

Path to Enlightenment

A guide to meditation techniques
practiced in Thailand

Institute of Spiritual Practice
The World Buddhist University (WBU)
Bangkok

Chapter 1

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Why should we practice meditation? In fact, meditation is important for our life. The more technical progress in terms of material wealth is made, the more mental development in terms of spiritual wealth is required. Again, the more we ignore training our mind, the more we face conflicts in various forms. This is because our minds are confused and cannot function well enough in many situations, such as stress, anxiety and lack of safety in our society. It is known that those who train their mind will have an advantage over others who do not. In short, meditation helps us to live more happily in today's world.

Meditation not only benefits our spiritual health and mental development, but it also has a good effect on our physical health. That is to say, meditation may help cure and heal diseases. A University of Wisconsin's research¹ revealed that longtime practitioners of Buddhist meditation showed higher levels of brain activation. It means that the brain of a meditator is continuously developing which strengthens its memory function. Human beings may not have to fear that age will have a negative effect on the memory. Dr. O. Carl Simonton, of the Simon Cancer Care Centre in California, USA, an expert in the use of traditional therapy for the treatment of cancer, studied the relationship between mind and body while treating and caring cancer patients for ten years. He pointed out that "the benefits of learning meditation will help create a place of resistance in the body which is able to manufacture the white blood cells which fight against cancer and HIV/AIDS."² Dr. Benson of the Harvard Medical School also has researched and tested the effects of meditation on health and body. In a book called *The Relaxation Response*, he stated that meditation can treat diseases because it helps the patient to release tension, boosts the will power to fight and increases the consciousness of being in control of one's life.³ The research results show that the mind can look after itself and has an effect on the

¹ Marc Kaufman. *Meditation Gives Brain a Charge, Study Finds*. (Available Online) www.buddhistchannel.tv/index.php?id=7,544,0,0,1,0 (Access) 5/3/2005

² *Buddhist Meditation and health*. (Available Online) <http://www.buddhanet.net/sanghametta/medhealth.html> (Access) 5/3/2005

³ Ibid.

treatment of physical disease; it is not simply depending on medicine. One's mental well-being will have a good effect on one's physical well being.

It is not only Buddhist meditation that has a good effect on our health, meditation techniques of other religions are also included. For example, yoga in Hinduism helps cure mental and physical ailing. Swami Ramdev⁴, a popular Indian yoga guru says, "If you do *pranayana* for half an hour daily you will never fall sick." Yoga can lower blood pressure and cure diabetes, asthma, cancer, slipped discs, cervical and arthritis pain, kidney failure and poor eyesight. He reasons that "diseases are nothing but imbalances of the body, and yoga corrects these imbalances." The yoga technique process of deeply inhaling and exhaling in many postures improves health in general.

Yoga looks like *Ānāpānasati* in Buddhism from the point of view of using the breath, but *Ānāpānasati* uses the breath as a meditation object for mindfulness that is more about spirituality. However, we can apply the art of yoga breathing for spirituality. That is to say, we mindfully inhale and exhale when practicing yoga. Observe the breath: short breath or long breath, refined breath or unrefined breath. While we are changing one posture to another posture we are aware of bodily movement. This is an example to explain *vipassanā* practice in relationship to yoga. The next five chapters will help you understand more how to practice Buddhist medication. If you are a yoga practitioner, you can apply it to your yoga practice.

Mental Development in Buddhism. When we are talking about spirituality here, we refer to mental development. Mental development, *cittibhāvanā* in Pali, appears in many places in the Buddhist texts. It appears in the third of the *kusala kammapada* (Threefold Classification of Wholesomeness)⁵, in *traisikkha*⁶ and in *ovādapātimokkha* (The Three Admonitions or Exhortations of the Buddha)⁷. The word 'mental development' is also included in the study of the Buddha's teaching, and when it is explained to others, because there are different degrees of mental development. The Buddha's teaching, as summarized is found in the *saddhamma* (the essential doctrine), the *pariyatti* (the true doctrine of study), the *patipatti* (the true doctrine of

⁴ Kumar, Hari. "Busy Indians Embrace a Swami's Easy Yoga." *International Herald Tribune*. February 2, 2005

⁵ Kusala kammapada is *dana* (generosity), *sila* (good moral conduct), *bhavanā* (mental development)

⁶ The Threefold Training is: training in higher morality, training in higher mentality, and training in higher wisdom. Or they are called morality, concentration and wisdom.

⁷ They are: not to do any evil, to do good, and to purify the mind.

practice) and the *pativeda* (the attainable aspect of the true doctrine). Basic to all the Buddha's teaching is the theory that we learn in order to understand, we understand in order to practice, and we practice for results. The highest result is the end suffering (*nibbāna*).

Generally speaking, mental development focuses on *samatha* (tranquil meditation) and *vipassanā* (insight meditation), but they each have a different function and different way of development. *Samatha* aims to develop calmness by concentrating on a meditative subject. Its function is to calm and temporarily free the meditator from sense impressions and the attachment which accompanies them. On the other hand, *vipassanā* has wisdom as its function attempting to eradicate wrong view (*moha*) and all other defilements to the attainment of enlightenment which is found and taught in Buddhism. *Samatha* was used by the people before Buddha's time.

A way of practicing *vipassanā* by those who attained *samatha* before is through using the tranquil mind to investigate impermanence, suffering and non-self, both internally and externally. When practicing with a tranquil mind we have an easier time practicing *nana* (real knowledge) *vipassanā*. So, both *samatha* and *vipassanā* are important for development of spirituality.

What is *Samatha*? *Samatha* is concerned with the concentration of one's mind on a suitable meditation object in order to prevent the mind from wandering about. This will bring about subtle peacefulness and pleasantness. *Samatha* is a powerful tool with which to practice *vipassanā* effectively. Whoever attains *samatha*, their mind becomes like a still, clear pool completely free from disturbance and agitation. In Buddhism, there are 40 different types of proper meditation object (*kammatthāna*) to calm the mind.

The forty meditation objects are: 10 *kasina*, 10 *asubha*, 10 *anussati*, 4 *appamanñās*, 4 *arupas*, 4 *dhātumanasikāras*, and 1 *āharepatikula sanñā*. Below are explanations in brief:

The 10 *kasinas* are *pathavi kasina* (earth), *apo kasina* (water), *tejo kasina* (fire), *vāyo kasina* (wind or air), *aloka kasina* (light), *lohita kasina* (red), *nila kasina* (green), *pita kasina* (yellow), *odata kasina* (white), and *ākāsa kasina* (space). In the

practice of *kasina*, select one of these meditation objects and then look at that object by closing the physical eyes for a few minutes. Close the eyes and imagine the object until the object can be seen with the mind (mental eye). If you cannot remember it, open the eyes and look at the object again and again. When you can see the object both with opened eyes and closed eyes, you attain concentration.

The 10 *asubhas* (10 kinds of foulness): bloated corpse, bluish dissolved corpse, festering corpse, split or cut up corpse, gnawed corpse, scattered corpse, hacked and scattered corpse, blood stained-corpse, worm-infested corpse, and skeleton. In the practice of *asubha*, traditionally, the practitioners go to a graveyard and then investigate one of the ten conditions of a corpse. This meditation object is suitable for one whose habit is passion. After attaining concentration, the practitioners may practice *vipassanā* by investigating the corpse as impermanence and out of control (non-self): We have to die some day. Our body will be like this corpse. The practitioners continuously investigate all things in the universe until the mind reaches the state of impermanence and non-self.

The 10 *anussatis* (10 recollections) are: recollection of the Buddha's virtues, recollection of the Dhamma, recollection of the Sangha's virtues, contemplation of one's own morals, contemplation of one's own liberality, contemplation of the virtues which enable people to become gods, mindfulness of death, contemplation of the 32 impure parts of the body, mindfulness on breathing, and recollection of peace. To contemplate on the 32 impure parts of the body is to make practitioners realize that people generally cling to their body as an object of beauty. This causes the "self" to rise in the mind. In fact, within our body is found a skeleton. It is full of flesh which is covered with skin. Beauty is nothing but skin deep. When one reflects thus on the impure parts of the body, passionate attachment to one's body gradually disappears. Many Bhikkhus in the time of the Buddha attained Arahatsip by meditating on these impurities. However, this meditation may not appeal to those who are not sensual. The 32 parts of the body are: hair, hair of the body, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinew, bones, marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, diaphragm, spleen, lungs, bowels, mesentery, stomach, faeces, brain, articular fluid, and urine.

The 4 *appamanñās* (unbound states of mind) are loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity. In the practice of this meditation, we unlimitedly radiate loving-kindness to all beings in the world and the many universes without exception. When seeing one who needs help, we try to help him with our ability and wisdom to lessen his suffering without hesitation. In some cases we cannot help him such as one who broke a nation's law and was arrested by the police or we cannot help him because the problem he faces is beyond our ability and wisdom. In that case we radiate equanimity to that person. Finally, we congratulate and show our sympathetic joy to those who succeed in life either by verbal expression (example: congratulations on your graduating) or physical expressions (giving a bunch of flowers to one who has had success) or both. That is the way to develop sympathetic joy.

The 4 *arupas* (4 kinds of formless sphere) are: sphere of infinity or space, sphere of infinity of consciousness, sphere of nothingness, and the sphere of neither perception nor non-perception. In the practice of this meditation, the practitioners select one of these meditation objects and then contemplate on that object more and more until the mind and the object are one thing.

The 4 *dhātumanasikara* (analysis of the 4 elements) are: earth, water, fire and air. The way to practice this meditation is the same as *kasina*.

The 1 *āhārepatikula saññā* (perception of the loathsomeness of food) is a way to detach oneself from the taste of food during eating. The practitioners contemplate food so that it will become loathsome when it is eaten because of being related to the body. The food eaten is changed from freshness to loathsomeness. One the other hand, the practitioner may contemplate that food cannot stay for a long time. It becomes discoloured and decays. When decaying, it produces bad smell and is loathsome. This is the eternal law that cannot be denied. When eating, practitioners contemplate this situation. This kind of meditation is a way to train our mind to realize the real purpose of eating. We should eat to survive; we are not born for just eating.

As is known, *samatha* has calmness as its function. Calmness (*samāthi*) has different levels according to its strength: *khanika samāthi*, *upacāra samāthi* and *appanā samāthi*. *Khanika samāthi* (a temporary concentration) is a concentration that we use in our life for working and reading. *Upacāra samāthi* (an elevated concentration, closer to the level of *appanā samāthi*) is deeper concentration that allows our mind to be still and calm for at least fifteen minutes. At this stage, mental images may occur (*nimitta*) and we can enlarge them and reduce them in size as we wish. If we use this calm to investigate our body either from the point of view of the Four Elements or through Loathsomeness, we can realize the truth that we are a component of the Four Elements. When contemplating our body as loathsomeness, we can realize that, but when we contemplate “skin” we see it as beauty. When reaching the level of *upacāra samāthi*, we see skin with our eyes while closing the eyes in meditation because of the power of calmness. We can use this concentration to investigate the skin as loathsome by separating the body into many parts. This is skin; this is hair, hair of the body, nails, teeth, flesh, sinew, bones and so on. When these parts of the body are separated from each other, we cannot see our body as beauty. A complete being cannot be found. We find only many parts of the separated body which is loathsome.

We can see and say that we are persons because a being is compounded of many parts of the body. Again, we see our body not as ugliness because we look at our body as a whole. When separating the body by concentration, like a doctor separates the parts of the body from one another, we cannot see our body as beautiful anymore. This is an easy example by which we can understand the reality of the body in our daily life as foulness. Why is our body foul? One example is saliva. We may not enjoy food when we see or hear saliva spit on the ground by someone. This is when we see saliva as loathsomeness. Another example is when our saliva is spit on a spoon. We cannot bear to eat it because of the feeling that it is loathsome even if that saliva is from our own body. Therefore, parts of the human body are foul. If we contemplate this, where and how can we experience our body as beauty? The answer is we cannot.

After skillfully practising *upacāra samāthi* meditation, the next step is *appanā samādhi*. It is a concentration that permits the mind to remain a very long time on the

same object. At this stage mental images will not appear. Practitioners may go back and forth between *upacāra samāthi* and *appanā samāthi* if they wish. *Appanā samāthi* is near *jhāna* (meditative absorption) in which there are different stages of absorption, and at each subsequent stage there is a higher degree of calm. At the moment of absorption, sense impressions and defilements are temporarily subdued.

What is *Vipassanā*? *Vipassanā* is clear intuitive insight into physical and mental phenomena as they arise and disappear, seeing them for what they actually are – in and of themselves – in terms of the three characteristics: impermanence, unsatisfaction and non-self. *Vipassanā* is the way which leads eventually to the attainment of *nibbāna*, perceptual happiness. In the practice of *vipassanā*, insight arises through a direct meditative observation of one's own bodily and mental processes. *Samādhi* (a concentration) that is useful to the practice of *vipassanā* is *khanika samādhi*.

In the Buddhist texts, there are comments about the spiritual health gained from Tranquil Meditation and Insight Meditation practice.⁸ Physical health is a good side effect of improving spiritual health as mentioned earlier. Below is a comparison of positive effect of Tranquil and Insight Meditation.

Tranquil Meditation

- Deep physical rest and relaxation and improved physical health
- Complete mental rest along with the attainment of a high level of happiness
- A complete free mind
- Strengthened memory
- Increased learning power
- More effective job performance
- Initiative and creative wisdom
- A whole and effective outlet for coping with life's problems
- Subtle tranquility and happiness

Insight Meditation

- Attainment of 'the light of wisdom' in dispelling the 'darkness of ignorance' in life
- Elimination of wrong views in life

⁸ Ussivikul, Vinai. *An Introduction for Buddhist Meditation for Results*. Thailand: Tippayawisut Ltd. Partnership, 1996

- Elimination of the ‘multiplier of adverse feelings or suffering’ in life
- Providing the most effective and unique method of relieving mental wandering
- Preventing the adverse and harmful unwholesomeness which is about to occur from wishing
- Effective weakening or elimination of the power of past unwholesomeness
- Bringing about the wholesomeness which has not yet arisen and intensifying the power of past wholesomeness
- Increasing the effectiveness of wholesome and highly beneficial memory power and the ability to cope effectively with unwholesome and extremely harmful memory power
- Attainment of the mind of the highest degree and with the most complete freedom

The Mahasatipaṭṭhāna Sutta⁹: A Discourse on Mental Development

In Buddhism the discourse on the main principle practice for mental development is the *Mahasatipaṭṭhāna Sutta*. As a compound term, satipaṭṭhana can be broken down in two ways, either as *sati-paṭṭhāna*, foundation of mindfulness or as *sati-upaṭṭhāna*, establishing mindfulness. Maha is the prefix that means “great.” So *Mahasatipaṭṭhāna* means the great foundation of mindfulness. This sutta is regarded as the canonical Buddhist text with the fullest instructions on the system of meditation technique that the Buddha taught. What the Buddha shows in this discourse is the tremendous power that can unfold from the mind’s potential culminating in final deliverance from unsatisfactoriness.

This is the direct path for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of Sorrow and lamentation, for the disappearance of pain and distress, for the Attainment of the right method, and for the realization of Unbinding.

(Digha Nikāya 22)

The *Mahasatipaṭṭhāna Sutta* is divided into four sections as follows:

<i>Kāyānupassanā</i>	contemplation of the body
<i>Vedanānupassanā</i>	contemplation of feelings

⁹ Thanissaro, Bhikkhu. *Anapanasati Sutra Mindfulness of Breathing*, Majjhima Nikaya 18 (Available online) <http://www.accesstonight.org/canon/sutta/majjhima/mn118.html> (access): February 1, 2005

<i>Cittānupassanā</i>	contemplation of the mind
<i>Dhammānupassanā</i>	contemplation of Dhammas

The key to the practice is to combine energy (*virīya*), mindfulness (*sati*) and clear comprehension (*sampajanna*) to the phenomena of mind and body.

To mindfully practise, students will generally require sound theoretical knowledge of the practice along with actual training. The theoretical knowledge should be based on the *Mahasatipaṭṭhāna Sutta*. The actual training descriptions, which are well known among Thai Buddhist as well as practitioners abroad and have been practiced for centuries, will be presented in the ensuing chapters. Here is a brief description of the *Mahasatipaṭṭhāna Sutta* that new students can study to understand the overall picture of the discourse. This information quotes from the original source of the Buddha’s teachings in the *sutta*.

Kāyānupassanā: This exercise aims to develop insight – seeing the body as it truly is. Commonly we cling to our body as beauty, desirability, attractiveness, ego, etc. because ignorance and craving dominate our mind. There are six divisions in this exercise. All quotes come from the *Mahasatipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, *Digha Nikaya 22*.

Mindfulness of Breathing (*Ānāpānasati*):

“Breathing in long, he discerns that he is breathing in long; or breathing out long, he discerns that he is breathing out long. Or breathing in short, he discerns that he is breathing in short; or breathing out short, he discerns that he is breathing out short. He trains himself to breathe in sensitive to the entire body and breathe out sensitive to the entire body. He trains himself to breathe in calming the bodily processes and to breathe out calming the bodily processes. Just as a skilled turner or his apprentice, when making a long turn, discerns that he is making a long turn, or when making a short turn discerns that he is making a short turn; in the same way the monk, when breathing in long, discerns that he is breathing in long, or breathing out short, he discerns that he is breathing out short...He trains himself to breathe in calming the bodily processes, and to breathe out calming the bodily processes.

Modes of Deportment (*iriyāpatha*) or Self-awareness on four bodily movements:

“Furthermore, when walking, the monk discerns that he is walking. When standing he discerns that he is standing. When sitting, he discerns that he is sitting. When lying down, he discerns that he is lying down. Or however his body is disposed, that is how he discerns it.

Clear Comprehension (*satisampajañña*):

“Furthermore, when going forward and returning, he makes himself fully alert; when looking toward and looking away...when bending and extending his limbs...when carrying his outer cloak, his upper robe and his bowl...when eating, drinking, chewing and savouring...when urinating and defecating...when walking, standing, sitting, falling asleep, waking up, talking, and remaining silent, he makes himself fully alert.

Reflection on the Repulsiveness of the Body (*asubha*): This exercise is suitable for those whose habits are passion, lust, sensual desire or other related defilements that prevent worldly beings from reaching enlightenment.

“Furthermore, just as if a sack with openings at both ends were full of various kinds of grain – wheat, rice, mung beans, kidney beans, sesame seeds, husked rice – and a man with good eyesight, pouring it out were to reflect: ‘This is wheat. This is rice. These are mung beans. These are kidney beans. These are sesame seeds. This is husked rice.’ in the same way, a monk reflects on this very body from the soles of his feet on up, from the crown of his head on down, surrounded by skin and full of various kinds of unclean things: ‘In this body there are head hairs, body hairs, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, tendons, bones, bone marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, pleura, spleen, lungs, large intestines, gorge, feces, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, skin oil, saliva, mucus, fluid in the joints, urine.

Reflection on the Modes of the Four Elements:

“Furthermore...just as a skilled butcher or his apprentice, having killed a cow, would sit at a crossroads cutting it into pieces, the monk contemplates this very body – however it stands, however it is disposed – in terms of properties: ‘In this body there is earth property, the liquid property, the fire property, and the wind property.’

“This way he remains focused internally on the body in and on itself, or focused externally...unsustained by anything in the world. This is how a monk remains focused on the body and of itself.

Cemetery Concentration (*sivathika*): This exercise leads to understand the loathsomeness of the body which will decay one day and is impermanent.

“Furthermore, as if he were to see a corpse cast away in a charnel ground – one day, two days, three days dead – bloated, livid, and festering, he applies it to this very body. ‘This body, too. Such is its nature, such is its future, such is its unavoidable fate’...

“Or again, as if he were to see a corpse cast away in a charnel ground, picked at by crows, vultures, and hawks, by dogs, hyenas, and various other creatures...a skeleton smeared with flesh and blood, connected with tendons...a fleshless skeleton smeared with blood, connected with tendons...a skeleton without flesh or blood, connected with tendons...bones detached from their tendons, scattered in all directions – here a hand bone, there a foot bone, here a shin bone, there a thigh bone, here a hip bone, there a back bone, here a rib bone, there a chest bone, here a shoulder bone, there a neck bone, here a jaw bone, there a tooth, here a skull...the bones whitened, somewhat like the colour of shells...piled up, more than a year old...decomposed into powder. He applies it to this very body, ‘This body, too. Such is its nature, such is its future, such is its unavoidable fate.’

Vedananupassanā: This exercise is an aspect of the mind. Practitioners must always try to see the body and the mind apart. Feeling arises due to outside world contacts with the mind. Feeling causes a problem if we are under the influence of the feeling. So, when any feeling arises, practitioners watch it and allow it to pass by.

“And how does a monk remain focused on feelings in and out of themselves? There is the case where a monk, when feeling a painful feeling, discerns that he is feeling a painful feeling. When feeling a pleasant feeling, he discerns that he is feeling a pleasant feeling. When feeling a neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling, he discerns that he is feeling a neither painful-nor-pleasant feeling.

“When feeling a painful feeling of the flesh, he discerns that he is feeling a painful feeling of the flesh. When feeling a painful feeling not of the flesh, he discerns that he is feeling a painful feeling not of the flesh. When feeling a pleasant feeling of the flesh, he discerns that he is feeling a pleasant feeling of the flesh. When he is feeling a pleasant feeling not of the flesh, he discerns that he is feeling a pleasant feeling not of the flesh. When feeling a neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling of the flesh, he discerns that he is feeling a neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling of the flesh. When feeling a neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling not of the flesh, he discerns that he is feeling a neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling not of the flesh.

Chittānupassanā: This exercise aims to perceive and understand any stages of the mind. The *sutta* says:

“And how does a monk remain focused on the mind in and on itself? There is the case where a monk, when the mind has passion, discerns that the mind has passion. When the mind is without passion, he discerns that the mind is without passion. When the mind has aversion, he discerns that the mind has aversion. When the mind is without aversion, he discerns that the mind is without aversion. When the mind has delusion, he discerns that mind has delusion. When the mind is without delusion, he discerns that the mind is without delusion.

“When the mind is restricted, he discerns that the mind is restricted. When the mind is scattered, he discerns that the mind is scattered. When the mind is enlarged, he discerns that the mind is enlarged. When the mind is surpassed, he discerns that the mind is surpassed. When the mind is unsurpassed, he discerns that the mind is unsurpassed. When the mind is concentrated, he discerns that the mind is concentrated. When the mind is not concentrated, he discerns that the mind is not concentrated. When the mind is released, he discerns that the mind is released. When the mind is not released, he discerns that the mind is not released.

Dhammānupassanā: This is the last section. The meditative objects are Dhammas (or mental qualities). There are Five Hindrances, Five Aggregates, Sixfold Internal

and External Sense Media, Seven Factors of Awakening, and the Four Noble Truths. Below is the explanation for application from the original *sutta*.

Five Hindrances:

“There is the case where a monk remains focused on mental qualities in and of themselves with reference to the *five hindrances*. And how does a monk remain focused on mental qualities in and of themselves with reference to the five hindrances? There is the case where, there being sensual desire present within, a monk discerns that ‘There is sensual desire within me.’ Or, there being no sensual desire present within, he discerns that ‘There is no sensual desire present within me.’ He discerns how there is the arising of unarisen sensual desire. And he discerns how there is the abandoning of sensual desire once it has arisen. And he discerns how there is no further appearance in the future of sensual desire that has been abandoned. (The same formula is repeated for the remaining hindrances: ill will, sloth and drowsiness, restlessness and anxiety, and uncertainty).

Five Aggregates:

“Furthermore, the monk remains focused on mental qualities in and of themselves with reference to the *five aggregates for sustenance/clinging*. And how does he remain focused on mental qualities in and of themselves with reference to the five aggregates for sustenance/clinging? There is a case where a monk [discerns]: ‘Such is form, such its origination, such its disappearance. Such is feeling... Such is perception... Such are processes... Such is consciousness... such its origination, such its disappearance.

Sixfold Internal and External Sense Media:

“Furthermore, the monk remains focused on mental qualities in or of themselves with reference to the *sixfold internal and external sense media*. And how does he remain focused on mental qualities in and of themselves with reference to the sixfold internal and external sense media? There is the case where he discerns the eye, he discerns form, he discerns the fetter dependent on both. He discerns how there is the arising of the unrisen fetter. And he discerns how there is the abandoning of a fetter once it has arisen. And he discerns how there is no further appearance in the future of a fetter

that has been abandoned. (The same formula is repeated for the remaining sense media: ear, nose, tongue, body and intellect.)

Seven Factors of Awakening:

“Furthermore, the monk remains focused on mental qualities in and of themselves with reference to the Seven Factors of Awakening. And how does he remain focused on mental qualities in and of themselves with reference to the seven factors of awakening? There is the case where, he discerns that ‘Mindfulness as a factor of awakening is present in me.’ Or, there being no mindfulness as a factor of awakening present within, he discerns that ‘Mindfulness as a factor of awakening is not present within me.’ He discerns how there is the arising of unarisen mindfulness as a factor of awakening. And he discerns how there is the culmination of the development of mindfulness as a factor of awakening once it has arisen.’ (The same formula is repeated for the remaining factors of awakening: analysis of qualities, persistence, rapture, serenity, concentration, and equanimity.)

The Four Noble Truths:

“Furthermore, the monk remains focused on mental qualities in and of themselves with reference to the Four Noble Truths. And how does he remain focused on mental qualities in and of themselves with reference to the Four Noble Truths? There is the case where he discerns, as it is actually present that ‘This is stress...This is the origination of stress... This is the cessation of stress... This is the way leading to cessation of stress.’

“Now what is the noble truth of stress? Birth is stress, aging is stress, death is stress; sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress and despair are stress; not getting what is wanted is stress. In short, the five aggregates for sustenance are stress...

“And what is the noble truth of the origination of stress? The craving that makes for further becoming – accompanied by passion and delight, relishing now here now there – i.e. craving for sensuality, craving for becoming, craving for non-becoming.

“And where does this craving, when arising, arise? And where, when dwelling, does it dwell? Whatever is endearing and alluring in terms of the

world: there is where this craving, when arising, arises. That is where, when dwelling, it dwells.

“And what is endearing and alluring in terms of the world? The eye is endearing and alluring in terms of the world. That is where this craving, when arising, arises. That is where, when dwelling, it dwells.

“The ear...The nose...The tongue...The body...The intellect...

“Forms...Sounds...Smells...Tastes...Tactile sensations...Ideas...

“Eye-consciousness...Ear-consciousness...Nose-consciousness...Tongue-consciousness...Body-consciousness...Intellect-consciousness...

“Eye-contact...Ear-contact...Nose-contact...Tongue-contact...Body-contact...Intellect-contact...

“Feeling born of eye-contact...Feeling born of ear-contact...Feeling born of nose-contact...Feeling born of Tongue-contact...Feeling born of body-contact...Feeling born of intellect-contact...

“Perception of forms...Perception of sound...Perception of smells...Perception of tastes...Perception of tactile sensations...Perception of ideas...

“Intention for forms...Intention for sounds...Intention for smells...Intention for tastes...Intentions for tactile sensations...Intentions for ideas...

“Craving for forms...Craving for sounds...Craving for smells...Craving for tastes...Craving for tactile sensations...Craving for ideas...

“Thought directed at forms...Thought directed at sounds...Thought directed at smells...Thought directed at tastes...Thought directed at tactile sensation...Thought directed at ideas...

”Evaluation of forms...Evaluation of sounds...Evaluation of smells...Evaluation of tastes...Evaluation of tactile sensations...Evaluation of ideas is endearing and alluring of the world. This is where this craving, when arising, arises. This is where, when dwelling, it dwells.

“And what is the noble truth of the cessation of stress? The remainderless fading and cessation, renunciation, relinquishment, release, and letting go of that very craving.

“And what is the noble truth of the path of practice leading to the cessation of stress? Just this very Noble Eightfold Path: right view, right

aspiration, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.

“And what is right view? Knowledge with regards to stress, knowledge with regard to the origination of stress, knowledge with regard to the cessation of stress, knowledge with regard to the way of practice leading to the cessation of stress. This is called the right view.

“And what is right aspiration? Aspiring to renunciation, to freedom from ill will, to harmlessness: This is called right aspiration.

“And what is right speech? Abstaining from lying, from divisive speech, from abusive speech, from idle chatter: This is called right speech.

“And what is right action? Abstaining from taking life, from stealing, and from sexual intercourse: This is called right action.

“And what is right livelihood? There is the case where a noble disciple, having abandoned dishonest livelihood, keeps his life going with the right livelihood: This is called right livelihood.

“And what is right effort? There is the case where a monk generates desire, endeavors, arouses persistence, upholds and exerts his intent for the sake of the non-arising of evil, unskilled qualities that have not yet arisen ...for the sake of the abandoning of evil, unskilled qualities that have arisen...for the sake of skillful qualities that have not yet arisen...(and) for the maintenance, non-confusion, increase, plenitude, development, and culmination of skillful qualities that have arisen: This is called right effort.

“And what is right mindfulness? There is the case where a monk remains focused on the body in and of itself – ardent, alert, and mindful – putting aside greed and distress with reference to the world. He remains focused on feelings in and of themselves...the mind in and of itself...mental qualities in and of themselves – ardent, alert and mindful – putting aside greed and distress with reference to the world. This is called right mindfulness.

“And what is right concentration?” There is the case where a monk – quite withdrawn from sensuality, withdrawn from unskillful (mental) qualities – enters and remains in the first jhāna: rapture and pleasure born withdrawal, accompanied by directed thought and evaluation. With the stilling of directed thought and evaluation, he enters and remains in the second jhāna: rapture and pleasure born from composure, unification of awareness free from directed thought – internal assurance. With the fading of rapture he remains in equanimity, mindful and alert, physically sensitive of pleasure. He enters and remains in the third jhāna, and of him the Noble Ones declare, ‘Equanimous and mindful, he has pleasurable abiding.’ With the abandoning of pleasure and pain – as with earlier disappearance of elation and distress – he enters and remains in the fourth jhāna: purity of equanimity and mindfulness, neither pleasure nor pain. This is called right concentration. This is called the noble truth of the path of practice leading to the cessation of stress.

In the conclusion of the *sutta*, the Buddha stated, “If anyone would develop these four frames of reference in this way for seven years, one of two fruits can be expected for him: either gnosis right here and now, or – if there be any remnant of clinging-sustenance – non-return (anagami).”

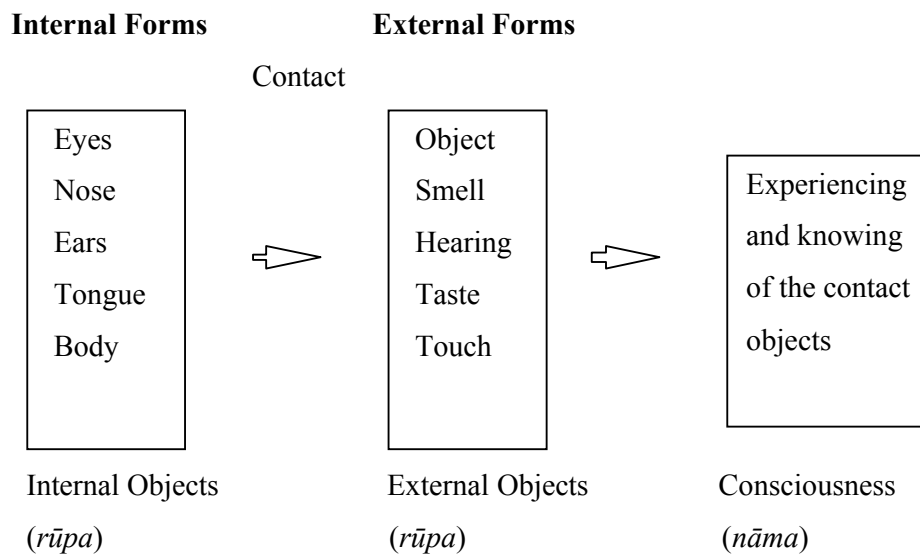
How can we practice all of these four so that we finish with them? Do not worry. The Buddha’s teachings are related to each other like a chain. If we practice one of them more and more, other spiritual themes of the practice will progress by themselves. As the Buddha said in the *Ānāpānasati Sutta* about the achievement of a relationship of one Dhamma to another:

“Mindfulness of in and out breathing, when developed and pursued, is of great fruit, of great benefit. Mindfulness of in and out breathing, when developed and pursued, brings the Four Frames of Reference (Mahasatipaṭṭhāna) to their culmination. The Four Frames of Reference, when developed and pursued, brings the Seven Factors for Awakening to their culmination. The Seven Factors for Awakening, when developed and pursued, brings Clear Knowing and Release to their culmination.”

How do we become enlightened? The Buddha explained the path to enlightenment in *ñāna* (the knowledge of Insight) in relationship to what will happen to the practitioners who practice *samatha* and *vipassanā*. There are sixteen stages of the knowledge of insight. What happens at each stage shows that insight is progressing. It is helpful to say that *ñāna* is the result of our spiritual progress from the primary stage up to the final stage (nibbāna). Below are the details about *ñāna* :¹⁰

1. Nāma-rūpa paricheda-ñāna : knowledge of the distinction between mentality and materiality

This is the primary sign for enlightenment. Practitioners clearly see the distinctions made about physical experience (*rūpa*) and the quality of the knowing of the physical experience (*nāma*) becomes apparent. The physical experience is the contact between the internal sense fields and the external sense fields.



Take a sound as an example. The ears make contact with the sound when you hear a song. In the form of ‘hearing a song’ it may become sound as just sound or as knowing of sound. The others are similar to this.

2. Paccaya-pariggaha-ñāna : knowledge of conditionality

At this stage practitioners can see how one experience conditions another one. They can see the cause of the experience and its effect. It may be that mind (*nāma*)

¹⁰ *Vipassanā Ñāna* (Available Online) <http://www.buddhanet.net/knowledge.htm> (Access): March 27, 2006.
Ibid. (Available online) <http://web.ukonline.co.uk/buddhism/vpsnana.htm>. (Access) March 27, 2006

conditions body (*rūpa*); body conditions mind; mind conditions mind; and body conditions body. Also, practitioners can see the actual moment of experience and its middle, but they cannot see its end. The actual moment of experience comes from attention or volition.

3. Sammasana-ñāna : knowledge of mastery

At this stage practitioner now see clearly the beginning (arising), middle (manifesting) and end (cessation) of the experience through the five senses. They also have more insight into unsatisfactoriness and non-self.

4. Udayabbaya-ñāna : knowledge of rising and passing away

This stage is central to the practice. Practitioners enter into the purification of knowing and see what is and what is not the path. The arising and passing away of experience is very clear. They can notice everything easily, and it seems that the meditation is going on by itself. They understand more clearly the importance of just seeing experience as experience, not getting stuck by ego or attaching a judgment on to it. Practitioners have experienced faith, rapture and bliss.

5. Bhanga-ñāna : knowledge of dissolution

At this stage, practitioners see only the passing away of phenomena. There are two signs at this stage. Firstly, practitioners seem like they no longer focus on anything. Their attention keeps sliding off whatever they try to look at. Or, they cannot focus on anything. It is nothing at all. Lastly, the sense of body disappears. There is only the act of experience or knowing the act of sound. There is no 'body'.

6. Bhaya-ñāna : knowledge of fear

In the appearance of everything that is examined, the mind begins to realize: there is nothing beneath the parade of changes and there is no foundation. The result is existential anxiety. At this stage of practice, the practitioners' insight into *anatta*, non-self, takes the form of a sense of loss of control. The realization is that 'I am not in control of my life.'" Some practitioners may very much be afraid of what they see, even if it is only a water jug or a bed post. There are no feelings of happiness, pleasure or enjoyment, and they cry when they think of their friends and relatives.

7. Ādinava-ñāna : knowledge of contemplation on disadvantages

Here, practitioners realize there is no rest, no security in anything. But they know there is escape. Also, practitioners can be aware of nothing but the rising, continuing and passing away of *nāma* and *rūpa*. They also become aware of impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and the non-self of *nāma* and *rūpa*. However, irritable feelings remain and are experienced.

8. Nibbidā-ñāna : knowledge of contemplation

The practitioners view all objects as tiresome and ugly. They are absent of joy and are bored as though they have been separated from what they love. They may not wish to speak to or meet anybody; or they may feel lonely, sad and apathetic. They become bored realizing that all things become subject to change. Therefore, they set off together with a strong inclination to search for *nibbāna*.

9. Muncitu-kamyatā -ñāna : knowledge of the desire for liberation

At this stage of the practice, the practitioners experience a strong desire for liberation or may give up meditation. One of the reasons is they experience a great deal of physical pain and restlessness. They may be unable to hold any posture of the body for any period of time. They itch all over the body or feel as if they have been bitten and climbed on by ants or small insects.

10. Patisankha-ñāna : knowledge of reflective contemplation

At this stage, the practitioners may feel that they have lost the ability to concentrate as if they lost all insight about having gone through this before. They may feel drowsy, heavy as stone, feel heat throughout the body, or feel uncomfortable.

11. Sankhārupekkha-ñāna : knowledge of equanimity regarding formations

At this stage all forms of pain either disappear or are minimized. The practitioners feel neither happiness nor sadness, frightened nor gladness, only indifferent. They find they can practice for long periods of time, and need little sleep. The meditation seems to be carrying on by itself. As a result, practitioners may forget the time that has been spent during practice.

12. Anuloma-ñāna : knowledge of adaptation

The special knowledge appears with the realization that physical and mental phenomena which occur at the six sense-doors momentarily are impermanent, suffering and non-self. The knowledge that arises at the last moment is “Anuloma-ñāna ” (Knowledge of adaptation) which consists of three ‘*jāvanas*’ (impulse moments): ‘*parikamma*’ (preparation) ‘*upacāra*’ (approach) and ‘*anuloma*’ (adaptation). Anuloma ñāna transforms the mind so it becomes qualified to enter the threshold of Nibbāna.

13. Gotrabhū-ñāna : knowledge of connection

Gotrabhū-ñāna is the knowledge that is between the worldly state and supramundane state. Practitioners cast off *nāma* and *rūpa*. Their awareness grasps *nibbāna* as its object.

14. Magga-ñāna : knowledge of the path

In this ñāna , some defilements have been broken off. Practitioners are clear and have complete knowledge of the path that is necessary to reach *nibbāna* through deep wisdom. This stage is supramundane. One becomes a noble one according to the defilements (*kilesas*) or fetters (*samyoja*) that have been eradicated. There are four types of noble ones: *sotabana*¹¹, *sakadagami*¹², *anagami*¹³ and *arahant*¹⁴.

¹¹ Sotāpanna: Stream winner. A person has abandoned the first three of the fetters (*sanyojana*), self-identification views (*sakkaya-ditthi*), uncertainty (*vicikicchā*), grasping at precepts and practices (*silabbata-paramasa*) that bind the mind to the cycle of rebirth and has thus entered the “stream” flowing inexorably to *nibbāna*, ensuring that one will be reborn at mostly only seven more times, and only in human and higher realms.

¹² Sakadāgami: Once-returner. A person who has abandoned the first three of the fetters that bind the mind to the cycle of rebirth, has weakened the fetters of sensual passion and resistance, and who after death is destined to be reborn in this world only once.

¹³ Anāgāmi: Nonreturner. A person who has abandoned the five lower fetter (*sanyojana*), self-identification views (*sakkaya-ditthi*), uncertainty (*vicikicchā*), grasping at precepts and practices (*silabbata-paramāsa*), sensual passion (*kāmarāga*) and resistance (*patikha*) that bind the mind to the cycle of rebirth, and who after death will appear in the Brahma worlds called the Pure Abodes, there to attain *nibbāna*, never to return to this world.

¹⁴ Arahant: A “worthy one” or “pure one”; a person whose mind is free of defilements who has abandoned all ten of the fetters , self-identification views (*sakkaya ditthi*), uncertainty (*vicikicchā*), grasping at precepts and practices (*silahata-parāmasa*), sensual passion (*kāmarāga*), resistance (*pathiga*), passion for form (*rupa-rāga*), passion for formless phenomena (*arāpa-rāga*), conceit (*māna*), restlessness (*uddhacca*), and unawareness (*avijjā*) that bind the mind to the cycle of rebirth, whose heart is free of mental affluents (*āsava*), and who is thus not destined for further rebirth. This is the title of the Buddha and the highest level of his noble disciples.

15. Phala-ñāna : knowledge of fruition

This ñāna occurs a moment after *magga-ñāna*. *Magga-ñāna* is the cause and *phala-ñāna* is the result. Whenever some defilements are eradicated, the fruition happens. This means practitioners become a noble one at this stage.

16. Paccavekkhana-ñāna : knowledge of review

At this stage, practitioners review the path and the fruition that has been attained. Nibbāna has been known and experienced. Also, practitioners continue following the path if there are some defilements which remain. From now the work of eradicating defilements is going on by itself automatically until there is no defilement left in the mind.

The ensuing chapters will introduce five Theravada meditation techniques that are well known and popularly practiced in Thailand. One thing that is important for the practitioners who desire to get results is how much they are dedicating themselves to only a specific technique. Even if the techniques that will be introduced are the best, they are in vain if the practitioners do not dedicate themselves to practicing seriously. New practitioners should choose one of the meditation techniques for their own practice. The way to find the best one is to try to practice them all for some period of time. Then you can evaluate them by yourself. Which one of them that you practiced felt right for you? Choose it and practice it more and more in your daily life and throughout your life until you attain the highest goal. Do not go to another technique and come back to the same one again. It encourages you to be uncertain, your practice will be in vain and you never get a result again. However, these five meditation techniques are like a house with many doors. No matter what door you come through, once we are in, we will not only see each other, but also the same thing inside. Choose the most practical way, the one that is best suited to you and is your opportunity to enter the house.

Chapter 2

ACHARN MUN'S SAMATHA-VIPASSANĀ

Introduction. One of the well-known meditation practices in Thailand that will be explained here is Ārchan¹⁵ Mun's *samatha-vipassanā*, generally known as “Buddho Meditation” in Thailand. This technique¹⁶ is classified as Ānāpānasati, mindfulness of breath, together with mental recitation of the Buddha's name ‘Bud-dho’. Mentally you recite ‘Bud’ on the inhalation and ‘Dho’ for the exhalation. Buddho means “The Awakened One”. The purpose of using the word ‘Buddho’ along with the breath is a technique that helps the mind focus easily on one-pointedness.

First of all, the practitioners of this method should practice *samatha* to calm the mind. Then they begin to practice *vipassanā* by using the calmed mind to concentrate on the reality of all things truly as they are.

One important element that the practitioners should do before trying out meditating is to investigate the body as the compound of the four elements and the Five Aggregates. Observe your thoughts regarding the body as a desirable thing to cling to, as impermanence and non-self. Contemplate the body like this until the mind accepts these realities.

Biography of the Master. Ārchan Mun¹⁷ (1870-1949) was born on Thursday, 20th January 1870 at Khambong Village, a farming village in Ubolratchathani Province, Northeastern Thailand. He was a son of the Kankaew family. Kamduang was his father and Jan was his mother. He was named Mun, meaning ‘firm’. Mun was the eldest among seven brothers and sisters. He was small in stature and had a fair complexion. He was, from childhood, agile and full of vigour, intelligent and resourceful.

¹⁵ Ārchan is a Thai word meaning “teacher”.

¹⁶ Really speaking, it was Ārchan Sao Kantasilo who first taught Buddho meditation. Ārchan Mun was a disciple who succeeded in meditation and helped his master to propagate this technique to Thai Buddhists at that time. As Ārchan Sao's life and teachings were not recorded, Ārchan Mun became more widely known than his master. Besides, some of Ārchan Mun's followers who saw and touched his teaching directly are still alive. In meditation discussion among his practitioners they often talk about Ārchan Mun's mode of practice that is regarded a good model in teaching and practice.

¹⁷ Read more about his life by visiting http://www.buddhanet.net/pfd_file/acariya-mun.pdf

At fifteen, Mun was ordained as a novice in the village monastery of Khambong. He spent two years as a novice and then disrobed on the request of his father. He however resolved that sooner or later he would return because of an unshakable confidence in a chaste life. Later, at the age of twenty-two, he was ordained as a monk at Wat Srithong in Ubonratchathani with Venerable Phra Ariyakavi as his preceptor, Venerable Phrakru Seetha as the Announcing Teacher and Venerable Phrakru Prachak Ubolguna as the Instructing Teacher during the Ordination Procedure. He was given the name Bhuridatto (Blessed with Wisdom). After his ordination he went to practice *vipassanā* with Ārchan Sao Kantasilo at Wat Liab, and completed a primary practice focused *on good manners for monks and rules for teachers and preceptors* to the satisfaction of his teacher. The young monk Mun, fortified with the theory for his life in the monkhood, then wandered through Thailand, Burma, and Laos, dwelling for the most part of the time in the forest, to engage in meditation practice with his teacher, Phra Ārchan Sao Kantasilo¹⁸ (1861-1941).

Ārchan Mun wandered throughout the northeastern part of Thailand from the beginning of his practice until he had achieved a necessary strength of mind and calmness. This level of practice helped him to resist the interest and temperaments characteristic of his ultra dynamic mind as well as external stimuli. He then journeyed up and down between the central part and the northeastern part of Thailand. He stayed for a rains retreat at Wat Pathumvanaram where he regularly went for instruction and advice from His Eminence Phra Upaligunupamacariya (Siricando) at Wat Boromnivas in Bangkok. After the rainy retreat, he journeyed to Lopburi province and stayed at various caves such as Phaiwang Cave, Mount Khao Phra Ngam, and Singto (Lion) Cave. In all three places he increased his efforts regularly to develop his meditation and profound insight. A major site of his practice was the Sarika Cave in Khao Yai (Big Mount) in the province of Nakhon Nayok, where he the stayed for three years. His followers believe he attained the highest of enlightenment.

Ārchan Mun passed away in 1949 at Wat Suddhavaśa, Sakhon Nakhon Province. His bone fragments, which later became relics including his hairs, were distributed after the cremation ceremony. At present, his teachings and the mode of practice are recognized as a good model that is attracting numerous people who seek

¹⁸ Later, Ārchan Mun helped his master establish the forest meditation tradition (the Kammatthana tradition) that subsequently spread throughout Thailand and several countries abroad.

enlightenment. Ārchan Mun observed four ascetic practices (*dhudanga*) throughout his life. The ascetic practices which are thirteen in total¹⁹ are ways to eradicate defilements. The four ascetic practices that Ārchan Mun observed are:

1. The practice of wearing robes made from thrown-away cloth
2. The practice of going for alms
3. The practice of eating one's food only from one's bowl
4. The practice of eating no more than one meal a day

Besides these, he also observed the practice of living in the wilderness occasionally, which for him was at least one kilometer from the nearest village.

The Practice of Ārchan Mun's Samatha-Vipassanā

Sitting Meditation. The technique of the practice is to combine *citta* ((mind), mindfulness, and the word Bud-Dho together. The purpose of using the word is to calm the mind by focusing on the word which is an object of attachment for the mind. However, the recitation word will disappear when the mind is at one-pointedness.

After sitting in a suitable posture, the practitioners are aware of breathing in and breathing out. This technique uses the word 'Bud' as breathing in and 'Dho' as breathing out. While repeating the word 'Bud-Dho', focus your attention on the middle of the chest, or at the heart where the air is touching as inhalation and exhalation. Do not let attention stay ahead or behind you. Be mindful to keep the mind in that place and be steady in its one-pointedness. Later, the mind will enter into a state of concentration. The mind in true concentration is the mind in a state of one-pointedness. If the mind does not reach the state of one-pointedness, it is not yet in a state of concentration. Thoughts or mental states that arise while meditating are one of the hindrances. At this point, the practitioner only reaches the mind and does not penetrate into the heart. The mind is what can think, form and perceive ideas about all

¹⁹ The thirteen Ascetic Practices are 1. *Pansukulikanga*: the practice of wearing robes made from thrown-away cloth, 2. *Tecivarikanga*: the practice of using only one set of three robes, 3. *Pindapatikanga*: the practice of going for alms, 4. *Sapadakarikanga*: the practice of not by-passing any donors on one's alms path, 5. *Ekasanikanga*: the practice of eating no more than one meal a day, 6. *Pattapindikanga*: the practice of eating one's food only from one's bowl, 7. *Khalupacchabhattikanga*: the practice of not accepting any food presented after one has eaten one's fill, 8. *Arañnikanga*: the practice of living in the wilderness, 9. *Rukkhamulikanga*: the practice of living under the shade of a tree, 10. *Abbhokasikanga*: the practice of living out under the open sky, 11. *Sosanikanga*: The practice of living in a cemetery, 12. *Yathasanthatikanga*: the practice of living in whatever place is assigned to one; and 13. *Nesajjikanga*: the practice of not lying down.

sorts of things. The heart is what simply stays still without forming any further thoughts at all. When the thought passes or disappears, observe the breath again.

Practitioners should not worry that they cannot reach one-pointedness. The more they try to use force to calm their minds, the more they will be far away from calmness. Here the advice is: simply observe the breath-in and breath-out. That is enough. Someday concentration will appear by itself. Practice and try to apply it in daily life, day and night; try it and see it as an important essence of life. Be happy when you observe it and achieve it naturally. Do not force the breath. Simply observe it naturally. If practitioners can do this, they can taste a minor calm. Even if it is not a deep calm, they can feel it happily at one level.

Another suggestion about the technique to attain one-pointedness is to apply ‘Bud-Dho, Bud-Dho’ in all activities. Do it until the mind is identical with ‘Bud-Dho’. Then the mind will reach a calm state.

Walking Meditation. The key technique for walking meditation is to be mindful of walking and aware of the touching of the feet to the ground. Before starting the walking meditation, the practitioner should prepare a walking path. The walking path should not be shorter than seventeen steps long. The walking path must be clean and smooth. The direction of the walking path, when part of a practice, is from the east to the west. Other directions are acceptable, if a suitable direction cannot be found, except walking from the north to the south and from the south to the north. Before starting the walking meditation, stand at one end and put the right hand over the left in front of the body. Having thus composed the body, stand still and bring awareness and attention to the body. Further practice is to raise one’s hands together (a gesture of respect) and with the eyes shut reflect for a few minutes on the qualities of the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha. Then bring the hands down and decide on how long you are going to walk. Focus your sight down on the ground/floor about six feet in front of you or at a suitable distance for each individual. Do not look around.

While walking, practitioners mindfully note this arising and passing away of feelings as the soles of the feet lift off or touch onto the ground. Keep the full attention on sensations that arise through walking. Walking quickly or slowly depends on each practitioner. If the mind wanders a lot, walking slowly is suitable. Always bring the mind back to the sensations at the feet and continue walking. While

walking the mind may become calm and tranquil. Stop and stand to allow the mind to experience this calmness and tranquility.

Another way to practice walking meditation is to use a mantra like ‘Buddho’. This technique of practice is like the sitting meditation as mentioned earlier. The practitioner mentally repeats ‘Buddho’ with breath while walking. Be mindful of the breaths as you repeat the mantra, ‘Buddho’, all the time. This technique will help calm the mind. However, it is not suitable for beginners because the breath is a subtle meditation object. Walking meditation combined with the breath of the word ‘Buddho’ is fit for one who has attained a certain degree of stability and calmness beforehand.

A Useful Principle for Dhamma Practice

While practicing meditation the practitioners should be concerned about the Dhamma that is discussed during meditation. The Ever-Present Principle²⁰ is an important topic which supports the meditation practice.

The practitioners must focus on a meditation object at each present moment all the time. They should be present when experiencing seeing, hearing, tasting, touching or smelling. They should be present when thoughts and feelings about various contexts (good or bad) occur. These things, like inconstancy, stress and non-self occur naturally and display the truth for them to see at all times. So, the practitioners continuously use this approach to contemplate things with their mindfulness and discernment. It can be said that they are listening to the Dhamma at all times, both day and night.

The Enlightenment Path

As described above, these techniques calm the mind and are an important tool to develop wisdom and to eradicate defilement. To uproot defilements use *vipassanā*.

The following passage describes how to uproot defilements.

²⁰ Mun, Ven. Achariya. *The Ever-Present Truth*. Translated from the Thai by Thanissaro Bhikkhu. CA: Metta Forest Monastery, 1995 (Available Online) : <http://www.assesstoinight.org/lib/thai/everpresent.html> (Access): December 12, 2004

Recalling the nature of the body

The practitioners practice *samatha* until they attain *appanā samāthi* (attainment concentration). They use *appanā samāthi* to contemplate the nature of the body. The nature of the body is repulsive because the body is an assemblage of filth, urine, and excrement. Common people see the body and assume that it is beautiful, delightful and attractive. Actually, the elements of the body are repulsive. For example, the teeth have to be constantly washed and scrubbed, because if we do not clean them, they will smell bad and no one will come to talk to us. One important thing that deludes people into conceiving the body as being beautiful and attractive is because the cover of the skin deceives the people. We see a body and suppose it to have pleasing complexions: fair, ruddy, dark etc. In fact without the skin the body would be regarded with nothing but hatred, loathing and disgust. The skin needs us to look after it. If not it produces bad smell and disgusts us. On the one hand, if the body were not wrapped in skin, the flesh, tendons and other parts of the body would not hold together and could not be used to accomplish anything at all. It is easy to accept this truth when we look below the surface of the skin. Therefore, the practitioners, to clarify this reality in the mind, investigate the hair of the body, the hair of the head, nails, teeth, and skin. After practicing this way, the practitioners will be cured of the delusion of beauty and attractiveness that is especially fixated on the skin. Thus, practitioners will have equanimity in the body, no longer dwelling on it or finding it appealing and desirable, for they have seen it for what it is. This meditation is called *tacapancakakammatthāna* (the subject for meditation comprising the five constituents).

The practitioners investigate whichever part or aspect of the body is agreeable to their temperament until a particular aspect of the body appears as an *uggaha nimitta* in the mind (mental image). Then they should keep investigating the body on the points that are agreeable to their temperaments by asking themselves, why do I see my body as beautiful? How is it beautiful and attractive? After investigating a particular aspect of the body, a mental image may appear while meditating. The mental image is a sign of attaining a concentration which is called *upacāra samāthi* (an elevated concentration). The practitioners should investigate that mental image of the body not as beauty until they have equanimity in the body and decline to cling to it. Then, they will not see it as beauty because they have realized the reality of their bodies as they truly are. When the mental image of the body first appears to them and

they continue to see it in all places and at all times, this technique is a means of enlightenment. The practitioners must concentrate on it in all places and at all times. A mental image of the body that they contemplated may appear during meditating.

Afterwards, the practitioners should then separate the body into the elements of earth, water, fire, and air. They can examine it until they really see it in those terms. At this stage the practitioners do not abandon the original body reference point that first appeared to them. They still investigate it and separate its elements again and again. Do not exclusively investigate the body or exclusively quiet the mind. When they have investigated it in this way, the mind will be bound to converge in a big way: and the instant it converges, everything will be one and the same. The entire world will be nothing but elements. At some time, an image will appear of the world as being level as a drum head, because the entire world is of one and the same inherent nature. This stage is called *yathābhūtañāna-dassana vipassanā* (the clear insight that both knows and sees things for what they really are). Next, the practitioners analyse things in line with their inherent nature, namely impermanence (*aniccā*) and suffering (*dukkha*). When we analyze this, it will quiet the conditions of the mind. The realization will come to them. The practitioners should not stop at this point but further investigate all things as non-self until the mind is made to converge, enabling them to see truly *vutthana-gamini vipassanā* (clear insight leading to emergence). At this stage there is a turning point of release that ends suffering. They continue to work at this point until the mind is absolutely clear.

Chapter 3

RISING-FALLING MEDITATION OF THE ABDOMEN

Introduction. Mahasi Sayadaw Shin Sobhana (1904-1982) is one of the Burmese Buddhist monks who are famous meditation masters of rising-falling meditation of the abdomen. He is recognized as a leading teacher of this technique in Myanmar and is considered the founder of the technique in Thailand. As a meditation master he had a significant influence on the teaching of Satipatthāna Vipassanā meditation in the West and throughout Asia. Sayadaw became a monk in November 1923, and passed the state examination to become a Dharma teacher in 1941. He helped establish missions in Japan, Sri Lanka, India, Indonesia, and Thailand. His style of meditation involved quietly noting the rising and fallen of the abdomen during breathing.

The Burmese tradition had been introduced to Thailand as early as the year 1953 at the request of the minister in charge of Sangha Affairs in Thailand, the Venerable Vimaladhamma. In response, Mahasi Sayadaw sent Sayadaws U Asabha to Thailand who at the age of 94 years still instructs *vipassanā* meditation at Sorntawi Vipassanā Centre where is living now (2004). U Indawamsa who also came with him from Burma as his assistant introduced the practice of Satipatthanā Vipassanā meditation together with a Thai monk, Ven. Phra Maha Teerarach Mahatheeracharn (Jodok). Mahasi Sayadaw's method of Satipatthana Vipassanā meditation gained wide support in Thailand where many meditation centres had come into existence by the year 1960 and the number of trained meditators exceeded hundreds of thousands all over Thailand. At present, this technique is practiced with the other four meditation practices in Thailand. This technique is popularly known as “Yup Nor Pong Nor”.

Ven. Phra Maha Teerarach Mahatheeracharn, for short known as Ven. Jodok, graduated at the highest level of the Pali state examination in Thailand. He lived at Wat Mahadhatu, Bangkok. At a time when the Sayadaw Tradition was famous in Burma, Ven. Jodok, already interested in meditation, was encouraged to get insight through this technique. So, he went to study the Sayadaw Tradition in Burma. After coming back to Thailand, he started teaching the Sayadaw Tradition to both Thai Buddhists as well as foreigners in Thailand and other parts of the world. He later became Phra Dhamma Theerarach Mahamuni and was honoured by the Sangha

Council with his appointment as the Chief Master for Vipassanā Meditation in Thailand. Ven. Jodok passed away on the 30th of June 1988.

The Practice of Rising-Falling Meditation of the Abdomen.²¹

Sitting meditation. The practitioners sit in any posture. The key technique is to observe any mental or physical processes that occur within the present moment. To note the rising falling movement of the abdomen with every breath is the starting point of the practice of this technique. This is a simple and easy form of exercise for a beginner and even advanced practitioners. The abdomen moves up during inhalation, while mentally reciting ‘Rising’; the abdomen moves down during exhalation while mentally reciting ‘Falling’. Do not follow the process of breathing; just note the rising and falling of the abdomen. The words that are used, ‘rising and falling’, are one of the main objectives of attention. They are tools of awareness. However, the words need not be used if the practitioners are able to be aware of the process without analyzing, comparing, thinking or judging. The noting may be dropped. Just observe.

In the case of the rising-falling of the abdomen, the practitioners should understand two factors while they are noting: mentality (*nāma*) and materiality (*rūpa*). The former is to note the rising-falling of the abdomen from its beginning to the end; the latter is the air moving in and out as we are breathing. As the ‘rising’ of the abdomen is an expansion of the abdomen while breathing in, and ‘falling’ for the downward movement of the abdomen while breathing out. If the mind will not stay fixed with the rising-falling of the abdomen, it should be noted as ‘wandering’. When one notes wandering once or twice, the mind usually stops wandering. Then, the exercise of noting ‘rising, falling’ should be continued. Any other mental activities that occur during sitting meditation (reflection, planning, etc) must be contemplated and called by their name as the case may be.

Walking Meditation. Walking meditation is a method of keeping the mind on a common focus. It can be practiced anywhere, anytime, for the rest of life. It can also produce deep concentration and clear insights into the mind/body processes, as in sitting meditation. Every sitting should be preceded by walking, of at least ten

²¹ Phra Dhamma Theerach Mahamuni. Ven. (Jodok). *The Path to Nibbana* (9th edition). Thailand: Vipassanā Centre. Section 5 Mahadhatu, 2001; Bhattanta Asabha. *Vipassanā*.

minutes, because walking centers the mind and provides the necessary preparation for a mindful sitting. The walking path should be between three to ten metres in length, ideally about six metres. Walk with eyes cast down about two metres ahead of your steps. Hold your hands in front or behind. Before changing posture from sitting to walking, practitioners should make a note in the intending mind as ‘intending, intending’. When the practitioners reach the other end of the walking path, they stop, stand and turn around while closing their eyes. Sometimes, sensations may interrupt during walking meditation such as a headache or a dizzy spell, etc., and then the practitioners should stop and note ‘dizziness’, or ‘headache’. The practitioners react to them as earlier mentioned in sitting meditation. Remember whatever sensations occur in the body, the mind (knowing) and actions must come together on every occasion. The action ‘standing’ should be carried out slowly. The physical movement of the foot in walking meditation has six parts:

Part 1 stepping (stepping left, stepping right)

Part 2 right/left stepping, placing

Part 3 lifting, pushing, placing

Part 4 raising (the heel), lifting (the knee), pushing, placing

Part 5 raising, lifting, pushing, dropping, placing

Part 6 raising, lifting, pushing, dropping, touching (the floor), pressing

The practitioners must follow the whole process of the movement of the foot very attentively, closely and slowly. They can see the walking process of six parts when the mind is subtle with their skill of attention. Beginners should spend time noting Part 1 for two or three days. After that they can go straight to the noting of the next parts. For experienced practitioners, they should spend about five minutes noting Part 1 first and then go to the next steps.

A reason of noting ‘attention’, or ‘wishing’ or ‘wanting’ before changing postures is because every action is the work of bodily and mental processes. The aim of awareness is to realize them in their true nature. Therefore, this meditation is not just for concentration but for realization of mental and physical processes too. This realization is called ‘Vipassanā-nana’, insight knowledge that leads to enlightenment.

General Practices

a. Seeing, Hearing, Smelling, Tasting, Touching

In the process of seeing, there is both mind and form (nāma and rūpa) which exists in reality. At the moment of seeing, the things that actually exist are the eye, the visual object (both material), and seeing (mentality). Therefore, while seeing, do not think what ‘seeing’ is, ‘that which is seen is’ or to see “things.” If you think this way, you have ‘ego’ or self which is a defilement. In reality, seeing comes into being depending on the eye. The eye and seeing (the thing that is seen) are two separate things.

b. Patience

While practicing meditation, pain is one of the general points of contemplation. Pain is unpleasant bodily feeling that many practitioners cannot avoid during contemplation. They may feel many sensations in the body, such as pain, pressure, tension, numbness, feeling cool, feeling hot. They should simply observe these sensations and call them by their names.

Alternatively, the practitioners may observe the associated mental state or emotional feeling that arises with pain until it disappears. They return continuously to observe the pain as it is again – pain, just pain; no person pain.

Alternatively, penetrate into the centre of the pain. It seems more intense and it disappears from view. If it does not disappear from view, do not ‘expect’ it to disappear.

Alternatively, they look at the mental image that arises with pain. Does it have colour, shape, or any characteristics? Note it as seeing or imaging until it disappears.

Lastly, relax or change to a new position. But as a practitioner still note it.

Remember, pain may not go away; it can always come back. The practitioner should see it as their friend. In this way pain will not cause suffering to them. Three parts of the body that must not be noted are the heartbeat, pain in the chest and pain in the head²² because they are our major organs and are part of our survival system. If we note one of these parts when we feel tension, pain never decreases and may cause danger. So, just relax them by noting other parts of the body whenever we feel tension at these three points.

²² Dhammarakkhita, Bhikkhu. “A Successful Retreat or How to Make Progress whilst Retreating”, (Document): 2002.

The Enlightened Path. While the practitioners are engaging in the notice of rising-falling of the abdomen or of stepping, their insight knowledge will gradually grow. At the beginning of the attainment of the first insight, the practitioners will realize that the movement of the body is the working process of *nāma* (mind) and *rūpa* (form). They can see *nāma* and *rūpa* working together. The mind because of intentions precedes the body. This stage is called *namarūpapaticheḍaṅṅāna* (knowledge of the delimitation of mentality and materiality). It is the preparatory stage of enlightenment. The following insights are: to see rising-extinction of *nāma* and *rūpa*, impermanence of *nāma* and *rūpa* (*anicānupassana ñāna*), non-self of *nāma* and *rūpa* (*anattānaupassana ñāna*), and detachment from the Five Aggregates or *nāma* and *rūpa*. Constantly practicing, the mind realizes what defilements are eradicated. A noble one can be expected to emerge.

Chapter 4

BUDDHADĀSA BHIKKHU'S ĀNĀPĀNASATI

Introduction. Buddhadāsa was not only a well-known meditation master, he also worked painstakingly to establish and explain the correct and essential principles of what he called “pristine Buddhism.” He defined this as the original realization of the Lord Buddha before it was buried under commentaries, ritualism, clerical politics and the like. His work was based on extensive research of the Pali texts (Canon and commentary), especially of the Buddha’s Discourses (Sutta Pitaka), as well as his own personal experiment and practice with these teachings. Then he taught whatever he thought would truly quench *dukkha* (dissatisfaction). His goal was to produce a complete set of materials for present and future research and practice. His approach in his books, pamphlets, articles, and talks was always scientific, straight-forward and practical.

His formal education may only have been Grade 9 and Pali Studies Level 3, but he was conferred five Honorary Doctorates by Thai universities. Doctoral dissertations are still being written about him and his spiritual legacy. Books transcribed from his talks as well as his writings that have influenced all serious Thai Buddhists have filled a whole room in the National Library. His teaching and selfless example has gained the support of the progressive elements in the Thai society, especially the young generation. Since the 1960’s, activists and thinkers in areas such as education, ecology, social welfare, and rural development have drawn upon his teaching and advice. Most of the monks involved in nature conservation and community development were inspired by him. It is true to say that Buddhadasa’s instructions provided the link between scriptural tradition and engaged Buddhist practice today.

Buddhadāsa has been honoured as one of the world’s great personalities by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The UNESCO General Conference on October 20, 2005 included the 100th anniversary of the birth of Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu in the UNESCO Calendar of Anniversaries of Great Personalities and Historic Events 2006 and 2007.

This chapter will explain *samatha* practice and *vipassanā* practice. Two books by Buddhādāsa discussed here, *Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā*²³ and *Vipassanā: Short and Direct*²⁴, give a clear picture of his meditation practice.

Biography of the Master

Venerable Buddhādāsa Bhikkhu was born on Sunday 27 April B.E. 2449 (1906) in a business family at Klang Village, Pumriang Subdistrict in Suratthani in southern Thailand. He was named Nguam. His parents were Mr. Sieng and Mrs. Kluan. He has one brother, Yee Kuey, and one sister, Kim Choice. Nguam went forth as a *bhikkhu* (Buddhist monk) at the age of twenty in 1926. His religious name is Indapañño. Venerable Indapañño went to Bangkok to study the Dhamma and the Pali language. In B.E. 2471 (1928) he passed the highest level in Dhamma Studies (Nak Dham-Ek) and in B.E. (1930) he passed three of the nine levels in Pali Studies.

After a few years of study in Bangkok, which convinced him that “purity is not to be found in the big city”, he was inspired to live close to nature in order to investigate the Buddha-Dhamma. During that time, he devoted himself to the practice of meditation along with the study of Buddhist scriptures. In 1932, he established Suan Mokkhabalārām (The Grove of the Power of Liberation) near his hometown of Pumriang (now in Chaya district). At that time, it was the only forest Dhamma Center and one of the few places dedicated to *vipassanā* meditation in southern Thailand. The monk ‘Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu’ (A *bhikkhu* who is a Servant of the Buddha) became known by his works and the Suan Mokkh temple he set up in order to introduce Buddhism to people in the nuclear age. His reputation spread over the years as “easily one of the most influential teachers in the Buddhist history of Siam.”

After the founding of Suan Mokkh, he studied all schools of Buddhism, as well as the other major religious traditions. His interest was practical rather than scholarly. He thought to unite all genuinely religious people in order to work together to help, as he put it, “drag humanity out from under the power of materialism.” This broadmindedness won him friends and students around the world, including Christians, Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs.

²³ Buddhadasa Bhikkhu. *Anapanasati Bhavana*. (Available online): www.buddhanet.net (Access): March 27, 2006

²⁴ พุทธทาส ภิกขุ. วัปปสนาระบบสันลัด (พิมพ์ครั้งที่ 4) กรุงเทพฯ: สุขภาพใจ, 2543

His last project was to establish an International Dhamma Hermitage Centre. This addition to Suan Mokkh is intended to provide facilities for:

- Courses which introduce foreigners to the correct understanding of Buddhist principles and practice
- Meetings among Buddhists from around the world to establish and agree upon the “heart of Buddhism”
- Meetings of leaders from all religions for the sake of increasing mutual understanding and cooperating to drag the world out from under the tyranny of materialism
- He also left instructions for a small monastery in which foreign monks may train as Dhamma-duta (Dhamma missionaries). It now functions under the name “Daun Kiam” or *Suan Atammayatārāma*.
- A similar facility for nuns, Thai and foreign, awaits the women who will make it happen. He called it *Dhamma-Mata*, which means Dhamma Mothers, those who give birth to others through Dhamma)

Buddhadāsa died on 8th July B.E. 2536 (1993). Suan Mokkh continues to exist in the hearts and actions of all those who have been inspired and guided by his example and words. Suan Mokks is not so much a physical place as it is the space of liberation that we all must discover in this very life.

THE PRACTICE OF BUDDHADĀSA BHIKKHU’S ĀNĀPĀNASATI

Sitting Meditation. The practice for sitting meditation that will be discussed here is ‘sitting meditation for *samatha*’ and ‘sitting meditation for *vipassanā*’. Their purposes are different. The first one aims to attain concentration first and then approach *vipassanā*, the latter aims to develop *vipassanā* which is the direct way to enlightenment.

a. Sitting Meditation for Samatha

Practitioners sit up straight and keep the head upright, lay their hands on the lap, comfortably, one on top of the other. Overlap or cross the legs or sit in a comfortable posture. Then direct the eyes towards the tip of the nose so that nothing else is seen. The eyes will close by themselves – when the time comes for them to close – as concentration and calmness (*Samādhi*) increase. Then the practitioners start forcing the breath in and out strongly many times. They do so in order to know clearly where

the breath rubs against or touches as it is drawn in and out along its path. Observe the inner and outer end points of the breathing. Do not be tense or too strict about it. However, most people will feel the breath striking at the tip of the nose, and ending at the navel. The breath will naturally flow back and forth between these two points. Practitioners try to breathe naturally. They should be aware of the two points the whole time when meditating. No matter how long or short the breath is, no matter how heavy or light it is, know it. If they can do this, they can go to the next step.

Next, the practitioners pay attention at a particular point and stop chasing after the breathing path. Now, Sati (awareness) must be consistently watched only at the tip of the nose while inhaling and exhaling. This is called ‘guarding the stage’.

The ability to do this well is the ‘waiting in ambush at one point level of preparation’. The practitioners use their breaths as an object of meditation, which is practiced in the bodily-formation section of the sutra. They must do more and more of this until their minds become calm. They attain concentration and may go on to further practice meditative absorption (*jhāna*) or may go on to practice *vipassanā*. Those who are interested in practicing meditative absorption may study from the book, *Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā*²⁵ by Buddhadasa Bhikkhu.

b. Sitting Meditation for Vipassanā

The practitioners first learn about their breath. They are aware of breathing in and out. In this stage, they develop awareness (*sati*) and control their minds. Practitioners should practice until they can follow the breath steadily and smoothly.

In the next step, they investigate their breaths; refined or unrefined. If the breath is a strong breath, it is unrefined. If it is a smooth breath, it is refined. Other states of the mind such as anger, fear, anxiety, etc. affect the mind and are included in the category of unrefined breath. The practitioners may mentally recite ‘refined’ or ‘unrefined’ as the case may be. The next step investigates ‘Rūpa’ and ‘Nāma’ (form and mental formation). Rūpa in this case is the breath. Nāma is *sati* (awareness) that knows the breath as it flows in and out. While inhaling and exhaling, practitioners clearly know that it is the process of *rūpa* and *nāma*. They may mentally recite ‘Rūpa’ or ‘nāma’ as the case may be. The importance of the practice is that breathing and consciousness of breathing are the working process of *rūpa* and *nāma*.

²⁵ The book is available online at www.buddhanet.net

The next step is to contemplate the Five Aggregates: Form (*rūpa*), Sensory Feeling (*vedanā*), Perception (*saññā*), Mental Formation (*sankhārā*) and Consciousness (*vinñāna*). In the exercise, the practitioners may mentally recite ‘form’, ‘feeling’, ‘perception’, ‘mental formation’, and ‘consciousness’ as the case may be. The Five Aggregates are also grouped into *rūpa* and *nāma*.

Rūpa = the breath

Nāma = feeling, perception, mental-formation, and consciousness

In this stage, practitioners understand *rūpa* and *nāma* better along with realizing the reality of their lives as the components of the Five Aggregates or *rūpa* and *nāma*.

The next stage is to contemplate ‘rising’ and ‘extinction’ of *rūpa* and *nāma*. In this stage, the practitioners realize that the body consists of two main functions, namely *rūpa* and *nāma*. This realization comes as a result of the practice of the previous stage.

Rūpa = (Breath) practitioners may feel the breath as long or short or only breath moving in and out through the body (like the air stream goes through a hole inwards and backwards). This phenomenon may rise and then become extinct with each breath. They are aware of it and mentally recite ‘rising’ or ‘extinction’ as the case may be.

Nāma = (Feeling, Perception, Mental Formation and Consciousness). If any one of those occur, practitioners contemplate on it and mentally recite ‘rising’ or ‘extinction’ as the case may be.

The next stage is to contemplate the reality of ‘Characteristics in all Things’; impermanence and non-self. After skillfully contemplating the ‘arising’ and ‘extinction’, practitioners realize that the fact of the arising-extinction stage is actually impermanence. Then they see and contemplate this state and mentally recite ‘impermanence’. They realize the Five Aggregates as impermanence in the mind. The important thing in this stage is that the practitioners can clearly see the difference of the breath as breathing in either long or short. After that the practitioners contemplate the Five Aggregates as non-self (*anattā*) thus: We (the Five Aggregates) are impermanent because of our lack of control to keep things permanent or to be neither this nor that as we wish. Therefore, we (the Five Aggregates) are also Non-Self.

Rūpa = the breath, whether it is in long and out short, in short and out long, refined and unrefined, etc. there is no person except the breath. Therefore, it is non-self.

Nāma = human beings in abstract terms are mind, feeling, perception, mental formation, and consciousness. Human beings cannot assume they are permanent as persons or selves. Among the Five Aggregates, the one that is most difficult to contemplate is ‘feeling’. If practitioners can contemplate it as impermanence with deep acceptance in their minds, their practice is very advanced.

At this stage it is easy for the practitioners to contemplate the non-self state in the Five Aggregates. While contemplating them as non-self, the practitioners mentally recite ‘non-self’.

The next stage contemplates ‘Fading Away, Cessation and Relinquishment’. After contemplating the non-self phenomenon, practitioners feel a fading away in everything, especially the Five Aggregates. The mind that has always clung to the Five Aggregates becomes less and less clinging. Practitioners are aware of this state and mentally recite ‘fading away’. While practitioners continuously contemplate the ‘fading away’ state in the Five Aggregates, the mind ceases to attach to the Five Aggregates (*rūpa* and *nāma*). They may mentally recite ‘ceasing, ceasing’. Afterwards, they reach the stage of ‘relinquishment’ of defilements and may mentally recite ‘relinquishment.’ Continuously, they deepen their practice leading to becoming noble ones.

Walking Meditation.

Walking Meditation has two purposes: walking meditation for *samatha* and for *vipassanā*. This explanation concentrates on the latter. However, the technique of how to walk is the same for both.

Primary Stage

- Step 1 Awareness of stepping forward on the right foot (*stepping right*) and then stepping forward on the left foot (*stepping left*)
- Step 2 Awareness of *raising* right/left, *pushing* right /left and *placing* right/left

Intermediate Stage

- Step 1 Awareness of *lifting* (the heel), *pushing*, *dropping* and *touching*
- Step 2 Awareness of *lifting* (the heel), *raising* (the leg), *pushing*, *dropping*
and *placing*

Advanced Stage

- Step 1 Awareness of *raising*, *lifting* (the leg), *pushing*, *dropping*, *touching* and
pressing
- Step 2 Awareness of raising (the heel), *lifting* (the leg), *pushing*, *dropping*,
touching (the floor), *placing* and *pressing*

Before changing postures for the next steps, the practitioners should skillfully practice each stage. Why are there so many steps? Each stage manifests in the mind. If the practitioners can practice the immediate and advanced stage, they get a subtle mind and a calm mind. They, then, can see the whole process of walking. The practitioners, therefore, should walk slowly and mindfully. Beginners should follow the primary stage until they are more skillful.

a. Walking Meditation Technique for Samatha

The key exercise is mindfulness in walking. The purpose of walking in many steps is to prevent thought or stop thinking and calming the mind. Whenever practitioners reach the one-pointedness meditation, they should stop and let it go naturally.

b. Walking Meditation for Vipassanā

The way of walking for *vipassanā* is the same as the walking technique for *samatha*. Beginners should practice the primary stage until they are skillful in walking. The purpose of walking meditation for *vipassanā* is to develop wisdom. Below are some techniques to develop wisdom.

Practitioners should keep in mind that walking is a process involving *rūpa* and *nāma*. The practitioners are aware of walking by contemplating and investigating what is *rūpa* and *nāma* all the time.

Rūpa = walking movements

Nāma = consciousness of walking; occurrence of feeling (pain, happiness, unhappiness, etc.); perception on how to walk along the meditation path; and thinking anything that happens during walking.

Practitioners investigate these until their minds accept the facts. They see themselves as a working process of *rūpa* and *nāma*. Then they move to the next stage.

Rising and vanishing of *rūpa* and *nāma* during walking. At this stage, the practitioners can see *nāma* and *rūpa* as rising and vanishing all the time. Then, they move to the next stage.

Impermanent state (aniccā). When practitioners observe the rising and vanishing of *nāma* and *rūpa*, they then observe *nāma* and *rūpa* as impermanence. It is rather easy for one who has realized the state of *nāma* and *rūpa* before. They know that *nāma* and *rūpa* arise, survive for a moment and vanish at the end and are therefore regarded as impermanent. The practitioners see the truth until it is deeply accepted in their heart while walking along the path in meditation. Afterwards they move to the next stage.

Non-self state (anattā). When practitioners realize the impermanent state, they then further contemplate the non-self state. In this last state, they realize the impermanent state of *rūpa* (physical phenomena) and *nāma* (mental phenomena) as impermanence. Also, impermanence is regarded as non-self. Thus, they see the body that we assumed as “person”, “self”, or “I”, as non-self. At this stage it is easy for those who attained the past stages to investigate the impermanent state as a non-self state of things. The practitioners investigate the impermanent state as a non-self state of things until it is deeply accepted in their minds while walking along the path in meditation. They then move to the next stage.

Fading away, cessation and relinquishment. When the practitioners realize the non-self state, they continue the practice. They may hold the Non-Self state lightly leading to fading away, ceasing and relinquishing. At this point, it may be said that the mind has reached a state of equanimity in *rūpa* and *nāma* (the Five Aggregates) in the world. Some defilements can be eradicated at this stage. They become a noble one.

To sum up, when practitioners realize *rūpa-nāma*, impermanence, non-self, fading away, cessation, and relinquishment, whether sitting or walking, they can see these states all the time. The meditation for enlightenment is going on by itself both day and night. Their path goes forth to *nibbāna*.

The Enlightenment Path

The *rūpa-nāma* state is the primary sign of enlightenment. The practitioners continuously follow the above instruction in the ‘Vipassanā Practice’. The path to enlightenment is explained in the Sixteen Knowledges of Insight (*ñāna*). Buddhādāsa Bhikkhu summarized the Sixteen Knowledges of Insight into two kinds, namely, *dhammatthiti-ñāna* (the knowledge of comprehending the actual happening of things), and *nibbāna-ñāna* (the knowledge realizing *nibbāna*). The *dhammatthiti-ñāna* starts from ‘Analytical Knowledge of Body and Mind’ leading up to attaining the impermanent and non-self state. And the *nibbāna-ñāna* begins with ‘fading away, cessation and relinquishment’. This *ñāna* deals with *nibbāna* and helps practitioners attain *nibbāna*. They will become a Noble One.

Buddhādāsa stated in his *Nibbāna for Everyone*²⁶ that *nibbāna* is the highest goal of living beings. Everyone must study it throughout their lives because *nibbāna* is inseparable from one’s life. In the study of *nibbāna*, Buddhādāsa advises us to see *nibbāna* in the nature surrounding us. Nature teaches us about *nibbāna* all the time.

The study of *nibbāna* in daily life is possible in order to have a better understanding of and a greater interest in *nibbāna*’s meaning. When seeing a fire go out or something cooling down, look for the meaning of *nibbāna* in it. When bathing or drinking ice water, when a breeze blows or rain falls, take notice of the meaning of *nibbāna*. Whenever a fever subsides, a swelling goes down, or a headache goes away, recognize the meaning of *nibbāna* as found in spiritual deathlessness. If one sees this fact, they will personally experience that we can survive only through this kind of *nibbāna*. We do not survive just because of the rice and food that so infatuates people.

²⁶ Buddhadasa. *Nibbana for Everyone*. <http://www.saigon.com/~anson/ebud/ebdha013.htm/> (10/28/2004)

...When perspiring, sleeping comfortably, or eating one's fill, see the meaning of *nibbāna*. When seeing an animal with all its fierceness and danger tamed away, see the meaning of *nibbāna* in every moment. The mind will regularly incline towards contentment in *nibbāna* and this helps the mind to flow more easily along the path of *nibbāna*.

In the above quote, Buddhādāsa initially explains to us and helps us understand and see the importance of *nibbāna*. *Nibbāna* is important to human beings in daily life. It cannot be separated from our lives. And *nibbāna* is not just about the passing away of the Buddhas or arahants. By contrast, *nibbāna* is the essence of our life. We cannot live without *nibbāna*. In order to encourage us to understand *nibbāna* as one part of our lives, Buddhādāsa pointed out to us to see the importance of *nibbāna* in our daily life thus:

Whenever you feel coolness in your experience, mark that coolness firmly in your heart, and breathe in and out. Breathing in is cool, breathing out is cool. In cool, out cool – do this for a little while. This is an excellent lesson that will help you to become a lover of *nibbāna* (*nibbānakama*) more quickly. The consciousness will develop in an enlightened way more than if you do not practice like this. Naturally *nibbāna* – the unconscious quenching of defilement – will occur more often and easily. This is the best way to help nature (understand and study *nibbāna*).

In conclusion, the last expression about *nibbāna*²⁷ by Buddhādāsa Bhikkhu that he left in his notebook in the hospital before he died is given here:

Nibbāna in a Direct, Broad & Most Concise Sense:

*“state” that is without anything oppressive or harmful,
(both physically and mentally, both oneself and others)*

“state” that is without anything to be suffered or endured,

²⁷ It is available online on <http://www.suanmokkh.org/archive/nbools/nb-nibb1.htm>

whether physically, mentally or spiritually.

*“state that is without any dukkha,
both directly, and secretly-profoundly*

*cool: the quenching of heat
however many levels, however many kinds*

Why is the Way to Nibbāna So Long?

*Simply because the stupidity (avijjā) in our
heads is so long.*

*Just try to shrink the length of the stupidity in our
own heads*

*so that it shortens, the way to nibbāna will shorten
all by itself.*

*Shrink avijjā by genuinely and increasingly studying
impermanence, dukkha-ness (unsatisfactoriness),
and not-self, including also suññatā (emptiness of
one’s-self) and tathatā (suchness) the way to
nibbāna will shorten with a doubt!*

*As soon as one sees the luminous mind, temporary
Nibbāna*

*manifests bit by bit. Once realizing tathatā, nibbāna
is here and now.*

Chapter 5

DYNAMIC MEDITATION

Introduction. Dynamic Meditation²⁸ is a well known meditation technique introduced by Luangpor Teean (1911-1988), an important teacher of Buddhism in Thailand. As the term implies, his technique can be characterized as “dynamic” in contrast to the more conventional methods of “static” meditation. The Thai meditation master expounded the goal of Buddhist meditation with an unsurpassed vividness and authenticity that makes it unique among the various schools of contemporary Buddhism.

Dynamic Meditation is a kind of *vipassanā* practice that mainly uses bodily movements in every position as a foundation to develop awareness (*sati*). This awareness can overcome thoughts or mental images that are the cause of suffering. Once awareness achieves domination over thought and mental images, it simultaneously overcomes attraction, resistance, delusion and hence suffering. The story of Luangpor Teean’s life itself is interesting in that he attained the state of enlightenment while he was a layman.

Biography of the Master. The fifth child of Chin and Som Inthaphiu, Luangpor Teean was born on September 5, 1911, at Buhom, a small village in the remote province of Loei in the northeastern region of Thailand. His given name was Phan. He has four brothers and one sister. His father died when he was still very young. There were no schools in the area, and Phan received no formal education. However, at the age of 10, he was ordained a novice at the local monastery where his uncle, Yakhuphong Chansuk, was a resident monk. Diligent, obedient, and devout, Phan spent eighteen months there studying ancient Buddhist scripts, meditation and magic before he disrobed to return to his home. Later, following the tradition, he was

²⁸ Tavivat Puntarugvivat. *The Dhammic Practices of Luangpor Teean, a Thai Meditation Master*. http://www.baus.org/sati/luangpor_teean_-t.htm
To One that Feels. http://baus.org/sati/to_one_that_feels.htm
Visit also: Anchali Thaiyanond. *Against the Stream of Thought*.
http://www.baus.org/sati/against_the_stream_of_thought.htm

ordained as a monk at the age of 20, studying and meditating with his uncle, for a period of six months. His interest in meditation, fuelled by a deep faith in the Buddha's teachings, continued to grow and he practiced regularly.

About two years after returning to lay life, Phan Inthaphiu married. He and his wife, Hom, had three sons: Niam, Teean, and Triam. After the eldest died at the age of 5, Phan became known as "Por Teean" (father of Teean) in accordance with the local tradition of calling a parent by the name of the eldest living child. Later, he moved to Chiangkhan, in the same province, where he became a successful trader, sailing in his own boat along the Mekhong river between Thailand and Laos. During these years he met several meditation teachers and practiced the methods they taught him. Thus, his enthusiasm for pursuing Dhamma continued to strengthen. By the time he had reached his mid-40s, however, he came to the realization that his many years of making merit, avoiding "sin", and practicing meditation had not liberated him from anger, and so he decided that it was time for him to commit himself fully to seeking the Dhamma. And so, at the age of 46, after arranging for his wife's well being and economic security and settling his business affairs, Por Teean left his home, firmly determined not to return unless he found the true Dhamma.

Por Teean travelled to Wat Rangsimukdaram, in Nongkhai province, where he decided to spend the rapidly approaching three-month monastic retreat (*phansā*). There he met a Laotian meditation teacher who taught him a form of body-moving meditation, where each movement and the pause at the end of the movement was accompanied by the silent recitation of the words "moving-stopping". Having practiced many forms of meditation over the preceding thirty-five years, all involving concentration on breathing – and also, in the most cases inner recitation – he had only obtained transitory calmness. He therefore decided to abandon such techniques and instead to only practice body-moving meditation, but without inner recitation.

This he did throughout the whole of the following day, practicing in accord with nature, remaining energetic and at ease. On the third day of his practice at Wat Ransimukdaram in Nongkhai province, while he was sitting and moving his arms in meditation, a sudden knowledge occurred in his mind: instead of experiencing himself as he always did, he now understood *rūpa-nāma* (body-mind).

By evening Por Teean's awareness was sufficiently continuous and fast so that he began to "see", rather than merely know, thought. Thought was "seen" as soon as it arose, and it immediately stopped. Practicing in this way, he soon penetrated to the

source of thought and realization arose. His mind changed fundamentally. Por Teean was now independent of both scriptures and teachers. As he continued to practice that day, his mind was changed step by step. In later years, much of his teaching would be concerned with the details of the steps and stages through which the mind progressed on its way to the ending of suffering.

Later that evening a deeper realization arose, and his mind changed for the second time. Early, the next morning, the 11th day of the waxing moon (July 8, 1957), as he walked in meditation, his realization went even deeper, and his mind changed for the third time. Soon afterwards he attained the state of arising-extinguishing of the mind. “I have died to filth, wickedness, sorrow, darkness, and drowsiness, but I am still alive,” he explained.

It was as a layman that Por Teean held his first meditation retreat open to the public at Buhom, his hometown. He spent his own money to feed the thirty to forty people who attended the retreat. Thereafter, he devoted all his energy and wealth to teaching people.

Since he felt a responsibility to teach what he called the Dhamma of “an instant” to as wide a circle as possible, after two years and eight months as a lay teacher, Por Teean entered the monkhood, at the age of 48, in order to be in a better position to teach.

On February 3, 1960, he was ordained a monk at Wat Srikhunmuang in his hometown by a senior monk named Vajitdhammacariya. At his ordination he was given the Pali name “Cittasubho” (the brilliant mind), but people continued to call him “Luangpor Teean” (Venerable Father Teean). He was known by that name throughout the rest of his life.

Luangpor Teean had been in poor health for some time when in the 1983 he was diagnosed as suffering from cancer. Despite extensive major surgery for malignant lymphoma later that year, he required surgery again in 1986. Despite repeated courses of radiation therapy and chemotherapy, Luangpor Teean was able to achieve an extraordinary amount of work in his last five years. He gave public talks, led meditation retreats, and provided personal guidance. He built his final meditation centre at Thapmingkhwan in the town of Loei in 1983 and added Ko Phutthatham, a large nearby area, to it in 1986. He taught actively and incisively until the disease reached its advanced stages.

When he realized that the end was near, Luangpor Teean discharged himself from the hospital and returned to Ko Phutthatham in Loei province. Late in the afternoon on his fifth day back in Loei he announced that he was now going to die. He then turned his awareness completely inward; his wasted body which had been so stiff and brittle, became fully relaxed and fluid; and fully aware, unattached, holding to nothing, not even the breath, an hour later (at 6:15 p.m. on September, 1988) his breathing ceased like a tree coming to rest as the wind that moved it fades completely away.

The Teaching of Luangpor Teean

Luangpor Teean said that thought is the cause of human suffering. Anger-delusion-greed-defilement-craving-attachment all appear in a form of thought. So practitioners must be aware of their movement all the time and see thought every time it arises. This is awareness of body and mind.

Everybody can practice this dynamic meditation, irrespective of nationality, religion, sex or age, monks or laypersons, because everybody has body and mind. Everybody can get to the end of suffering. Whether practitioners observe the precepts or not, it does not matter, as far as they see their mind all the time. The precepts will be observed automatically. When one sees his mind all times, one will do, speak and think only the right things.

One should practice developing awareness all the time to have continuous awareness. It does not matter if you are standing, walking, sitting or lying down, including minor movements. One can practice developing awareness all day during his daily life, whenever the body moves. One does not close the eyes, nor stay still. The movement of the body is mainly used to develop awareness. One does not have to do rhythmic practice in a sitting posture every time; one may do something else, such as walking meditation, moving the hands up and down, rubbing the fingers, moving the feet, blinking the eyes, etc.

Developing awareness only will lead you to achieve liberating knowledge (Pañña) from a clean, calm and clear mind. Pañña will release you from suffering. Avijja will be replaced by Sati-Pañña. You will have feeling-perception-mental formations-consciousness that does not suffer anymore.

The Method of Developing Sati

The Rhythmic Practice in a Sitting Position:

1. Rest the hands, palm down, on the thighs
2. Turn the right hand onto its edge, be aware, and stop
3. Raise the right hand, be aware, and stop
4. Lower the right hand to rest on the abdomen, be aware, and stop
5. Turn the left hand, onto its edge, be aware, and stop
6. Raise the left hand, be aware, and stop
7. Lower the left hand to rest on the abdomen, be aware, and stop
8. Move the right hand up to rest on the chest, be aware, and stop
9. Move the right hand out, be aware, and stop
10. Lower the right hand to the thigh, be aware, and stop
11. Turn the right hand down, be aware, and stop
12. Move the left hand up to the chest, be aware, and stop
13. Move the left hand out, be aware, and stop
14. Lower the left hand to the thigh, be aware, and stop
15. Turn the left hand down, be aware, and stop

While doing rhythmic practice, practitioners do not close their eyes and do not recite any word. Do not pay strong attention to the feeling. Take it easy. Do not be serious or expect any achievement.

Walking Meditation

Walking Meditation is to walk back and forth with awareness – a length of eight to twelve paces. Do not move the arms. Fold the arms across the chest, or clasp the hands behind the back. Be aware of the foot's movement as you are walking, but do not concentrate on the movement.

You do not close your eyes for developing awareness; you must be aware of both body and mind. You have to know/to feel the movement of the body and to see thought as it arises. Whenever the body moves, be aware of the movement immediately and continuously. Whenever thought or any object arises, know it/see it every time. This is the meaning of awareness of body and mind. Developing awareness does not resist any thought, but on the contrary, the mind is wide open to

face everything bravely. Thought is free to arise, but you always have to know it, to see it, and to understand it with mindfulness.

Developing Sati in Daily Life

When we get on a bus or boat and are seated properly, we turn the palms up. We turn the palms down. We move the hand, or stretch the hand, or run the thumb over the fingertips. Be aware of the movement of blinking eyes, breathing, swallowing saliva. It is the way to have awareness – return to oneself. When thought arises, be aware of it, and detach from it.

Dynamic Meditation and Satipatthāna

Dynamic Meditation is related to “the Four Foundations of Mindfulness” (Satipatthāna) as follows:

1. To be aware of all the movements of the body, such as doing rhythmic practice or walking back and forth with awareness. This is *Kāyānupassanā*.
2. Having total awareness of body and mind, the mind will be steady. One will achieve neither pleasant nor painful feeling (Upekkhā-vedanā). This is *Vedānanupassanā*.
3. With total awareness of body-mind one can see the mind and thought every time it arises. This is *Cittānupassanā*.
4. Having total awareness of body and mind, one will achieve steadiness of mind (Samāthi). Pañña will arise in this state of mind. One can be released from suffering by Pañña, as one understands the law of nature. This is *Dhammānupassanā*.

Having active and continuous awareness, one will see thought as soon as it arises. One will see the source of thought which is the cause of suffering. One will attain the state of *Koet-Dap* (arising-extinguishing) of the mind, the state of enlightenment.

The external sense-fields cannot contact the internal sense-fields anymore. It is the extinction of suffering in *Paticcasamupabada* (dependent co-arising).

The Enlightened Path

Luangpor Teean summarized the “object of practice” in dynamic meditation as follows:

Stage 1: Suppositional Object

Rūpa-nāma (body-mind)

Rūpa-acting, nāma-acting, rūpa-disease, nāma disease

Dukkham-aniccam-anattā (unbearable-unstable-uncontrollable)

Sammati (supposition)

Sāsana (religion), Buddhasāsana (Buddhism)

Pāpa (sin), punña (merit)

Stage 2: Touchable Object

Vatthu-paramattha-ākāra

(seeing-touching the changing object with the mind)

Dosa-moha-lobha

(anger-delusion-greed)

Vedanā-saññā-sankhārā-viññāna

(feeling-perception-mental formation-consciousness)

Kilesa-tanhā-upādāna-kamma

(stickiness-heaviness-attachment-action)

Sīla (normality)

Sīla khandha-samādhikhandha-pannakhandha

(Container of normality-of steady mind-of liberating knowledge)

Samatha (concentration) and vipassanā (insight) types of calmness

Kāmāsava-bhavāsava-avijjāsava

The taint of sensuality, being, not knowing)

The results of bad bodily, verbal, and mental actions, and their combination

The results of good bodily, verbal, and mental actions, and their combination;

The state of *Koet-Dap* (arising-extinguishing) of the mind.

The “object of practice” in dynamic meditation is a series of experiences by which the mind progresses step by step towards the end of suffering. These experiences are those – inner as well as physical – discovered by Luangpor Teean. They now serve as guideposts for the practitioners of dynamic meditation.

Chapter 6

VIJJĀ DHAMMAKĀYA

Introduction

Venerable Chao Khun Phramongkol Thepmuni (Sod Chantasaro) is the founder of Vijjā Dhammakāya²⁹. In 1916 he attained a high stage of enlightenment after seriously practicing this method of meditation. He said that Vijjā Dhammakāya had been lost sometime during the first five hundred years after the passing away of the Buddha. The Venerable rediscovered this method and after introduced it, later called what he attained Vijjā Dhammakāya. This technique is based on the Four Foundations of Mindfulness (Mahā Satipathāna 4) and leads the practitioner directly along the path to enlightenment by combining Samatha (Concentration) and Vipassanā (Insight Meditation). This method can produce a supernatural power which is very helpful to practitioners of this school who seek enlightenment.

Biography of the Master

The Master of Vijjā Dhammakāya is popularly known as Luangpor Sod (Venerable Father Sod). He was born on October 10, 1884 to a rice merchant family in Supanburi Province. He was named Sod and was the second child of Mr. Ngern and Mrs. Sudjai Meekaewnoi. As was typical in those days, the young boy received his education in the temple. At the age of twenty-two in July 1906, he was ordained a Bhikkhu at Wat Songpeenong near his home. He was given the Buddhist name of Candasaro by his main preceptor, Venerable Phra Ajahn Dee of Wat Pratusarn, Supanburi. Candasaro Bhikkhu followed his keen interest in meditation practice and the study of Pali scriptures, and soon became known for excellent knowledge in both. After ten years of ordination, having deeply understood the Buddhist scriptures and the principle of meditation practice, his name spread as an informed scholar of Buddhism and strict meditation monk. During the Buddhist Lent in his twelfth year of ordination he lived at Wat Bang Khoo Vieng when he prepared himself on the full moon day of September for meditation in the Uposatha and vowed not to rise from his seat in front of the Buddha statue until he was permitted to attain some understanding

²⁹ This chapter was revised by Ven. Phra Rajanāvisitha, abbot of Wat Luangporsod Dhammakayaram.

of the Dhamma as discerned by the Buddha. The Dhamma appeared in the centre of his body, two finger-breadths above the navel. He was able to penetrate the full depth of the Dhamma as it was revealed to and by the Buddha. Luangpor then made a vow dedicating his life to Buddhism and devoted himself totally to meditation practice. After discovering *Vijjā Dhammakāya*, he introduced and taught the technique for the next 45 years. Now *Vijjā Dhammakāya* is practiced widely in Thailand and abroad. Luangpor Sod died on February 3, 1959 at the age of seventy-five, at Wat Paknam which is presently a centre of meditation practice and Pali studies.

The Practice of *Vijjā Dhammakāya*

Samatha meditation aims at concentration to remove the *Five Hindrances*. Lord Buddha taught forty meditation devices. *Vijjā Dhammakāya* utilizes three of these simultaneously, focussed at the centre of the body. They are visualization of the light object (*aloka kasina*), repetition of *sammā arahang*, and mindfulness of breathing or *Ānāpānasati*. Luang Por Wat Paknam taught how to use these techniques to bring the mind inward to rest at the centre of the body. Here you can see your own true nucleus or Dhamma where the results of *Right Action*, *Right Speech* and *Right Thought* can be observed.

Continuing to concentrate and purify your mind at the centre of the centre, you can pass through eighteen internal body-minds until you reach the non-compound *Dhammakāya* and temporarily attain *nibbāna*. In this state you can see *nibbāna* and Lord Buddha who resides in *nibbāna*.

Sitting Meditation

Sit in a regular meditation posture, cross-legged as seen in some images of the Buddha, with the right leg resting on the left. The right hand rests on the left, palms turned upwards, right index finger just touching the left thumb. The body is upright and the mind fully alert. Take a deep breath and relax the body until you feel comfortable. Close your eyelids lightly, do not press them.

In basic *samatha vipassanā* practice, two aids are used:

- Repetitive words (*parikamma-bhāvanā*)
- An object of visualization (*parikamma-nimitta*)

The repetitive words are *Sammā Arahang* and the object of visualization is a bright, clear luminous sphere. Using these aids, we shall draw the mind inward along the path to the centre of the body. Such concentration allows the mind components of vision, memory, thought and awareness to come together into oneness or *ekaggatāramanā*.

Position 1: The Nostril Aperture

Concentrate your mind and visualize until there exists a vision of the bright and clear sphere. Let the sphere appear at your nostril, for ladies at the left nostril and for gentlemen at the right nostril. Fix your attention and rest your mind at the centre of the sphere. This is a bright and clear spot, the size of a grain of sand or needle point. Repeat the words “*sammā arahang*” mentally three times to sustain the bright and clear sphere at the nostril. This is the first position at which your mind is focused.

Position 2: The Eye Socket

Next, mentally move the bright, clear sphere slowly up to rest at the eye socket – ladies to your left eye socket and gentlemen to your right eye socket. While you are moving the sphere with your mind, fix your attention always to the small bright centre of the sphere. As the sphere rests at your eye socket, repeat mentally the words “*sammā arahang*” three times. This is the second position.

Position 3: The Centre of the Head

Mentally shift the sphere slowly to the centre of your head in line with the eyes. Keep the mind constantly fixed at the bright centre of the luminous sphere. Repeat to yourself the words “*sammā arahang*” three times to keep the sphere as bright and clear as you can, so that it shines and remains in that position. This is the third position.

Position 4: The Palate Terminus

Roll your eyeballs upwards without lifting your head, so that your vision will turn back and inside. Meanwhile, mentally move the luminous and transparent sphere slowly and directly downward toward the palate. Recite to yourself the words “*sammā arahang*” three times, to make the sphere even brighter and clearer, and hold it there. This is the fourth position.

Position 5: The Throat Aperture

Mentally move the bright, clear sphere slowly and directly downward to rest at the throat aperture. Repeat the words “*sammā arahang*” to yourself three times, to keep the sphere bright and clear and hold it steady. This is the fifth position.

Position 6: Centre of the Body

Next, slowly move the clear, luminous sphere directly downward, while keeping your attention focused on the bright nucleus at its centre. Bring the sphere to rest at the centre of the body, where the breath ends, even with the navel. This is the sixth position. Mentally recite the words “*sammā arahang*” three times to keep the transparent sphere bright and luminous, and to hold it steady.

Position 7: Position of the Sphere

Now shift the sphere directly upward about two finger widths above the navel. This is the centre of the body and the seventh position. This is the mind’s permanent resting place. Whenever a person or any other creature is born, dies, sleeps or awakens, the *Dhamma Sphere* which governs the body arises from this position. The *Dhamma Sphere* is composed of the *Vision Sphere*, the *Memory Sphere*, the *Thought Sphere*, and the *Awareness Sphere*. During Meditation the *Dhamma Sphere* appears to float from the sixth position up to the seventh position. The seventh position is also considered to be the centre of the body.

Keep the bright, clear sphere resting at the centre of the body in the seventh position. Mentally recite the words “*sammā arahang*” continuously to keep the sphere still and make it become brighter and clearer. Concentrate so that the sphere shines continuously. Focus your mind on the bright centre of the sphere, and at the bright centre of each successive sphere that emerges. Pay no attention to any external sensation. Let your mind delve deeper and deeper into the successive centres as you recite the *parikamma-bhāvanā*, “*sammā arahang*”. Even if ants are climbing all over you or mosquitoes are flying all around, pay no heed. Don’t even pay attention to following the breath.

Bring your mind to rest at the centre of the centre, by envisioning a bright sphere. Your mind should rest steadily and continuously at the centre of the sphere. Do no force your mind too strongly. Over exerting the mind will cause a shift in your meditation and the mind will no be able to see.

Do not use your physical eyes to focus on the vision. The practice is only for your mind. Gently train your mind to see the bright, clear, steady sphere. Mentally observe and focus on the bright clear centre. Concentrate on the centre of each consecutive sphere that emerges from the preceding one. Do no wander to the left, right, front, rear, top or bottom. Always focus on the centre of each new sphere which emerges from the bright shining centre. Rest the mind there.

As the mind components of vision, memory, thought and awareness are drawn into oneness, they come to rest at the same centre of the body. The meditator will notice a gradual decrease in response to external sensations. With proper concentration, the mind will fall back to the sixth position.

Then, a bright clear sphere will emerge at the seventh position. The sphere may be the size of an egg-yolk. Smaller ones may look like a star in the sky. Large spheres may be as big as the sun or the moon. This is the sphere of *pathama-magga*, the preliminary sign of concentration. It is the first step towards the path (*magga*), fruit (*pala*), and *nibbāna*. This is also known as the Dhamma Sphere, which makes the human body possible.

When this luminous and clear sphere appears, do not be overjoyed or over-react. If you do, the concentration (*samādhi*) could loosen and the sphere might disappear. Keep your mind evenly calm in equanimity (*upekkhā*).

Hold the mind still, without repeating the parikamma-bhavana (“*sammā arahang*”). Once the sphere of *pathama-magga* is perceived, there is no need to continue this mental recitation.

Concentrate the mind at the small, luminous, clear centre of the *pathama-magga* sphere. Five smaller spheres will appear within this sphere. One is concentric at the centre. The others are in front, at the right, left, and behind, respectively.

These small spheres are the refined centres of the basic elements. In front is the water element, controlling fluids in bodily functions. To the right is the earth element, controlling solid parts. To the back lies the fire element dealing with the body’s temperature and heat. To the left is the wind element, controlling internal movements of gases. At the centre is the space element, controlling the various gaps within the body. In the centre of the space element is the cognitive element and *vinnanadhatu* which controls consciousness. Four thin bright, clear lines connect each of the circumferential spheres to the central sphere.

The *pathama-magga* sphere will appear as reflecting the physical, verbal, and mental purification of the meditator. When the mind is at rest, concentrated at the seventh position, it allows all six refined elements to come into unison at this seventh position, the centre, where the original *dhātu-dhamma* was generated.

Once this *pathama-magga* sphere can be observed, concentrate further at the centre of the clear, luminous sphere. When the mind is still and in the right mode, the centre will expand, giving rise in its place to a new, more luminous, clear and refined

sphere of moral conduct (sīla). Through this sphere, we can refine physical, verbal and mental deeds more effectively and on a deeper level than through common morality. This is the pure sila of kammahan and can be regarded as adhisila or higher (purer) morality. When the mind can remain permanently in the centre of this Sila Sphere, the physical, verbal and mental activities and their intentions will always be clean and pure. Higher morality (adhisila) goes together with higher mind (adhicitta), higher wisdom (adhipanya), emancipation (vimutti), and insight (vimutti-nānādassana) or vision of truth from emancipation.

As the mind stays at rest, still and concentrated further into the centre of the sphere of sila, and in the right mode, the centre of the sphere will keep on expanding and in its place will appear a new, more luminous, clear and refined sphere of Samādhi. This further refines physical, verbal, and mental activities. When the mind rests still and deep in Samādhi at this stage, it will destroy the Five Hindrances to the attainment of goodness: lust, malice, anxiety, sloth and doubt about practice. This is the commencement of the first state of absorption (pathama-jhāna). The mind is now gentle enough for insight practice (vipassanā) to develop the wisdom (panyā) to know correctly and clearly the Truth of the Dhamma. Hence, it is called the adhicitta or higher mind.

Concentrate further and rest still at the centre of the centre of the Sphere of Samādhi. With the mind at rest, still, and in the right mode, the previous centre will expand and a new, more luminous, clear Sphere of Panya will appear in its place.

Similarly, with the mind resting still, concentrated at the centre of the Panya Sphere, the Sphere of Vimutti (emancipation) emerges. Let the mind adhere to the centre of the Vimutti Sphere, keeping it always luminous and clear. This will destroy the crude desires belonging to human beings such as greed, vengeance and wrong point-of-view.

Hold your mind at rest in the centre of the centre of the Vimutti Sphere. When the mind is in the right mode, the Sphere of Vimutti-Ñānadassana will appear. Concentrate the mind further, resting still at the centre of the centre of the Vimutti-Ñānadassana Sphere.

With the right mode of mind, the centre will expand and a Refined Human Form or Panita-Manussakaya will emerge from the centre. This refined Human Form appears identical to the meditator, but is finer than the ordinary form. It sits in the regular meditation posture, facing the same direction as the meditator.

In some cases, a clear crystal Buddha appears with a crown of budding lotus. The Buddha is beautiful, pure and perfect. This is Dhammakāya.

Continue to repeat the same procedure for further mental purification through subsequent spheres and kāya. Whenever there arises a more refined body, detach your feeling from the present body and assume or become the new refined one. Concentrate your attention at the centre until the spheres of dhamma, sīla, samādhi, panya, vimutti and vimutti-ñānadassana are observed. The rūpabrahmakāya appears next, then panita-rūpabrahmakāya . Next comes arūpabrahmakāya, followed by arūpabrahmakāya.

Whatever refined form (panita-kāya) is observed, concentrate with all your mind to assume or become such a form (kāya). As the centres of all kayas are concentric, the mind is now right at the centre of the new kaya. Concentrate until both the sphere and the kaya are bright and clear. The mind now rests still at the centre of the nucleus of the new sphere, so that it is all bright and clear. As new spheres are observed, proceed in the same manner as before through the new spheres of sīla, samādhi, panya, vimutti, and vimutti-ñānadassana.

The mind now rests still at the centre of the small bright nucleus of the sphere of vimutti-ñānadassana. Then the nucleus will expand and a new refined form (panita-kāya) will be observed. Dibbakāya arises. When the refined body, panita-dibbakāya arises, detach all your feeling from the present body to assume or become the newly refined one. Concentrate all your attention at the centre until the spheres of dhamma, sīla, samādhi, panya, vimutti, and vimutti-ñānadassana are observed successively.

Dhammakāya-Gotrabhu

Continue to repeat the same procedure for further mental purification through subsequent spheres and kayas. Whenever there arises a more refined body, detach your feelings from the present body and assume or become the new refined one: Concentrate your attention at the centre until the spheres of dhamma, sīla, samādhi, panya, vimutti, and vimutti-ñānadassana are observed.

The rūpabrahmakāya appears next, then panita-rūpabrahmakāya. Next comes arūpabrahmakāya, followed by panita-arūpabrahmakāya. Finally, Dhammakāya-Gotrabhu (i.e wisdom through which a Noble State is developed) is attained and seen. The lap-width, height and sphere diameter are each nine metres (10 yards).

Dhammakāya appear like diamond Buddha statues, crowned with budding lotus. They are luminous, radiant and as clear as a pure, perfect, first-rate diamond. As you continue to concentrate at the centre of the centre, more and more refined, purer and purer, larger and larger Dhammakāya will be observed. Follow the same procedure described for previous kāya, concentrating through successive spheres until the next body appears:

Dhammakāya Gotrabhu (Noble State Wisdom) and then a Refined Dhammakāya whose lap-width, height and sphere diameter are all nine metres or more

Dhammakāya Sota (Stream Winner) and then a refined Dhammakāya Sota whose lap-width, height and sphere diameter are ten metres or more

Dhammakāya Sakadāgāmi (Once Returner) and then a Refined Dhammakāya Sakadagami whose lap-width, height and sphere diameter are twenty metres or more

Dhammakāya Anāgāmi (Non-Returner) and then a Refined Dhammakāya Anagami who lap-width, height and sphere diameter measure up to thirty metres or more

Dhammakāya Arahatta (Perfect One) and then a Refined Dhammakāya Arahatta whose lap-width, height and sphere diameter extend up to forty metres.

With your entire mind, become the more and more refined Dhammakāya Arahatta. Rest your mind and keep it still, right at the centre of the sphere of the most refined Dhammakāya Arahatta that you can attain. Hold steady until you reach ayatana nibbāna, the place and sphere where the most refined Dhammakāya Arahatta can exist in the highest perfection. This is where the arahantas and Lord Buddhas whose Five Aggregates or Khandas have passed away exist forever. It is also called anupādisesa-nibbāna or nibbāna without residue.

One who has attained Dhammakāya has developed mindful contemplation of physical body, feelings, mental functions and phenomena (dhamma). He or she can cut at last three fetters (sayojana): the wrong view of perceiving a “self” in the Five Khandas (sakkāyaditthi), uncertainty (vicikicchā), and useless or wrong ritual practices and vows (silabbata paramāsa). This meditator can then become a Noble One.

The Enlightened Path

The primary sign of enlightenment, a crystal sphere, will appear as reflecting the physical, verbal and mental state. The practitioners should purify their conduct, observe a Buddhist precept and train their minds constantly. When the sphere appears

at the centre of the body, the practitioners should continuously concentrate through successive spheres until the next form appears.

When the Dhamma Sphere arises at the centre of the body, a practitioner can see the four elements within the body. While concentration is at the centre of the sphere, the sphere of *sila* (morality) will appear, then the spheres of *samatha* (concentration), *pañña* (wisdom), *vimutti* (emancipation), and *vimutti ñānadassana* (a state of attainment of knowledge and insight releasing).

With concentration, the Refined Form appears. It appears identical to the practitioners but it is more refined than the ordinary form. By continuously concentrating at the centre of the successive forms, the next one will appear. There are eighteen forms from the primary form up to the highest form: namely a Crude Human Form and its refined counterpart, a Crude Celestial Form and its refined counterpart, a Crude Brahman Form and its refined counterpart, a Crude Formless Brahman Form and its refined counterpart, a *Dhammakāya Gotrabhu* and its refined counterpart (Noble State Wisdom), a *Dhammakāya Sotapanna* and its refined counterpart (the first noble one or Stream Winner), a *Dhammakāya Sakadagami* and its refined counterpart (the second noble one or Once Returner), a *Dhammakāya Anagami* and its refined counterpart (the third noble one or Non-returner), a *Dhammakāya Arahatta* and its refined counterpart (Perfect One).

The *Dhammakāya Sphere's* appearance is like a clear crystal Buddha with a crown of budding lotus. The Buddha is beautiful and pure.

The first eight forms are classified as *samatha* practice which is the mundane practice and the latter is *vipassanā* practice which is the supra-mundane level. The crude forms are magga (path); the refined forms are *phala* (fruit).

When the first sphere (Crude Human Form) appears, the practitioners can investigate Dhamma and see its spheres of *suffering, old age, sickness and death, cause of suffering, and the Noble Eightfold Path which leads to the extinction of suffering*. Therefore the Dhamma spheres are good tools to enlightenment.

The enlightened path consists of three: *Samatha, Anupassanā and Vipassanā* respectively.

Samatha in Vijjā Dhammakāya (mundane state)

As is well known, calmness is a function of *samatha*. It is the same of Vijjā Dhammakāya which has less calmness as its function. When practitioners practice it

more and more, their minds will reach a calm state. In the practice of Vijjā Dhammakāya, the calm mind will happen when a certain light ball appears. The mind concentrates steadily on one point. This ball is known as the learning sign (*uggaha nimitta*) that is the first level of meditation. The practitioner further concentrates on the centre of the ball until able to enlarge or reduce it. This stage is called *patibhaga nimitta* (the counterpart sign). Concentrate on the ball further and rest at the centre of the centre of the ball. With the right mode of mind, the centre of the ball will expand and then a Refined Human Form will emerge from the centre. The Refined Human Form appears identical to the practitioner's, but it is finer than the ordinary form. It sits in the regular meditation posture, facing the same direction as the practitioner's. The higher forms can be succeeded by contemplating at the centre of the centre of the successive spheres. It is important to note here that when the luminous and clear sphere appears, not be overjoyed and overreact. Just keep the mind evenly calm in equanimity and hold the mind still, without repeating *sammā arahang*.

Anupassanā

Anupassanā (constant observation) is a changing point between a mundane state and a supra-mundane state. At this stage, a supernatural power may be reached such as the Divine Eye (Tippa Chakkhu), the Divine Ears (Tippa Sota), etc. The practice of Vijjā Dhammakāya by contemplating a crystal ball is the same practice as *aloka kasina* (light contemplation) which is very helpful to reach supernatural power.

Practitioners may further practice to obtain atitamsañāna (insight into the past; knowledge of the past), anagatamsañāna (insight into the future; knowledge of the future) and paccupannañāna (insight into the knowledge of the present).

Practitioners may realize the formation of the Five Aggregates of Beings as they really are. The Five Aggregates of Beings are conditioned by *abhisankhāra*³⁰ (formation involved in the act of karma-forming): *puññabhisankhāra* (meritorious karma-forming), *apuññabhisankhāra* (demeritorious) and *āneñjābhisankhāra* (imperturbable). The practitioners can realize the cycle of birth and death of beings that are influence by *karma*. They can cultivate their wisdom to deeply realize the state of compounded things which are conditioned by cause and are under the law of

³⁰ This threefold division covers karmic activity in all spheres of existence: the meritorious karma-formations extend to the sensuous and the fine-material sphere, demeritorious one only to the sensuous sphere, and the 'imperturbable' one only to the immaterial sphere.

the Three Common Characteristics of Things: *anicam* (impermanence), *dhukkham* (suffering) and *anattā* (non-self).

The practitioners should constantly practice until the mind reaches the Dhammakāya Gotrabhu which is a basis of the development of *vipassanā* for enlightenment.

Vipassanā in Vijjā Dhammakāya (supra-mundane state)

One desires to release oneself from defilement. The practice for developing *vipassanā* begins at the ninth level, the Dhammakāya Gotrabhu sphere. From here on all consecutive spheres are called *Dhammakāya* and look like a diamond Buddha statues crowned with a budding lotus. The lap width, height and sphere diameter of the statues range from nine metres up to forty metres. The size is dependent on the level of the spheres attained.

Vipassanā practice is the gateway to becoming a noble one. From now on, the practitioner should contemplate the Four Noble Truths in Crude Human Form and its refined counterpart, Crude Celestial Form and its refined counterpart, Crude Brahman Form and its refined counterpart, Crude Formless Brahman Form and its refined counterpart. The practitioner will realize the Three Characteristics of Things through contemplating the spheres; namely, suffering, impermanence and non-self. Through such practices, they can eradicate ten fetters or binds (*sanyojana*) and become the *Arahanta* (the Perfect One). If they can eradicate at least three fetters (binds); namely, the wrong view of perceiving a “self” in the Five Aggregates, uncertainty, and useless or wrong ritual practices and vows, they become a *Sotapanna* (the first noble one).