



# The Way to Nibbāna

*Satipaṭṭhāna - the establishment of mindfulness*

*"Bhikkhus, this is the only way for the purity of all beings, to overcome grief and sorrow, to get rid of suffering and dislike, to achieve on the right path, to realize Nibbāna." - Digha Nikaya (DN) 22*

**Ayya Kosallā Vipassinī (Bhikkhunī)**



## **Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsaṃbuddhassa**

Let us praise the exalted, worthy, self enlightened one and follow the truth.



Ayya Kosallā Vipassinī

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# AUTHOR

## *Ayya Kosallā Vipassinī (Bhikkhuni)*

was born in South Korea in 1970. She graduated with degrees in Childhood Education with Montessori and Yoga & Meditation from universities in South Korea. In 2008 she earned a degree in Oriental Medicine in California. Later she had an opportunity to study Meditation Psychology in South Korea for two years and to practice in Thailand as a bhikkhuni in 2018-2020.

From a very young age, Ayya (Venerable) Kosalla began contemplating spiritual questions and came to believe in reincarnation. Without any religious background, she often felt like a stranger in her own family. Whenever she saw people behaving wrongly, she recognized her mind was uncomfortable and was compelled to give feedback to make it right. When she was 13 years old, she followed her friend to a Catholic church without any prior knowledge of Catholicism. The tranquility of the environment made her mind calm and peaceful. After graduating high school, Ayya Kosalla was inspired to help people and volunteered at her local Catholic church.

In 1993, she began practicing yoga, qi gong, and meditation through Taoism and Buddhism, and she understood that everything is created within one's own mind, not by a Creator God. Thereafter, her practice improved rapidly, and she began sharing her learnings with others. She moved to the United States in 1997 to continue teaching, and she spent the next ten years teaching and traveling throughout America, China, South Korea, and India while working in Oriental medicine and yoga therapy. During this time, she taught both novices and other teachers seeking to deepen their skills.

But by 2008, she felt her life lacked meaning, like she was standing on a platform waiting for a train that would never arrive. At this point, her suffering helped her understand the Four Noble Truths of Buddhism, which inspired her to go to a Korean Zen Buddhist temple in California to continue to serve and meditate. In 2010, she decided to travel to India. While in India, she spent time at a Goenka center, where she finally connected her practice to the true teachings of the Buddha. Back when Ayya Kosalla had begun practicing Buddhism in the early 90's, she was introduced by a senior teacher to the Vipassanā way of practice in daily life. But it wasn't until her time in India that she came to understand that the type of observation she had been practicing for so long was *vedanānupassana* (observation of feeling) and *cittanupassana* (observation of mind). She realized this practice was already on the path of letting go of all formations.



Ayya Kosalla first went forth into the nunnery life of Taoism in 1994. After nearly two decades of non-stop practice in search of the truth, she self-ordained in Theravada in 2013 and went to Myanmar to become a Sayalay (Burmese nun). In 2014, she took 10 precepts in the Pa Auk style before changing to 8 precepts under U Tejaniya Sayadaw at Shaw Woo Min, Myanmar in 2015. She became a Samaneri named Kosalla Vipassini in 2016 and received the Bhikkhuni ordination at Dharma Vijaya Buddhist Vihara, Sri Lankan Temple in 2018 in Los Angeles, USA.

Her name Kosalla comes from Kosalla Sayadaw of Shwe Oo Min, Myanmar. The name was chosen to honor and remember the Nibbāna- and mettā-forward way of practice Kosalla Sayadaw taught while he lived and guided people.

Ayya Kosalla had many teachers who inspired and changed her life – Jesus, Asian sages, Ramana Maharsh, Korean monks (Sung-Chul, Sung-San), S.N. Goenkaji, U Kosalla Sayadaw, U Tejaniya Sayadaw, and Luang Por Pramote. Although she practiced many methods in Myanmar, the teaching of *cittanupassana* under U Tejaniya Sayadaw was her final guide to the Nibbāna way.

Ayya Kosalla would like to share her experience to all people who have a desire to practice and be happy. She would like to pay back her gratitude for the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha to the people who really want to understand and practice Dhamma. To teach and share her experience with others is her mission for the rest of her life.

Therefore, Ayya Kosalla accepted being invited as Abbess (Spiritual Director) of Mahapajapati Monastery in October 2020 and served until 2022. However, as her teacher, Sayadaw Kosalla, always said, “The time is not enough to practice in life!” She returned to herself to finish her practice in this very life.

Ayya Kosalla’s efforts are only for study and practice in Nibbāna, and she is happy to share her practice with any who ask for their benefits in Dhamma.



## || Acknowledgments ||

I would like to express my gratitude to all of Buddha's disciples who passed on the teachings of Buddha so that his teachings can continue to this day - more than 2,560 years later.

This is also dedicated to all modern practitioners as well as future practitioners who long for the truth.

May all beings be happy and well!

**Buddha Sasanaṃ Ciraṃ Tiṭṭhatu,**

Buddha's teachings lasted a long time,

**Bhavatu Sabba Sotiṃ ca Maṅgalaṃ ca!!**

May everyone be guided to the path of peace and blessings!!

Written in 2563 in Buddhist Era (2020)

Kosallā Vipassinī Bhikkhunī



## SHARING MERIT

The Dhamma Letter, which began in October 2020, is currently being delivered as Dhamma-Dāna every Tuesday morning under the name Wisdom Insight Letter. This book is a guide to the practice of Satipaṭṭhāna (the establishment of mindfulness) that presents the path to Nibbāna based on the teachings of the Buddha, starting from Dhamma Letter No. 1 sent every week.

The main content is centered on the master's thesis published in South Korea in 2020 by Ayya Kosalla. It has been edited into one book for Dhamma friends who continue to pursue Dhamma in their daily lives with an inquisitive mind.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Max Montgomery and Euna Bonovich for their help starting and editing from the beginning of the Dhamma Letters, and to Grace Schuurmans for her further editing as this first series of Dhamma Letters evolved into this book. Above all, I feel deeply rewarded by the meditators and yogis who read the weekly Dhamma with enthusiasm and apply it in their lives.

**Sharing the merits of it to all and hoping that each step will bear great fruit in this life in order to reach the final destination, Nibbāna.**

**Imaṃ no puñña-bhāgaṃ sabbasattānaṃ dema.**

We share this merit with all beings.

**Sabbe sattā sukhitā hontu.**

May all beings be well and happy.

**Sādhū! Sādhū! Sādhū!**

Well done! Well done! Well done!



# PREFACE

This book is not only intended for study but also practical application in daily life through advanced Vipassanā insightful meditation. It reflects the author's very experiential level of practice. Since she presented this method in her thesis in South Korea in 2020, the abstract is included here.

## **Abstract: The Study on Contemplation of the Mind (Cittānupassanā) in Contemporary Vipassanā Meditation**

There are two types of Buddhist meditation methods: *Samatha* and *Vipassanā*. *Samatha* aims to attain tranquility through concentration, and *Vipassanā* is aimed at developing inner insight and wisdom to reach Nirvāṇa where anguish disappears.

*Vipassanā* meditation is an important way of expressing the Buddha's enlightenment, and according to the early scriptures, the Buddha declares that *Vipassanā* meditation is the only way to achieve Nirvāṇa (Ekaggatā Maggo).

In *Vipassanā* meditation, there is a practice of meditation of body, feeling, mind, and dhammas (The four foundations of Mindfulness) to reach Nirvāṇa, a state of complete happiness in which all anguish disappears. *Cittānupassanā* (contemplation of the mind), a method of establishing awareness by observing the mind through *sati* (mindfulness), plays the most important role in understanding the ultimate corporate Dhamma and applying it as a law in life. Nevertheless, its importance has been overlooked compared to other methods, and various scientific studies and methods have not been popularized. The reason why the practice of sympathy is not well known is that the subject itself, the mind, is difficult, and it is considered that the beginners had difficulty in performing it, and thus, the study was not actively conducted.



This study was initiated by the importance that the study of the practice of mind observation, which will be the most central point of the four mindfulness practices, should be deepened and developed to reach the ultimate enlightenment of the Buddha. In Myanmar, where the most Vipassanā practice method is currently developed, the method of conducting mind observation was studied and organized based on the practice method performed by the Shwe Oo Min Meditation Practice Center, the only known practice method of mind observation. In addition, we explored the practice of the monk Pramote of the Ajahn Mun tradition, which plays a leading role in Theravada Buddhism in Thailand. The reason for comparing the two representative methods is to understand the mind observation objectively by understanding it more objectively.

As a result, when comparing the two methods, it can be seen that although each term or word is written a little differently, it is the same teaching in context. The essence of the method is to target the "mind" through sati (mindfulness) sampajāna (clear knowing) and recognize the underlying intentions of the body, speech, and mind.

But the "mind" is also five aggregates: (Rūpa: body· Vedanā: feeling· saññā: image, concept· Saṅkhara: willingness· Viññā: consciousness, knowing-mind) itself is known as "Impermanence·Unsatisfaction·Non-Self." Then the defilements are removed by abandoning Greed·Anger·Delusion.

Thus, through the wisdom of Non-Greed, Non-Anger, and Non-Delusion, the Four Noble Truths are obtained by self-acquisition. Therefore, it seems that both methods also produce common results that do not deviate from the teachings of the Buddha. The unique difference between the two methods is the difference between including Samatha meditation or not. But this too is presented in the same way of enlightenment in the result. As a way to approach the Buddha's enlightenment more easily through this direct experience, it can be seen that the practice of mind observation among the four methods of mindfulness practice is a practice that is at an important position in Vipassanā meditation. Also, it is necessary to properly understand and practice how to perform mind observation to complete dhamma (natural law) observation and the four observations with the correct viewpoint.





As a way to approach the Buddha's enlightenment more easily through this direct experience, it can be seen that the practice of mind observation among the four methods of mindfulness practice is a practice that is at an important position in Vipassanā meditation. Also, it is necessary to properly understand and practice how to perform mind observation to complete law observation and the four observations with the correct viewpoint.

Modern Vipassanā meditation practice is not a religious practice but a universal practice that benefits human life. Therefore, in the future, it is necessary to systematically study the Buddha's practice method. I hope that through this meditation, modern people will be able to escape from suffering and come to this path to happiness to pursue a better human life.

## Note

1. The Pali and Sanskrit words are added for increased understanding and are commonly used terminology in Buddhism. Diacritics are included throughout, though there may be some that are missed, so we ask for your understanding even if there is a little discomfort from a professional perspective.

2. This book is a collection of letters that were sent to those interested in Dhamma practice every Tuesday starting from October, 2020. Since the purpose is to read it and apply it to one's own practice in daily life, each letter ends with "With mettā." In fact, we have received feedback that people read it individually or in meditation groups and apply it to their practice. I hope that each person will always practice with mettā in a way that suits them.



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# GREETINGS

This is the first in a series of ***Dhamma Letters*** that will address questions inherent to being human. Throughout the cycle of life, we are all bound to face the unpleasant realities of aging, illness, and death.

It was the pondering of this very idea that led *Shakyamuni Gautama Buddha* (born ~500 BCE) to go forth from this life of comfort and luxury and seek the way of *ultimate happiness*. The Buddha not only self-*enlightened*, but continued to spend the rest of his life teaching and helping others to find their way.

We are fortunate to live in the time of a ***Buddha Sāsana***, where the teachings are available to us as a guide and foundation for our own practice.

My hope is that **The Dhamma Letter** will help all be happy and reach *Nibbāna* in this very life!<sup>1</sup>

**Buddha Sāsanaṃ Ciraṃ Tiṭṭhatu!**

May the Buddha's teachings last a long time!

**Bhavatu Sabba Sotiṃ ca Maṅgalaṃ ca!!**

May everyone be led on the path of peace and blessing!!

**Sādhu Sādhu Sādhu !**

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<sup>1</sup> Pāli terms : **Sāsana** means Teaching, **Paññā** is Wisdom, **Dhamma** is known as Dharma and **Nibbāna** is known as Nirvāṇa in Mahayana Buddhism.





# 1 What is Buddhism? Is it a Religion?

Religion is described in the dictionary as a system of mental culture that seeks to gain peace and happiness through the belief in, worship of, and recognition of God or the Absolute. Based on this definition, Buddhism is not within the scope of religion because the Buddha is not taken as God or the Absolute. The term "Buddha" means the "Complete Knowing One," and there have been a number of Buddhas in the past. Gautama did not seek to become a religious leader; he simply taught The Dhamma.

The ***Dhamma* was set up as the framework of his teaching** . Dhamma is a Pāli<sup>2</sup> word that has many meanings, one of which is "Natural Law." **The Buddha emphasized cultivating a healthy life, known as the "middle mode of living"** (Majjhima Patipada), guided by wisdom.

**Wisdom (paññā) is the ability to understand the Dhamma**, and this wisdom leads to enlightenment. Meditation is practiced to develop this wisdom. So what is meditation? It is a practice to train the mind and develop the wisdom (paññā) necessary **to understand the "Natural Law."**

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<sup>2</sup> Pāli is the language of the Buddha. It was a base of Sanskrit.



This series of Dhamma Letters will explore how meditation practice, mind training, and the development of wisdom can lead to a healthy human perspective and the ultimate happiness of Enlightenment (Nibbāna).

*May you be well and happy!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 2 What is Wisdom? How Does One Develop Wisdom?

### What is wisdom?

Wisdom is the ability to understand the *Dhamma*, the teachings of the Buddha, which is categorized in three cores, interrelated, and interdependent teachings, the *ti-sikkha*:

1. ***sīla*** (morality, 戒)
2. ***samādhi*** (tranquility, 定)
3. ***paññā*** (wisdom, 慧)

### How does one develop wisdom?

We develop morality, tranquility, and wisdom through the study and practice of meditation, the means by which we cultivate awareness of all phenomena.

The Buddha taught The Noble Eightfold Path (*Ariyo Attanghiko Magga*) as the means by which one reaches ultimate happiness, *Nibbāna*. Each step of the Eightfold Path falls into one of the *ti-sikkha* - morality, tranquility, and wisdom.

### Morality

- Right Speech (*Sammā-Vaca*)
- Right Action (*Sammā-Kammanta*)
- Right Livelihood (*Sammā-Ajīva*)

Moral solidity is a prerequisite for tranquility.

### Tranquility

- Right Effort (*Sammā-Vāyama*)
- Right Mindfulness (*Sammā-Satī*)
- Right Concentration (*Sammā-Samādhi*)

Tranquility provides a strong foundation for cultivating wisdom.

### Wisdom

- Right Understanding (*Sammā-Diṭṭhi*)
- Right Thought (*Sammā-Saṅkappa*)

Wisdom supports us to act morally and virtuously and to cultivate tranquility.



*Sīla*, morality and virtue, begins with generosity. Generous deeds teach us to cultivate happiness within ourselves and in others without taking anything - by only giving of ourselves through our words, actions, and attention. This is how we lay a moral foundation for ourselves from which we can develop further *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā*.

*All conditioned things are **impermanent**.*

*When one sees this with **wisdom**, one turns away from suffering.*

*All conditioned things are **unsatisfactory**.*

*When one sees this with **wisdom**, one turns away from suffering.*

*All things are **not-self**.*

*When one sees this with **wisdom**, one turns away from suffering.*

- Dhammapada 260

*May you be well and happy!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



### 3 The Three Stages of Wisdom

The Buddha described three stages of wisdom:

1. **Sutta-mayā-paññā (聞慧)** is based on knowledge that was either heard or read and therefore dependent on the conveyance of others.
2. **Cintā-mayā-paññā (思慧)** is acquired as the result of one's own consideration, reflection, and pondering independent of the teachings of others.
3. **Bhāvanā-mayā-paññā (修慧)** is experiential wisdom based on realizations arising from the practice of meditation (*Samatha* (止) or *Vipassanā* (觀)).

#### Intellectual vs. Experiential Practice

Buddhist practitioners must pair an intellectual comprehension of the *Dhamma* with experiential wisdom cultivated from a meditation practice. Take the *ti-lakkhana*, the three characteristics underlying all phenomena:

1. *Anicca* (impermanence, 無常)
2. *Dukkha* (dissatisfaction, 苦)
3. *Anattā* (non-ego, 無我)

It is not enough to intellectually know the Buddha's teaching of the *ti-lakkhana*. You must meditate on this teaching and observe your experience within the framework of these characteristics. In this way, knowledge connects with the heart. This leads to a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of daily life by applying the *Dhamma* directly to your own experience.

Remember, **everybody would like to be happy**. As human beings, we were born for a reason. Without *bhāvanā*, we will be unable to reach our goal, whether that is to gain worldly happiness and success or seek some truth or to *Nibbāna* (ultimate happiness).

***May all accumulate the paramīs and accomplish your own wishes!***

***May all be happy and well through the practices in this very life!***

*With mettā,*



## 4 Q&A No. 1

**Q1.1. How can one dissolve bad habits from the mind that were learned in order to exist in a different country and culture from one's birth?**

**A.** Habits, in Buddhist terms, are actually kamma (karma). The way to let go of any habit, no matter how it initially started or formed, is through wisdom - through clear-seeing. The way for this wisdom to develop is through mindfulness - through sustained observation - during formal meditation and during daily life activities and interactions. All of this takes time - lots and lots of time and lots and lots of starting over again.

**Q1.2. One intellectually comprehends the teachings shared by others. Also, upon reflection one can "see how it is part of a lived experience." However, one has not actually experienced the teaching within one's practice. One can see it in the mind, but there is no bodily experience. How can one move into the lived experience? Are there things which one can do or is it just about practice until something happens?**

**A.** The body and mind are completely interrelated; body reflects mind and mind reflects body. Sometimes observed experience is first felt or seen in the body and sometimes the other way around. You do not need to be waiting for something to happen in your practice. Something is already happening in your practice every second! Like we said in the answer to your first question the value of mindfulness and close observation cannot be emphasized enough. So, how to practice? Be in the present, be aware, be aware, be aware, and there is no rush. There is no place to go. Always check your mind - are you rushing, are you expecting, are you hoping, are you impatient? As your mind calms down, as tranquility arises, your mind develops wisdom, and clear-seeing naturally arises as well.



***May more wisdom arise for you!***

***May all accumulate the paramīs and accomplish their own wishes!***

***May all beings be happy and well through the practices in this very life!***

*With mettā,*



## 5 Tranquility

### Tranquility

All of us would like to be happy, and we are using our human birth to practice. The Pāli word for practice is *bhāvanā*, which literally means cultivation. *Bhāvanā-mayā-paññā* is the third stage of wisdom the Buddha described and is discussed in *Dhamma Letter No. 3*. Cultivation of this sort of wisdom involves two kinds of meditation: *Samatha* and *Vipassanā* meditation.

### Samatha and Vipassanā

Tranquility can be developed by concentration (*Samatha*) and insight (*Vipassanā*). There are many traditions which offer various approaches to calming the mind. When the mind is calm, we can more easily observe it. By observing the actions of the body, mind, and speech, we can determine which of our actions are leading to happiness and which are leading to continued suffering. **This is the foundation for developing wisdom.** As we noted in the previous *Dhamma Letters*, without *bhāvanā* (practice), we cannot reach our goal of ultimate, unconditioned happiness.

*Samatha* (concentration) serves to create a base of tranquility for *Vipassanā* (insight) in order to cultivate wisdom (explained more in the next letter). Without calmness of mind, you cannot see the mind clearly, which is why insight depends on concentration.

Just as *Samatha* meditation is a support for *Vipassanā* meditation, *Vipassanā* meditation is a support for *Samatha* meditation. However, this two-way relationship is often misunderstood. Oftentimes meditators stop upon achieving a state of calmness and do not progress to the wisdom stage. We should not be satisfied by the calm state because the mind will be inevitably shaken once again when present conditions change.

Our practice must continue to progress toward a complete understand of the three *Lakkhaṇa*, the characteristics inherent in all conditioned phenomena:

- **Anicca** (Impermanence)





- **Dukkha** (Dissatisfaction, stress)
- **Anattā** (Not-self)

This must be achieved experientially – not just at the level of knowledge or intellectual comprehension. If one understands the three *Lakkhaṇa* at an experiential level, one's life will be changed. It is important to observe oneself with Right View (*Sammā-Diṭṭhi*) and not to observe others judgmentally.

*May you all become experienced in tranquility with your practice!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 6 The Two Ways of Samādhi

Dhamma Letter No. 5 touched on the fact that both *Vipassanā* and *Samatha* can lead to *samādhi* (tranquility). In this letter, we will extend this concept by diving deeper into the differences in *samādhi* brought about by *Vipassanā* versus *Samatha*.

### What is *samādhi*?

*Samādhi* means tranquility and is achieved in two ways:

1. *Samatha* meditation
2. *Vipassanā* meditation

### What are the differences between *Samatha* and *Vipassanā* as they relate to *samādhi*?

*Samatha* meditation involves concentrating on a single object. Oftentimes, this involves suppressing the mind in different ways to increase and maintain focus on the object of concentration. No matter the depth of mastery of *Samatha* meditation, the tranquility that it develops is fragile. The mind cannot hold one object in mind forever. Moment to moment, the mind is always changing. The conditions in which tranquility was achieved from *Samatha* will not persist indefinitely. Eventually, conditions will change such that calmness and tranquility will be lost. In this way, *Samatha* meditation can succeed in achieving *samādhi*, but it will be fleeting and forever fragile.

*Vipassanā* meditation uses the body and mind as its objects of concentration; therefore, the specific objects of concentration are countless. *Vipassanā* intends to see the body and mind clearly, as it truly is. The insights achieved in this process result in wisdom. This wisdom helps understand ourselves, which in turn helps us understand and relate to others, thus harmonizing our relationships. This wisdom and understanding that comes from knowing all that is occurring in the mind and body brings about a sort of inner tranquility, *samādhi*, that is never lost completely, only temporarily obscured by ignorance. This knowledge once gained cannot be lost, and it's the same for tranquility that accompanies it.



### How does *samādhi* relate to *Right View*?

The understanding and wisdom from which *samādhi* is a result means to see clearly, to see as it is. "Seeing as it is" means to see without conceptualizations of what one desires to see or has seen previously. It is through *Right View*, the first step of the Buddha's *Noble Eightfold Path*, that we come to see clearly. Therefore, **one cannot be in complete tranquility, *samādhi*, until attaining *Right View*.**

*May all you be experienced in tranquility with your practice!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 7 Q&A No. 2 Pain During Sitting Meditation

### Q. How does one deal with pain during sitting meditation?

A. Encountering and investigating physical pain while sitting in meditation can be immensely productive. However, enduring and battling pain for long bouts can cause undue stress that, at times, can be counterproductive to the practice.

Experienced meditators cultivate concentration such that they are able to separate themselves from physical pain. They are able to "look" at it from a distance -as merely sensation - rather than a cause of stress. This is the goal for relating to pain during sitting meditation - the ability to view it objectively, not as something being "done" to you that causes aversion and stress. In this way, using pain as an object of meditation is both productive *and* necessary.

On the other hand, for the novice meditator just beginning to sit for long stretches of time, an encounter with pain can result in an enduring battle that causes stress, distracts the mind, and disallows it from calming to the point where proper investigation can take place. For this reason, it is sometimes better to situate oneself physically during sitting meditation to avoid pain by using cushions or a chair. This will allow the mind to calm with more ease and develop qualities necessary for better handling of pain. In this way, avoiding pain by physical re-situation helps one deal with it more directly in the long term.

However, one should be cautious when allowing oneself to move to a more comfortable position during sitting meditation. If you are too quick to capitulate to pain, you will develop a habit of readjusting your posture. This habit will disallow you from skillful striving as it relates to comprehending and dealing with pain.

In addition, one must use wisdom to know when pain is better ignored or better dealt with directly. There are times when it must be confronted and understood but also times where acknowledging it and using something else as your object of concentration is



more skillful.

*May all you be experienced in tranquility with your practice!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 8 Q&A No. 3 Dealing With Past Memories During Meditation

**Q. How does one deal with past memories during meditation?**

**A.** Memories will arise during meditation. In many regards, this is the purpose of meditation - to see one's mind clearly. Arising memories is an inevitable and necessary aspect of meditation.

When memories arise, one must use wisdom to decide to either

- 1) investigate the kamma associated with that memory or
- 2) acknowledge the memory and put it aside for the time being.

In the first case, one uses their wisdom and discernment to decide that it is time to investigate the arising memory with the goal of comprehending its kamma. One must ask themselves, "what role does this memory play in who I am?" "How has it led me to right here and now?" These are particularly challenging questions which often lead to painful investigations. That is why one must be strong in their wisdom and discernment to take on the task of comprehending the karmic consequences of any particular memory.

In the second case, beginning meditators acknowledge the memories as they arise and understand that they are a part of their past, a piece of seeing oneself clearly. However, they opt to set the memory aside for now and save further investigation for later when their discernment and wisdom has developed to a point that lends itself to comprehension of that memory's kamma. That being said, this decision - the choice *not* to investigate and remain focused on the object of concentration - is wisdom in itself. This skill is necessary to avoid ineffective and unfruitful memory-chasing.

***May all accumulate the pāramīs and accomplish their own wishes!***

***May all beings be happy and well through the practices in this very life!***

*With mettā,*



## 9 Q&A No. 4

**Q. Why should we not allow our "approval" or "likes" to guide our practice (e.g. sleeping in the morning and meditating after you have taken care of chores)?**

**A. Nothing is fixed. Everything is dependent on conditions.**

"Approval" and "likes" strengthen desire in the practice and cause anger if that which you "approve" or "like" are not developed to a point of satisfaction or expectation. Our mind is tricky. We practice as a means to control the mind - not to tilt it to one side or the other. Be in the Middle Way.

Additionally, "likes" and "dislikes" are one and the same in regard to their result. Why is this the case? *Anicca!* Impermanence! The mind is changing all the time.

Neither how long you sleep in the morning nor the time you meditate can ever be fixed. It will always depend on what you have done and what you will do. Oftentimes, following your natural inclinations will set the ideal conditions.

*May you be well and happy!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 10 The Relationship of Vipassanā and Pāramī

Buddhist practice requires a multi-faceted approach. **Sīla** (morality), **samādhi** (tranquility), and **paññā** (wisdom) depend upon and serve as a support for each other. They must all be developed in order to purify the mind and proceed toward our goal. Morality can be developed by practicing acts of generosity. This can be giving gifts of money or help to others. Generosity to others is actually beneficial to oneself by developing our **pāramī** (perfection). Generosity and morality are the first two of ten pāramīs that we must develop as part of our practice during daily life:

### 10 Pāramīs

1. Perfection in giving (or liberality; *dāna-pāramī*)
2. Morality (*sīla-pāramī*)
3. Renunciation (*nekkhamma-pāramī*)
4. Wisdom (*paññā-pāramī*)
5. Energy (*virīya-pāramī*)
6. Patience (or forbearance; *khanti-pāramī*)
7. Truthfulness (*sacca-pāramī*)
8. Resolution (*adhitthāna-pāramī*)
9. Loving-kindness (*mettā-pāramī*)
10. Equanimity (*upekkhā-pāramī*)

For tranquility of mind, morality is the foundation. And, as described in Dhamma Letter No. 6, without calmness of mind you cannot see the mind and mind-objects clearly. *Vipassanā* meditation teaches us how to deal with the objects of the mind.

When driving, numberless objects have to be dealt with along the road. Think of the mind as the driver and Vipassanā practice as the guide to any obstacle that presents itself. Wisdom will be built upon tranquility and morality (*tī-sikkha*; three studies for the practice). It is in this way that Vipassanā relates to paramī. Buddhist practice is conditioned with all of the above. The next Dhamma Letter will discuss the practical nature of Vipassanā.





**May all accumulate the pāramīs and accomplish their own wishes!**

*With mettā,*



# 11 Vipassanā Meditation No. 1

## Contemporary Vipassanā Meditation

*Vipassanā* meditation has come to be commonly known as "mindfulness" meditation or "insight" meditation. Regardless of the nomenclature, the meditation method taught by the Buddha is still practiced today and remains unchanged after more than 2,560 years due to the unbroken chain of recitation of the Buddha's words since they were spoken. The ***MahaSatipaṭṭhāna Sutta*** (The Great Discourse on the Foundations of Mindfulness) from the early scriptures begins with the following passage:

*“Bhikkhus, this is the only way for the purity of all beings, to overcome grief and sorrow, to get rid of suffering and dislike, to achieve on the right path, to realize Nirvāṇa (Nibbāna).” - Digha Nikaya (DN) 22*

The Buddha presents the method as beneficial to all and the only way (*Ekāyano Maggo*) to accomplish Nibbāna, ultimate happiness and the purpose of the teaching of the Buddha.

DN22 instructs the complete elimination of defilements for the purpose of establishing *sati* (mindfulness). The defilements are the following:

- *Lobha* (craving/attachment)
- *Dosa* (aversion/anger)
- *Moha* (delusion/ignorance)

Vipassanā meditation outlines practice in four domains: body, feeling, mind, and dhammas. These are the **Four Foundations of Mindfulness** that work together to develop inner insight and wisdom leading to a state in which all defilements dispel. The next Dhamma Letter will further discuss Vipassanā meditation.

*May all be free from any suffering!*

*May all be free from any dangers!*



## 12 Vipassanā Meditation No. 2

Continuing our discussion of Vipassanā meditation from Dhamma Letter No. 11, we begin with an etymological perspective. The word "Vipassanā" is composed of the prefix, "vi," followed by "*passana*." In this context, "vi" can be translated to separation, distinction, difference, and variance. "*Passana*" means gaze, observation, and continuous awareness. Using this etymological analysis, it can be said that **Vipassanā is a separate and continuous view of all things related to perceptual phenomena.** Using this framework, various concepts, such as craving, caring, mindfulness, awareness, bare attention, noting, and seeing through, are used as part of the core methodology of Vipassanā meditation.

In the end, Vipassanā meditation can be thought of as a meditation practice that emphasizes the observation of all phenomena such as impermanence, dissatisfaction, and not-self/non-ego simply as they are from the viewpoints and within the frameworks of *sati*. I pray that everyone can escape from suffering and follow the path of complete happiness through the practice of the four (body, feeling, mind, and dhammas) foundations of mindfulness (Satipaṭṭhāna) to reach Nibbāna (Nirvāṇa), a state in which all anguish disappears.

*"Bhikkhus, I say that anguish is extinct from those who know and see, I do not say that anguish is extinct from those who do not know and do not see." - Sangyutta Nikaya (SNII-29, SNIII-152)*

**Note:** "*sati*" is a Pāli term and essential in understanding *Vipassanā* meditation. The word "*sati*" will be used henceforth in lieu of "mindfulness" or "awareness" to help build a richer understanding of the term. "*Sati*" contains much more meaning than is typically ascribed to just "mindfulness."

*May you be well and happy!*

*With mettā,*



## 13 Q&A No. 5

### Q. How does one overcome sadness?

Subjectively, anger is experienced with a high-degree of intensity. In contrast, sadness is typically felt as lethargy and with down-levels of energy. However, the *Dhamma* tells us that **the root of both emotional states is the same. In the Buddha's teaching, sadness is treated and thought of in the same light as anger** - they are two sides of the same coin.

Both **sadness and anger derive from *moha* ("delusion" or "ignorance")**. From *moha*, ***lobha* (attachment and craving)** arises, which manifests as our desired or conceptualized possessions – what we "have" and/or what we want. Dissonance between reality and our *lobha* gives way to ***dosa* (aversion and anger)**.

Herein is the process by which we become sad and angry – **unfulfilled expectations born** from attachment and greed, which in turn stems from ignorance and delusion.

Our job is to practice and study **this system of mind in order to understand it as completely as the Buddha did himself.**

As a Vipassanā meditator, **we begin to understand this process by being mindfully (*satī*) aware of it.**

We seek to observe and understand the causal relationship between *moha*, *lobha*, and *dosa*. In this way, you will begin to see your *kamma* (karma). Once observed, it will dissipate at a rate proportionate to its strength. **When wisdom (*paññā*) arises, it will disappear.** The arising of wisdom is **dependent on your understanding of *anicca* (impermanence), *dukkha* (dissatisfaction), and *anattā* (non-ego).**

*May you be well and happy!*

*With mettā,*



## 14 Dukkha No. 1

We begin a series that will focus on three phenomena central to the Buddha's teachings: *dukkha*, *anattā*, and *anicca*. Today, we begin with *dukkha*.

### What is Dukkha (Suffering)?

Our study and practice of Buddhism must be informed by the Buddha's original question. When Gautama Buddha saw an aging, sick, or dying person, he felt in his heart a suffering inherent to life. The Pāli term for this suffering is *dukkha*. One can translate and, in different contexts, describe *dukkha* as suffering, dissatisfaction, irritation, disturbance, anguish, worry, dejection, loneliness, anxiety, et cetera. The Buddha asked, **"Why, as human beings, must we endure this suffering? How can one be only happy?"**

Buddha described *dukkha* as eight kinds of universal suffering:

"Now this, monks, is the Noble Truth of [dukkha](#): [Birth](#) is *dukkha*, [aging](#) is *dukkha*, [death](#) is *dukkha*; sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, & despair are *dukkha*; association with the unbeloved is *dukkha*; separation from the loved is *dukkha*; not getting what is wanted is *dukkha*. In short, the five clinging-aggregates are *dukkha*." — [SN 56.11](#)

Some say that life is a "blessing." This may be true. Although, while pleasant and optimistic words describing the nature of life may bring temporary bliss, it surely will not last forever.

Without facing and striving to understand the system of our consciousness, we will be unable to truly overcome our present suffering and situation. The more we avoid it, the deeper the *dukkha* will stay in the bottom of our hearts (*kamma*). As a Vipassanā meditator, we have to face it and eliminate *dukkha* from our lives.

We will continue our discussion of *dukkha* next week in Dhamma Letter No. 15.

*May you be free from any suffering!*

*With mettā,*



## 15 Dukkha No. 2

Some bemoan Buddhism's persistent emphasis on dukkha, lamenting what they feel is a negative and bleak worldly perspective. Yes, we all desire happiness and endeavor to find it in a positive and optimistic manner. However, there is a phrase: *no pain, no gain!* In order for our consciousness to mature, we have to face the world as it is.

Dhamma Letter No. 14 discussed the eight dukkhas, universal sufferings, as outlined by the Buddha. One must first accept whichever sufferings they experience. Upon acceptance, they can begin to understand their dukkha, which is **overcome only by knowing and seeing it as it truly is.**

### The Four Noble Truths

The Buddha became enlightened to The Four Noble Truths.

The Four Noble Truths, and thus our practice, **begin with knowing dukkha.**

The Buddha taught that The Four Noble Truths are the means by which we are freed from dukkha. The Four Noble Truths are the following:

1. Dukkha - the existence of stress and suffering
2. Its origination - the causes of dukkha
3. Its cessation - dukkha can be extinguished.
4. The path leading to its cessation - **The Noble Eightfold Path is the method by which dukkha is extinguished.**

In this very life, we begin on the path with small steps of beneficial actions of the body, speech, and mind directed to oneself and all other beings.

We will continue our discussion of dukkha in the next Dhamma Letter.

*May you be free from any physical suffering!*

*May you be free from any mental suffering!*

*With mettā,*



## 16 Dukkha No. 3

Dhamma Letter No. 14 outlined the numerous emotions that manifest as dukkha. With regard to the alleviation of these emotions, we must now begin to answer the question, **"how do we practice?"**

When we experience dukkha, the first step is to recognize it as such (see Dhamma Letter No. 15). Upon seeing dukkha as it is, the next step towards its assuagement is to investigate its causes.

### Conditions

In this life, our mind has been habituated since birth. However, this habit accumulation extends indefinitely into past lives beginning with those of our parents and cultures. The patterns of our minds, thoughts, and intentions are conditioned by our parents and cultures, past kamma, and a causal structure extending infinitely into the past. That to which we are attached, i.e. our "likes" (lobha), and towards which we have aversion, i.e. our "dislikes" (dosa), arise from these conditions. Conditions are the cause; our likes and dislikes are the results.

### Investigation

Let's begin with the supposition that every person has varied tastes (likes) from one another. One might ask, "Why do I have this taste?" Well, on what is this taste dependent? This is how we begin to investigate these patterns.

When we determine the causes and conditions giving rise to our dukkha, we can develop solutions to let go of them. In doing so, we liberate ourselves from stress-inducing attachments and delusion.

### Vipassanā

The stress and discomfort we experience is caused by the three poisons:

1. *Moha* (delusion)
2. *Lobha* (craving)



### 3. *Dosa* (aversion)

A Vipassanā meditator can observe their mind in the present moment and ask themselves, "What do I like or dislike?" **Begin with knowing the patterns of the mind.** See what object you crave. If you fulfill that craving, notice if you are content. If you resisted the craving or it proved unattainable, notice if you are sad, angry, etc.

What prevents your mind from peace and contentment? Try to let it go. If you notice the cause of your mind's discontent, try to do the opposite. Observe the results. This is difficult, but with practice it will prove easier. **This is how you train an equanimous mind through wisdom.** Do not be discouraged. This process is arduous and varies in length depending on the degree of your attachment.

**To practice is to make a path in the mind that we take to develop wisdom.**

*May you be free from any physical suffering!*

*May you be free from any mental suffering!*

*May you develop wisdom more and more!*

*With mettā,*





## 17 Q&A No. 6

### Q. Once achieved, how does one maintain equanimity?

A shaken mind and broken equanimity indicates your kamma (based on the conceptual mind) is still strong. It is the arising of a thought or reflection that breaks your equanimity. The practice of maintaining equanimity begins with the awareness of this process.

Keep observing the establishing and subsiding of your equanimity until you gain insight into this process. **When this wisdom arises, you will have discovered the answer to your question.** As always, the arising of wisdom (see Dhamma Letter No. 3) depends on the extent to which you understand the *Dhamma* through the three characteristics underlying all phenomena (*ti-lakkhaṇa*):

1. *Anicca* (impermanence, 無常)
2. *Dukkha* (dissatisfaction, 苦)
3. *Anattā* (non-ego, 無我)

When you hold on to that which you are attached to, you will not be equanimous. **When you let go with wisdom, you will discover equanimity is already present.**

The *ti-lakkhaṇa* are of utmost importance in the study of Buddhism, hence our writing of this series. We covered dukkha in letters 14, 15, and 16. We will continue our discussion with ***anattā*** next week in Dhamma Letter No. 18.

*May you develop wisdom more and more!*

*May you attain the level of equanimity you wish!*

*With mettā,*



## 18 Anattā (Non-Self) No. 1

### Anattā

*Anattā* means not-self. Why did the Buddha emphasize the idea and importance of not-self? To answer this question, let us begin with what we traditionally think of as "I" - the self. **There are two components to the "self": one physical and one mental.** The physical component of the self is the body. The mental component of the self is the mind.

Consider the statement,

*If my mind is mine, I must control my mind as I wish by myself.*

Likewise for the body; consider,

*If my body is mine, I must control my body as I wish by myself.*

In your experience, do you find this to be the case?

We do not have complete control of either our bodies or our minds. We cannot always adjust our emotions, physical well-being, or thoughts. We do not possess magical prowess over our physical and mental experience. Can you really "have" that which you cannot control? Can that which you cannot control really be "you," the "self"?

**My body is not me.**

**My body is not mine.**

**My mind is not me.**

**My mind is not mine.**

You may ask, if the body and mind are not-self, then how can we talk, think, and or do anything? The Buddha says that our mental and physical states from which our actions derive are dependent on their conditions which stem from past and present kamma.

### The Five Aggregates



We described the self as having physical and mental components. The physical component, the body, combined with the mental component, the mind, broken down into their constituent parts comprise the five aggregates (五蘊).

1. Form (*rūpa*, 色)
2. Feelings (*vedanā*, 受)
3. Perceptions (*saññā*, 想)
4. Mental action (*sankhārā*, 行)
5. Consciousness (*viññāṇa*, 識)

The Buddha used first person pronouns — "my," "I," et cetera - to tell his story. This is a practical necessity to create an understanding of the Dhamma and to mitigate confusion. We have to use "I," "me," and "mine" to communicate in a practical manner.

We will continue our discussion of anattā and its interconnectedness to the *ti-lakkhana* (*anattā*, *dukkha*, and *anicca*) in subsequent Dhamma Letters.

*May you be free from any bondages!*

*May you develop wisdom and understand anattā in your practice!*

*May you be happy and well!*

*With mettā,*



## 19 Anattā (Non-Self) No. 2

This week we are picking up where we left off from our discussion of anattā in Dhamma Letter No. 18.

### The Meaning of *Anattā*

In various contexts, we translate *anattā* as "not-I," "not-self," and "non-ego." What does anattā really mean? Even in the Indian philosophical tradition, anattā was a new concept during the time of the Buddha, who pointed to existence of the non-self (and consequently the non-existence of the self). It is more than just non-ego, though that is a useful starting point to establish a basic understanding of Buddhism.

### The Experience of *anattā*

All bases of cause begin with *anattā*'s opposite, *atta* (I, me, mine). The final stage of the Path is to understand this completely and experience the *anattā* nature for oneself.

Consider the statement again,

*If my mind is mine, I must control my mind as I wish by myself.*

Likewise for the body; consider,

*If my body is mine, I must control my body as I wish by myself.*

Let us start with **form** (*rūpa*, 色), the physical body and its senses. The eye cannot observe the eye itself. The ear cannot observe the ear itself. The nose cannot observe the nose itself. The tongue cannot observe the tongue itself. The body cannot observe the body itself.

However, sensations at the body and the six senses are experienced in and of themselves. The fact that they can be observed individually and only objectively means that they are not-self. Additionally, the body itself is inconstant and ever-changing. So too are the sensations felt at the six senses. The persistence of the processes of the body give the appearance of continuity, but as a whole it is unfixed.



Similarly, the mind can be observed as a progression involving the other four aggregates consisting of awareness (**consciousness**, **viññāṇa**, 識), the formation of **perceptions** (**saññā**, 想) about that which we are aware, **feelings** (**vedanā**, 受) ascribed to those perceptions, and **intentions and mental actions** (**sankhārā**, 行) formed as a result. The passivity of these processes of the mind and the fact that it can be observed objectively, like the body, means that it is not-self.

### **The Importance of Anattā**

The teaching of not-self is the teaching of the Buddha. Why did he so emphasize the importance of experiencing anattā?

If we remain identified with the self, attached to the "I," we continuously cause *dukkha* (discussed in Dhamma Letters No. 14-16) for ourselves and others. Furthermore, the degree to which we are conceited and identify as a self is proportional to the problems we cause in our relationships.

The Buddha's teachings of **anattā help us end our continual creation of dukkha (suffering)**. However, the Buddha did not just dispense vacuous theory. He also taught **the practical means by which to escape this cycle and experience anattā for oneself**. We will discuss this point in future Dhamma Letters.

*May you understand anattā and be free from any suffering!*

*With mettā,*



## 20 Q&A No. 7

Q: If...

- the body, mind, thoughts, feelings, emotions, consciousness, perceptions, and mental formations are all not self...
- and dependent origination, the process which creates conditioning, consists of what is neither me nor mine...
- and conditioning leads to behaviors, choices, actions, and reactions made of elements that are neither me nor mine...

**...how am I the owner of my *kamma* (karma) which derives from variables that are not-self?**

**A:** It is true that yourself, as in the "self" that appears to exist, is not composed of thoughts, feelings, emotions, et cetera. The Five Aggregates are simply **phenomena subject to arising and passing away depending on conditions**. That which is **unfixed cannot be the "self."**

*You* are not the causes and conditions that enable you to act in certain ways. But nevertheless, your body, mind, feelings, emotions, and causes and conditions do exist. And from these, your intentions, your *kamma*, is derived. You *do* make decisions. You *do* act and react as a result of these variables. The fact that these variables are not-self and largely out of your control is irrelevant to the reality that they are the causes and conditions by which you form intention.

The fact of the matter is that these intentions, your *kamma*, become causes and conditions in and of themselves. They are both the result of the process and the causes that propel the process of conditioning and reaction in perpetuity. For this reason, you are the owner of your *kamma*. You have no choice but to inherit your *kamma*, for once it is created it becomes a cause and condition by which you will form intention once again.



Much of the processes of the mind and body are not within your control. They are not-self. They are anattā. However, it is a fact that intention is formed and mental, verbal, and physical action is taken. This *kamma* (*habitual mind*) is added to the body of causes and conditions that shape your thoughts, perceptions (**saññā**, 想), and mental formations (**sankhārā**, 行) that in turn serve as the basis for future kamma and action. In this way the ownership of your kamma is inescapable.

Practical knowledge and experiential wisdom is **bhavana-maya-paññā** (修慧) (see Dhamma Letter No. 3). This wisdom will arise from your own practice and personal experience. It takes a lifetime, or perhaps many, through the cycle of Saṃsāra.

Think of an apple. One will never understand what an apple is solely from description and analysis. It is only after taking a bite and tasting an apple that you come to know what it truly is. An apple's essence can be described and expressed in many ways, but one simply knows how it tastes.

Please regard these teachings in a similar manner. We will continue to discuss how to practice in future Dhamma Letters.

*May you be free from any bondages!*

*May you develop wisdom and understand anattā in your practice!*

*May you be happy and well!*

*With mettā,*



## 21 Anicca (Impermanence, 無常)

Things are changing all the time; everything is subject to change.

We are dissatisfied and angered when that which we "like" changes or vanishes, which causes us to suffer. We have to accept the "impermanent" nature of all phenomena, that all things are subject to change.

The earth is changing. The body is changing. The mind is changing.  
Our relationships constantly evolve.

The sun rises each day, but its trajectory, position, and the composition of the sun itself are different moment-to-moment, day-to-day.

Human beings are born and then subject to aging, illness, and then death. Every morning our face looks the same, yet the cells from which it is composed are forever changing. We are constantly in flux.

Sometimes we understand change to be good; other times we see it as bad. Nevertheless the impermanence of all persists. This we must accept. We cannot hold anything that is subject to change. **When we try to hold and attach ourselves to that which is impermanent, we cause suffering within ourselves.**

When we practice Vipassanā we keep in mind the three interrelated characteristics of phenomena that we face ceaselessly and limitlessly:

1. *Anicca* (impermanence, 無常)
2. *Dukkha* (dissatisfaction, 苦)
3. *Anattā* (non-ego, 無我)

***May you understand anicca in your life and attain wisdom!***  
***May you be blessed and happy through Dhamma!***





## 22 Q&A No. 8

**Q:** Purchasing meat at the grocery store incentivizes its replacement by the grocer, which in turn necessitates killing more animals. It is my understanding that the Buddhist *vinaya* allows monastics to consume what is placed in their bowls. Because lay people retain optionality with what they eat, is it advised that they purchase only vegetarian foods?

**A:** The Buddha taught that there are **four types of food**:

“There are four kinds of nutrients which enable living beings to grow and maintain life. What are these four nutriments? The first is edible food, the second is the food of sense impressions, the third is the food of volition, and the fourth is the food of consciousness.” (SN 12:63)

**The purpose of the alms round for monastics is to cultivate non-attachment to food and gratitude towards the donors for their merit (pāramī) simultaneously.**

Monks practicing in the Mahayana tradition eat only vegetarian foods, adhering to the diet of Devadata, Gautama’s cousin and a monk himself. However, the Buddha disagreed with Devadata. He stated that because death is natural law, there are allowances for eating animals:

“Jivaka, I say that there are three instances in which meat should not be eaten: when it is seen, heard, or suspected to kill directly. I say that meat should not be eaten in these three instances. I say that there are three instances in which meat may be eaten: when it is not seen, not heard, and not suspected. I say that meat may be eaten in these three instances.” (MN55)

For those crafting a diet within the framework of the three purities outlined by the Buddha in MN55, the logic of meat-eating goes as follows: If an animal was not killed with the intention that it be consumed by you specifically, then it is permissible to eat. Therefore, meat purchased at a grocery store, restaurant, or similar institution in which



the slaughtering was done without the expressed purpose that the animal be consumed by *you*, then its consumption is justified within the three purities.

However, what is most important is to return to **the core teachings of the Buddha through mindful meditation and inspection of causes and conditions** with regard to what you choose to consume.

Ask yourself, **is this beneficial or not? Appropriate or not?** There should be no greed, craving, or attachment to food. That is most important. It is through this sort of mindfulness with regard to food that one relinquishes their attachments to it and develops **right understanding**. We must **remain in the Middle Way (Majjhimā Paṭipadā, 中道)**.

*May all understand Dhamma and develop wisdom!*

*May all beings be free from any suffering!*

*May all beings be well and happy!*

*With mettā,*



## 23 Three Kinds of Happiness

The Buddha defined three realms:

1. Desire realm
2. Fine material realm
3. Immaterial realm

He taught that each of these three realms correspond to a particular type of happiness:

1. Happiness achieved from one's desire (desire realm)
2. Happiness experienced within the tranquility of *jhāna* (meditative absorption), during which desire dissipates (fine material and immaterial realms)
3. The ultimate happiness, Nibbāna (Nirvāṇa), which arises from the cessation of dukkha (beyond the three realms)

It is not always possible to simply will oneself to Nibbāna in this very life. If one maintains enlightenment as their goal, it will require significant time and practice to achieve. Additionally, if one's kamma is not yet perfected (*pāramī*), attainment of the ultimate happiness is impossible regardless of their desires.

**It is important to understand the existence of the multi-realm world and know in which realm you currently abide.** The goals of most religions are confined to the desired realm. That is to say they instruct courses of action supposing a desire to be born or given entrance into heaven in the afterlife.

The Buddha taught the progression to Nibbāna from the desired to the immaterial world must be cultivated step-by-step via ***sīla*** (virtue, 戒), ***samādhi*** (tranquility, 定), and ***paññā*** (wisdom, 慧). The first step, *sīla*, begins with *Dāna* (generosity; see Dhamma Letter No. 2). We have to study and practice over many lifetimes – this is called *Saṃsāra*.

**May all be in peace and happy!**

**May you all accomplish your wishes!**



## 24 The Purpose of Life

### What is the Purpose of Life?

Dhamma Letter No. 23 described the three realms (desired, fine material, immaterial) outlined in the Buddha's teaching.

One can observe people on this earth with variant characters abiding and seeking happiness in all three realms. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that *all* beings want to be happy. Because all human beings practice on a path for happiness, that search in of itself could be called the purpose of life. Therefore, it is essential that you practice the *correct* path to happiness.

**What makes you happy?**

**How do you seek happiness?**

**What do you *really* want to do?**

**What is your purpose in *this* very life?**

According to the Buddha's teaching, we must consider these questions at the onset of The Path.

*May you all be happy and well!*

*May you achieve your wishes in this life!*

*With mettā,*



## 25 Q&A No. 9

**Q: Why are sensual desires disallowed in the practice of The Path?**

**A:** Most desire derives from feelings of pleasure. While pleasurable feelings are not bad in and of themselves, they are inherently fleeting; one cannot abide permanently in feelings of pleasure. **When an object of desire fails to be satisfied, one's desire turns to anger, an unpleasurable feeling.** This is the flow of nature and the means by which stress arises, and we suffer as a result of sensual desire.

Remember the natural law of the *ti-lakkhana*, *anicca*, *dukkha*, and *anattā* (*Dhamma Letters No. 14-21*) – the basis of the practice for which ultimate happiness is the goal. Things are changing all the time; all phenomena are impermanent (*anicca*). One's resistance to these facts is met with dissatisfaction (*dukkha*).

Additionally, keep in mind the relationship of *lobha* (greed), *dosa* (aversion), and *moha* (delusion). *Moha* is the root of all defilements and the underlying cause of *lobha* and *dosa*. When reality proves unsatisfactory with regard to one's *lobha*, *dosa* arises. Therefore, certain desires can serve as hindrances to the practice.

*May you be liberated from any bondages!*

*May you eradicate all defilement!*

*With mettā,*



## 26 What is Dhamma?

The word *Dhamma* (see Dhamma Letter No. 1) has three main meanings:

1. The universal and natural law of the cosmos
2. The collective teachings of the Buddha, i.e. Buddhism
3. Objects and phenomena observed in the practice in and of themselves

*Dharma* (Sanskrit) or *Dhamma* (Pāli) is a word often used by Buddhists. It refers to the second jewel among the three jewels of Buddhism: Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha. While this word is often defined as "the teachings of the Buddha," Dhamma is actually more than a Buddhist doctrine.

All of the Buddha's teachings can be summed up in one word: *Dhamma*. It means the truth. It also means "law" that exists in a person's mind and consciousness. It shows the principle of rightness **in Right View** (see Dhamma Letter No. 6).

In Buddhism, Dhamma means "cosmic law and order" expressed in the Buddha's teachings. In Buddhist philosophy, Dhamma is also a term for "phenomenon." Dhamma is a concept commonly known as "the teaching of the Buddha." Following the teachings of Buddhism **gives many people a sense and understanding of life.**

It can only be understood through personal and intuitive insights by one's own practice. **Then it becomes more than a concept – the ultimate truth.**

"Everyone talks about Dhamma but no one understands it.

Practicing purity of mind – this is true Dhamma."

- S. N. Goenka

*May you understand "Dhamma" through practice!*

*May you be well and happy!*

*With mettā,*



## 27 What is Dāna?

*Dāna* means giving (i.e. a gift). It is the first of the ten *pāramī* (perfections for ultimate happiness). ***Dāna* is to give generously.** *Dāna* can be offered in the form of heartfelt greetings, kind behavior, comforting words, and **visible** and **invisible** good deeds enacted **physically, verbally, or mentally**.

The following are passages from Majjhima Nikāya 142:

### ***Fourteen Individual Givings***

Ānanda, there are these fourteen gifts to individuals. What fourteen?

1. One gives a gift to the Supreme Buddha.
2. One gives a gift to a Private Buddha.
3. One gives a gift to an Arahant.
4. One gives a gift to someone practicing the way to the realization of the fruit of arahantship.
5. One gives a gift to a non-returner.
6. One gives a gift to someone practicing to realize the fruit of non-return.
7. One gives a gift to a once-returner.
8. One gives a gift to someone practicing to realize the fruit of once-return.
9. One gives a gift to a Stream-Enterer.
10. One gives a gift to someone practicing to the fruit of stream-entry.
11. One gives a gift to one outside the Buddha's path who is free of desire for sense pleasures.
12. One gives a gift to a virtuous ordinary person.
13. One gives a gift to an immoral ordinary person.
14. One gives a gift to an animal.

### ***Returns on a Gift to an Individual***



Now, Ānanda, gifts to the following individuals may be expected to yield the following returns.

“Giving a gift to an **animal yields** a return a **hundred times over**.

Giving a gift to an **unvirtuous ordinary person** yields a return a **thousand times over**.

Giving a gift to a **virtuous ordinary person** yields a return a **hundred thousand times over** (100,000).

Giving a gift to an **outsider free of desire for sense pleasures** yields a return a **trillion times over** (1,000,000,000,000).

But giving a gift to **someone practicing to realize the fruit of stream-entry** yields **incalculable, immeasurable returns**. How much more so giving a gift to a Stream-Enterer? How much more so giving a gift to someone practicing to realize the fruit of once-return? How much more so giving a gift to a once-returner? How much more so giving a gift to someone practicing to realize the fruit of non-return? How much more so giving a gift to a non-returner? How much more so giving a gift to someone practicing to realize the fruit of arahantship? How much more so giving a gift to an arahant? How much more so giving a gift to a Private Buddha? How much more so giving a gift to the Supreme Buddha?

### ***Seven Gifts to the Saṅgha***

One gives a gift to the

1. communities of both monks and nuns headed by the Buddha.
2. communities of both monks and nuns after the Supreme Buddha has attained final Nibbāna.
3. community of monks.
4. community of nuns.
5. Appoint this many monks and nuns for me from the community.
6. Appoint this many monks for me from the community.
7. Appoint this many nuns for me from the community.

Therefore, Ānanda, I say that there is no way a gift given to an individual can be





more fruitful than **giving a gift to the Saṅgha**.

**The existence of the Saṅgha, which maintains and carries forth the Dhamma is essential.**

Therefore, ***Dhammadāna*** is the highest ***dāna*** according to the Buddha. This is given via Dhamma talks, direct teachings of Dhamma, writing Dhamma Letters, donating Dhamma books, supporting Dhamma practice and distributions, etc.

*May you cultivate dāna (giving perfection) during life and be happy yourself!*

*May you accumulate your perfections through Dhamma practice!*

*May you be secured in this life and afterlife through dāna!*

*With mettā,*



## 28 Dāna by Purification

Dhamma Letter No. 27 discussed the analysis of giving (*dāna*) from the Buddha's discourses. Today's Dhamma Letter will review the four kinds of *dāna* purification described in the Buddha's word entitled "Four Ways of Purifying a Gift" (Majjhima Nikāya 142).

### ***Four Ways of Purifying a Gift (Giving)***

1. And how is a gift purified by the giver, not the receiver? It's when the **giver is virtuous**, of good character, but the **receiver is unvirtuous**, of bad character.
2. And how is a gift purified by the receiver, not the giver? It's when the **giver is unvirtuous**, of bad character, but the **receiver is virtuous**, of good character.
3. And how is a gift not purified by the giver or the receiver? It's when **both the giver and the receiver are unvirtuous**, of bad character.
4. And how is a gift purified by both the giver and the receiver? It's when **both the giver and the receiver are virtuous**, of good character.

These are the four ways of purifying a gift."

**when a desireless person gives to the desireless, a gift earned rightfully with a pleasant mind, believing the result of good kamma, that's truly the best of material gifts.**

Therefore, the use and **quality of one's mind** in the moment of giving and receiving gifts is essential to its purification. **The more pure the mind, the better the karmic result with regard to the *pāramī* (perfection) of *dāna*.**

*May you cultivate purification in Dhamma during your lifetime!*

*May your purification lead to wisdom to reach Nibbāna (ultimate happiness)!*

*May you experience happiness through giving!*

*With mettā,*



## 29 Q&A No. 10

**Q:** If greed is born from an unwholesome mind (Dhamma Letter No. 25) on the Path, then isn't even wanting or wishing for enlightenment or the attainment of ultimate happiness a form of greed or desire as well? **What's the difference between the desire for living and the desire for enlightenment?**

**A:** It might sound the same intellectually, but the function of the desire for living in the sensuous world (*kamachanda*) and the desire to realize Truth (*Dhamma chanda* or *kusala chanda*) is totally different.

The Buddha said in Majjhima Nikāya 39:

You can think like this, "This is enough. This has been achieved. It reaches the life of a meditator. We have no more work to do." And the person in charge may be satisfied. My monks, I inform you and declare to you. "If there is more work left to be done for the practitioner and you who save life, you must not abandon the meditator's goal."

**There are reasons we are born in the world of human beings.** We must know deeply what they are and aim to first become fully human. Then, we must aim to fulfill our duty as humans by fully realizing ultimate Truth in a wholesome and skillful way. **To accomplish that and to reach the ultimate happiness of liberation from suffering,** a strong wholesome wish or desire is needed. **This kind of desire is highly recommended by the Buddha.**

The difference is in whether we are honestly and sincerely aiming to know Truth or not. To really know the truth of being born into the world, any world (whether as a human, a god, or as any other being), is to possess a wisdom for stable happiness.

The key is in knowing in each moment whether there is a **tendency towards suffering or a tendency towards liberation in the mind. Until the eradication of all**



**defilements, we have to use the desire or the tendency towards liberation** as the rudder that keeps us going straight and forward in our practice.

The Buddha said that **the practice of Dhamma on the Path is beautiful in the beginning, beautiful in the middle, and beautiful in the end.** It is our wholesome desire for this beautiful Dhamma that supports us on the path of Dhamma.

*May you all be happy on the path of Dhamma!*

*May you all be eradicated of all defilements!!*

*May you all continue your Dhamma practice for happiness!*

*With mettā,*



## 30 Two Liberations (Vimutti): Majjhima Nikāya 53

1. **Liberation by mind (ceto-vimutti)**
2. **Liberation by wisdom (paññā-vimutti)**

One who practices meditation using the Samatha method develops concentration, which stops or suppresses the mental defilements (*asava* in Pāli) enough to gain insight, emphasizing the calm mind. He is said to have gained **liberation by mind**. One who practices meditation using the Insight method develops Vipassanā, which sees deeply enough into the subtle workings of the mental defilements to gain insight, emphasizing wisdom. He is said to have gained **liberation by wisdom** (Dhamma Letter No.2).

Both of the chief disciples of The Buddha (Venerable Sariputta and Venerable Moggallana) gained their Sainthood within a short time after hearing the good Dhamma, but Sariputta is called one liberated by wisdom, and Moggallana is called one liberated by mind. What is the difference? The answer lies in their disposition, namely the supreme wisdom faculty of Sariputta and the supreme concentration faculty of Moggallana.

**For complete liberation, one uses the Eightfold Path factor of concentration to cultivate wisdom (paññā), because without wisdom, liberation never happens.**

Majjhima Nikāya 46:

“What kind of person is one who is **liberated on both sides**? If a true man here transcends the world of subtle and fine material and experiences liberation beyond the immaterial world with his own body, and **destroys all anguish in the light of wisdom**, this true man is said to have been liberated on both sides, I say.”

This is the highest happiness of Nibbāna (Dhamma Letter No. 23), which is the ultimate goal in Buddhism.



## 31 Q&A No. 11

**Q: How can I remove my strong greed and be at peace?**

**A:** The Buddha described not only the five hindrances (*nivarana*), which block the meditator's ability to see things as they really are, but also the solutions to them.

The five hindrances are:

1. Sensory desire ([kāma](#)cchanda)
2. Ill-will ([vyāpāda](#))
3. Sloth-and-torpor ([thīna-middha](#))
4. Restlessness-and-worry ([uddhacca-kukkucca](#))
5. Doubt ([vicikicchā](#))

**These five hindrances are directly correlated with the five factors of jhāna (禪定, dhyana),** which are the meditator's skillful means for checking and finally overcoming all five of them.

The five jhāna factors are:

1. Vitakka (applied thinking) overcomes sloth and torpor
2. Vicāra (sustained thinking) overcomes doubt
3. Pīti (rapture) overcomes ill will
4. Sukha (happiness) overcomes restlessness and worry
5. **Ekaggatā (one-pointedness) overcomes sensory desire**

The reduction and eradication of greed, which arises through contact with the five senses of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching objects, **can be done by cultivating jhāna.** For example, a meditator can use a meditation method called the **ten kinds of foulness (*asubha*) to check and overcome the arising of lust.**



More meditation methods (like *Samatha* and *Vipassanā*) can be applied as needed over a lifetime of practice. **The essential point is that the more one understands the Dhamma, the more one can let go of not only greed but all the hindrances!**

*May you be liberated from any bondages!*

*May you be happy and peaceful!*

*May you develop wisdom through practice during this lifetime!*

*With mettā,*



## 32 Q&A No. 12

**Q: I worry about death. When I am thinking of my death, I worry about my family. How can I cultivate [the acceptance of] “death”?**

**A:** Birth, aging, sickness, and death are natural phenomena. Being present here and now, however, is the actual practice, the real practice, of the meditator.

Thinking about death and worrying about it is a sign that defilements are present in the mind, steering it toward useless proliferation.

**Buddhist meditation is about being present right here and right now.** It's not about going back to the past and worrying about it. And it's not about going into the future and worrying about it either.

If you reflect wisely and deeply, you will see that we are actually experiencing birth, existence, and death in every conscious moment. Each cell is born, lives, and dies momentarily, moment after moment after moment. When you can be in the present moment, then your mind will be at peace.

**To practice means to repeat something that you have not yet fully mastered over and over, again and again.** By practicing being with each moment of experience fully (over and over, again and again), one day the wisdom of the Buddha will arise. Then, you will know how to deal with death, as well as with life.

In Theravada Buddhism, **death is not really death in and of itself. It, like all things in the world, is based in delusion.** Meaning, death exists merely in relation to birth. When there is birth, there is death. No birth, no death. Death is in line with being, with birth.

So, it is good to reflect on death, because it will bring about the understanding of *anicca* (Dhamma Letter No. 21) and *dukkha* (Dhamma Letters No. 14-17). **When you understand death in the Dhamma way, wisdom will arise in you.**





Then, you will understand that when you are happy, your family will be happy. So, **be happy in this moment.**

*May you understand Dhamma and be happy!*

*May you develop wisdom through Dhamma practice!*

*With mettā,*



## 33 Rebirth in Kamma

*Karma* (*kamma* in Pāli) means *action* – any kind of intentional mental, verbal, or physical action. We are all responsible for our actions. **Much of our present mind state is the result of our past actions, and our present actions will determine our future mind states.** After the Buddha's enlightenment, he revealed to the world the process of dependent origination (*paṭicca-samuppāda*), which is happening in every conscious moment. It is this very process that shows us (to some extent) **how kammic actions are propelled from a cycle of cause-effect relationships** rather than from a person.

**Both good and evil actions (kamma) will trigger rebirth in *Saṃsāra*.** Good actions lead to rebirth in realms or dimensions of happiness (*sukha*). Evil actions lead to rebirth in realms or dimensions of misery or suffering (*dukkha*). After many, many cycles in *Saṃsāra*, **when a being finally breaks free from attachment to sense desires and the illusion of a separate self that is experiencing them, they can attain Nibbāna (Nirvāṇa), a state of liberation and freedom from every kind of suffering.**

***Every action is a cause that has an effect, and the effects of our actions come back to us.*** We should be very clear about this. Our good kamma will return to us as a blessing and lead to a good rebirth, and our bad kamma will return to us as misfortune and lead to rebirth in a lower form of regeneration.

A person can be reborn as another person, as an animal, or as any kind of creature, depending on their kamma. **Each rebirth moment to moment is propelled by some action performed in a previous moment. At the time of death, rebirth is propelled by some action performed in the current or previous life.** This is why people try really hard to gain merit by doing only those actions which improve their kammic field.

*May you cultivate the pāramī for your lasting happiness!*

*May you accumulate the merit of good verbal, mental, and physical actions with Nibbāna as your goal!*



## 34 Rebirth in Different Realms of Existence No. 1

We discussed **"kamma and rebirth"** last week in Dhamma Letter No. 33.

According to the Buddha, **there are thirty-one realms (or dimensions, *bhumi*) of existence, or places where rebirth can take place.** These realms are divided into three basic categories, each related to the three kinds of happiness discussed in Dhamma Letter No. 23.

- 1) The sensuous realm or the realm of desire for sensory objects (*kamaloka*),
- 2) The form realm or the realm of microscopic (fine-material) materiality (*rūpaloka*), and
- 3) The formless realm or the realm of immateriality (*arūpaloka*).

**Human beings** and almost all other sentient beings (such as gods, angels, animals, ghosts, and hellish creatures) belong to the first realm, the sensuous realm. Generally, these beings enjoy sensory objects, such as food, fame, materialism, sex, music, et cetera, and they try to avoid pain. We human beings (*manussa*) live in this realm. Both *dukkha* (pain) and *sukha* (happiness) are found here, but as a human being, you are most fortunate because this dimension is the only one where adequate moral initiative occurs and full enlightenment can be attained. Why is that?

**Because moderate pain and pleasure can be enough reasons for us to practice, and thus can be a motivator for spiritual growth.**

The second and third dimensions can be attained through mastering deep meditation, where one overcomes all sensuous desires. We will say more about this in the next Dhamma Letter.

*May you understand the relations of conditions, the teaching of the Buddha!*  
*May you be happy and well!*

*With mettā,*



## 35 Rebirth in Different Realms of Existence No. 2

Last week, in Dhamma Letter No. 34, we discussed **the 31 realms of existence**, or **the 31 dimensions where rebirth can take place**, and we divided them into three basic categories: the sensuous realm, the form realm, and the formless realm.

This week, we will look at how the 31 realms of existence can be further divided into four basic categories:

- 1) The formless realm (*arūpaloka*),
- 2) The form realm (*rūpaloka*),
- 3) The heaven and human realm (*kamaloka*), and
- 4) The fall or hell realm (*apaya*).

The first category, the formless, or intangible, realm (*arūpaloka*), is inhabited by beings that have no bodies and are made entirely of mind, but they can create bodies if they wish to see them. This level consists of 4 planes of *arūpa brahmas* (one of the principal deities). Even though the suffering they experience here is much less strong than what they experienced in the *rūpaloka*, **they are not completely free from the shackles of suffering** because – having no body – they do not have ears to hear the Buddha's teachings (the Dhamma) and to realize it for themselves.

The second category, the realm of forms (*rūpaloka*), is inhabited by beings with fine-material bodies. Therefore, they cannot experience sensual pleasures or intense pain. This level consists of 16 planes of *rūpa brahmas* (one of the principal deities), **each plane being commensurate with one of the four meditative absorptions they have attained. These *rūpa* beings can be perceived for yourself once you know the Dhamma.**

The third category, the realm of sensuous desire (*kamaloka*), is inhabited by beings with sensuous bodies. This level consists of 7 planes of happiness (6 planes of deities and 1



plane of human beings). **All the well-known worldly religions are combined in this level and next level.**

The fourth and last category, the realm of the unfortunate and the miserable, 4 planes is inhabited by ghosts with physical forms of varying sizes invisible to the naked eye, animals **due to evil deeds done and ignorance**, demons, and miserable hell beings **where existence pays the price for the *akusala* (unwholesome acts) committed in a previous life.**

**The goal of Buddhist practice is to get beyond all of these realms.** However, we first try to understand what it means to be human as well as non-human.

Then, **we practice from an established state of a human being** as mentioned in Dhamma Letter No. 34. To do that, **we have to cultivate wholesome minds or *pāramī* with effort** (Dhamma Letter No. 10)!

*May all beings accumulate the *pāramī* to realize Nibbāna!*

*May all beings be happy and well through our practice in this very life!*

*With mettā,*



## 36 Rebirth in Four Forms

The Buddha described **four forms of rebirth**.

1. Birth from an egg (Pāli: *aṇḍaja*; 卵生) – like a bird, fish, or reptile.
2. Birth from a womb (Pāli: *jalābuja*; 胎生) – like most mammals, including humans.
3. Birth from moisture (Pāli: *saṃsedaja*; 濕生) – like maggots appearing in rotting flesh, born from animals whose eggs are microscopic.
4. Birth from transformation (Pāli: *opapatika*; 化生) – like deities and hell-born beings who materialize in that realm miraculously.

Birth (*jāti*) is the eleventh link of the twelve-link chain of *paṭiccasamuppāda* ("dependent arising" or "dependent origination"), where birth can **refer both to rebirth (in terms of the next life) and to the arising of mental phenomena moment to moment (in terms of the ongoing principle of cause and effect)**.

When the term "birth" points to rebirth, it means **it is conditioned by becoming something (*bhava*), and necessarily gives rise to old age and death (*jarāmaraṇa*) in a living being**. In the Abhidhamma, however, birth is treated as the arising of mental phenomena moment to moment.

In Majjhima Nikāya 129, the Buddha used the discourse, **"Fools and Wise Men," to explain how human beings die and are reborn** (or more understanding, please read Dhamma Letter No. 33).

The Buddha said a fool has 3 characteristics:

"Here a fool is one who thinks **bad thoughts**, speaks **bad words**, and does **bad deeds**." He described the suffering in the realms of animal and hell beings into which a fool is reborn as a result of his evil deeds, and he used a variety of similes to aptly depict the horrors of the hells and the pitiful state of the animal realm.

The Buddha said a wise man also has 3 characteristics:



“Here a wise man is one who thinks **good thoughts**, speaks **good words**, and does **good deeds**. A wise man who has given himself over to good conduct of body, speech, and mind, on the dissolution of the body, after death, reappears in a happy destination, even in heaven.”

*May you all cultivate good thoughts, good words, and good deeds for your long-lasting benefit hereafter!*

*May all beings be happy and well!*

*With mettā,*



## 37 The Blind Turtle Parable

***“It’s hard to be born as a human being,”*** says the blind turtle parable of Majjhima Nikāya 129. In this parable, the Buddha used very vivid similes to describe what life is like in the hell and animal realms and **how difficult it is to be reborn as a human being.**

“Mendicants, suppose a person were to throw a yoke with a single hole into the ocean. The east wind wafts it west; the west wind wafts it east; the north wind wafts it south; and the south wind wafts it north. And there was a one-eyed turtle who popped up once every hundred years.

“What do you think, mendicants? Would that one-eyed turtle poke its neck through the hole in that yoke?

“No, sir. Only after a very long time, sir, if ever.

“That one-eyed turtle would poke its neck through the hole in that yoke sooner than a fool who has fallen to the underworld would be reborn as a human being, I say. Why is that? Because in that place there’s no principled or moral conduct and no doing what is good and skillful. There, they just prey on each other, preying on the weak.”

The Buddha emphasized that

**“...losing fortune, losing a family, and tying yourself up in such a situation is not a problem. It is a far greater defeat to be reborn in a painful place, a bad place, a fallen place, or hell after death.**

For more understanding of rebirth in *Saṃsāra*, please read Dhamma Letters No. 33-36.

*May you all understand the Buddha’s teachings well and cultivate wisdom to purify your actions of body, speech, and mind!*

*May you all be free from any kind of suffering!*

*May all beings be happy and well!*

*With mettā,*





## 38 Q&A No. 13

**Q. I understand karma, individual karma. But I do not understand when hundreds of people all die together. How does that collective karma occur?**

**A.** We can see it from two perspectives:

In Mahayana Buddhism and Indian philosophy, it is believed that groups with a common or shared karmic cause experience a shared result. This notion of shared karma supports the explanation of why hundreds of people experience collective suffering.

In Theravada Buddhism, however, it is believed that common or shared karma is merely a conventional truth (俗諦, *sammuti-sacca*), **a concept that refers to the tendency of individuals to perform similar *karmic* patterns**, not the ultimate truth (眞諦, *paramatta-sacca*).

Just as individuals gather to form a so-called **crowd**, collective, or shared, karma is seen as merely the merging or the coming together of each individual's karma. In this view, individuals are in the same boat, so to say, experiencing mere conditions.

**Each being's karma functions not only as a part of the whole but also functions on its own.**

In the Milindañha Sutta, it is written:

**“O great king, all who have intentions as sentient beings are born of karma. All that arises from seed is caused by cause.”**

This answer will be continued in the next Dhamma Letter.

*May you be free from any bondages!*

*May all beings be free from any suffering!*



## 39 Q&A No. 14

This letter is continuing the answer from the last Dhamma Letter.

**Q. I understand karma, individual karma. But I do not understand when hundreds of people all die together. How does that collective karma occur?**

**A.** We saw it from two perspectives in the last Dhamma Letter. And we can see it at a deep level.

What this means is that karma is recognized to be an ultimate reality - purely a single mental operation that is essentially independent of any group. **Karma is basically one's own inheritance, being nothing more and nothing less than the results of one's own mind operation (self-kamma, kammassakatā).** We can understand this in five aggregations [five *khandha*: form (*rūpa*, 色), feelings (*vedanā*, 受), perceptions (*saññā*, 想), mental action (*sankhārā*, 行), consciousness (*viññāṇa*, 識)] with Dhamma Letter No. 18.

Even the Buddha did not isolate individual karma from its impact on the natural environment as well as on other sentient beings. The close interrelationship between individual karma and the natural environment is confirmed in early Buddhist texts such as Aṅguttara Nikāya 77, Aggañña-Sutta, and the Cakkavattisīhanāda-Sutta.

**The ultimate goal of Buddhist practice is to get rid of suffering by analyzing and understanding it in detail, then cutting off its fuel,** thus ending the round of rebirth, the most vivid image of which is sentient beings running around and around the wheel of *saṃsāra*, the cycle of life and death. Why do they do this?

**The Buddha clearly stated that it is because of craving (*taṇhā*, *ponobhavikā*), which is the cause of rebirth and ignorance (*avijjā*), which is the cause of *Samāsāra*.** As long as there is craving and ignorance, the beginning-less and endless



wheel of the cycle of life and death continues to roll. For the arahant, however, there is no more saṃsāra, no more suffering.

Why? Because one has **overcome all defilements including craving**, the cause of rebirth, and the end of rebirth in all 31 realms of existence.

*May you understand the Buddha's teachings well and reach Nibbāna in this very life!*  
*May all beings be well and happy!*

*With mettā,*



## 40 Contemplation of the Mind (*Cittānupassanā*) in Vipassanā Meditation 1

From this Dhamma Letter we will discuss *cittānupassanā* (observing the mind). In 2020, Ayya Kosalla wrote a thesis about *cittānupassanā* in Korean. This contemplation of the mind will be continuous for the whole *vasa* (rains retreat) of three months.

Words of appreciation from Ayya Kosalla:

“I would like to express my gratitude to all the disciples of the Buddha who passed on the teachings of the Buddha, so that the teachings of the Buddha can continue into the present day after more than 2,560 years. This timeless study, along with all modern practitioners, will propel the truth towards future generations while honoring those who have perished.”

There are two types of Buddhist meditation methods: *Samatha* and *Vipassanā*. *Samatha* aims to attain a state of tranquility that is noticeable moment-to-moment during daily life or tranquility through sitting-concentration.

**Vipassanā aims to develop inner insight (within the mind/*cittā*) and wisdom (*paññā*) to reach Nirvāṇa (Nibbāna)— when anguish disappears.**

Vipassanā meditation is an important method to understand the Buddha's enlightenment, and according to the early scriptures, the Buddha declared that ***Vipassanā* meditation is the only way to achieve Nirvāṇa (*Ekagato Maggo*).**

*May you all be liberated from any bondages!*

*May you all be peaceful and happy!*

*May you all practice in your life and achieve the ultimate happiness of Nibbāna!*

*With mettā,*



## 41 Contemplation of the Mind (*Cittānupassanā*) in Vipassanā Meditation 2

In the Vipassanā meditation method there is a practice of meditation on body, feeling, mind, and dhammas (The Four Foundations of Mindfulness) **to reach Nirvāṇa—the state of complete happiness in which all anguish disappears.**

There is a meditation method within Vipassanā called *cittānupassanā*, which means “contemplation of the mind” or “mind observation” (this term will be used from here on interchangeably for *cittānupassanā*). This method establishes awareness **by observing the mind** through *satī* (mindfulness), and it plays the most important role in understanding the ultimate macrocosm of Dhamma (The Law of Nature) and in applying it as a law in daily life. Unfortunately, its importance has been overlooked compared to other methods of meditation, so it is not well-known. Perhaps this is because the subject itself, the mind, is strenuous and, at times, unfathomable. It is considered to be difficult for beginners, and thus, the method has not been actively taught.

This method was initiated due to the importance of the application of mind observation. **The contemplation of the mind is the most central point of The Four Foundations of Mindfulness and one which must be deepened and developed in order to reach the Buddha’s ultimate enlightenment.**

*May you all be liberated from any bondages!*

*May you all be peaceful and happy!*

*May you all practice in your life and achieve the ultimate happiness of Nibbāna!*

*With mettā,*



## 42 Contemplation of the Mind (*Cittānupassanā*) in Vipassanā Meditation 3

[This thesis's subtitle is "Comparison of the Shwe Oo Min method in Myanmar and the Pramote method in Thailand." The two meditation teachers are teaching cittanupassana rarely.]

In Myanmar, where most Vipassanā meditation is currently being developed by meditators, the method of conducting mind observation" was studied and organized based on the practice method performed by the Shwe Oo Min Meditation Practice Center. It is the only known practice **method of mind observation**.

In addition, the practice of a monk of the Ajahn Mun tradition, Ajahn Pramote, explores methods of mind observation and plays a leading role in Theravada Buddhism in Thailand. The reason for comparing the two representative methods is to understand **the function of mind observation objectively**.

As a result, when comparing the two methods, even though each is described with small differences, they are the same in practice. The essence of the method is to target the "mind" through **sati (mindfulness) and sampajañña (what is known obviously)** while also **to recognize the underlying intentions** of the body, speech, and mind.

For example, you may observe that you have a headache, but then you realize it is because you do not want to deal with cleaning dirty dishes when you're done meditating.

Remember that **the "mind" is also in the last four of the five aggregates:**

- *Rupa* (body, 色)
- *Vedanā* (feeling, 受)
- *Saññā* (image concept, 想)
- *Sankhara* (willingness, 行)
- *Viññāna* (consciousness/"knowing-mind," 識),



**which are all impermanent (*anicca*, 無常), unsatisfactory (*dukkha*, 苦), and non-self (*anattā*, 無我).**

Applying this to the example above, you see that you can do the dishes one-by-one. The headache will be gone as you notice feeling at-ease with nice, clean dishes. Maybe in the future you will try to not let them pile up again before sitting down to meditate.

**Upon this realization, the defilements are removed through abandoning greed (*lobha*, 貪), anger (*dosa*, 瞋), and delusion (*moha*, 癡).**

*May you all be liberated from any bondages!*

*May you all be peaceful and happy!*

*May you all practice in your life and achieve the ultimate happiness of Nibbāna!*

*With mettā,*



## 43 Contemplation of the Mind (*Cittānupassanā*) in Vipassanā Meditation 4

This letter is continuing from Dhamma Letters No. 40-42.

Through **the wisdom of non-greed (無貪), non-anger (無瞋), and non-delusion (無癡)**, the Four Noble Truths are **obtained by self-acquisition**.

It seems that both methods (*cittānupassanā* of Shwe On Min & Pramote) produce the same results that do not deviate from the teachings of the Buddha. One difference between the two methods is that Shwe Oo Min guides only Vipassanā, but Ajahn Promote guides Samatha and Vipassanā both (see *Dhamma Letters No. 5* and *No. 6*). However, each method consists of the same path with enlightenment as their result.

As a way to approach the Buddha's enlightenment more clearly **through this direct experience**, it can be seen that **the practice of mind observation** among The Four Foundations of Mindfulness is a technique that is central to Vipassanā meditation.

Also, it is necessary to properly understand and practice **how to perform mind observation (*cittānupassanā*) to complete natural law observation (*dhammānupassanā*)** and four observations with the correct viewpoint.

Modern Vipassanā meditation practice is not a religious one, but **a universal practice that benefits human life**. Therefore, in the future, it is necessary to systematically study the Buddha's practice method; I hope that through this meditation, modern people will be able to escape from suffering and join the path to happiness in pursuing a better human life.

*With mettā,*





## 44 Study of Cittanupassana in Vipassanā Meditation: Introduction 1

Vipassanā meditation is now better known as “mindfulness meditation.” The reason why the Buddha's meditation method can be transmitted without change for more than 2,560 years is because **the Buddha's words were recited and passed along through oral tradition** during earlier times.

Sri Lanka is one of the countries where the early traditions of Buddhism are maintained. The three baskets of Pāli Text were later copied collectively and translated from the West into English. Since then, this practice of Vipassanā has been passed down to the present day.

It is widely practiced as a meditation method in order to pursue happiness and for psychotherapy in countries around the world as well. Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) is a typical example of Vipassanā for mental health treatment. The reason for this development is because the Buddha's meditation method was transmitted to the West where it was studied in various forms.

Bhikkhus, this is for the purification of all sentient beings, for sorrow and lamentation. The right way to get rid of suffering and hatred to overcome. It is the only way to realize Nirvāṇa. - Digha Nikāya:22

It is the first verse of the Maha-Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta (DN22, 大念處經).

**It is truly the only way to realize Nirvāṇa (liberation from suffering), which is the ultimate goal of the Buddha's teachings and beneficial to all.**

The purpose of this study is to provide benefits to all who are interested in meditation by in-depth understanding of the Buddha's Vipassanā meditation, the root of mindfulness meditation.



Therefore, there is a need for a variety of studies on the contents of each part or considerations that deal with the fundamentals of this meditation practice.

*May you all be liberated from any bondages!*

*May you all be peaceful and happy!*

*May you all practice in your life and achieve the ultimate happiness of Nibbāna!*

*With mettā,*



## 45 Study of Cittanupassana in Vipassanā Meditation: Introduction 2

In this study of Vipassanā meditation, I want to discuss the meditative method of “contemplation of the mind,” which holds the mind as the object of meditation. It is one object within the Four Foundations of Mindfulness::

1. *Kāyanupassana* (mindfulness of the body)
2. *Vedanāupassana* (mindfulness of feeling[s])
3. *Cittanupassana* (mindfulness of the mind)
4. *Dhammanupassana* (mindfulness of dhammas).

The reason for emphasis on contemplation of the mind (*cittanupassana*) is **because the mind controls everything in each practice**. It is the mind which observes the objects of body, feeling, dhammas, and mind. ***You are observing the mind via the mind.***

Whenever the three karmas of body, speech, and mind occur, the mind and body act simultaneously with these four mindfulness meditations. However, the workings of cittanupassana happens at each stage of practice (contemplation on body, feeling, mind, and dhammas) because **it is only through the mind that the Dhamma – the ultimate truth – can be realized**. This enables us to apply it as the law of life and to see things as they really are - leading us to a breakthrough.

Two Methods will be introduced in this study.

1. The Vipassanā teaching method of a world-famous Thai monk Ajahn Mun (Luang Phor Mun Bhūridatto) is being handed down all over the world. Among them is Ajahn Pramote (Luang Phor Pramote), who is currently teaching, as of the writing of this letter, at Wat Suan Santidham (The Garden of the Peaceful Dhamma) in Thailand.

2. Even in Myanmar, where the tradition of *Vipassanā* meditation is the most practiced and taught in modern times, cittanupassana is still not typically well-guided. However, Shwe Oo Min Meditation Center (guided by U Tejaniya Sayadaw) is the only place in Myanmar known for this method.



Understanding these two methods first and comparing their similarities and differences is necessary to properly understand the practice of cittanupassana, which is one part of Satipaṭṭhāna (the four mindfulness methods) in Vipassanā meditation.

It is hoped that **by understanding the phenomenon of the mind and its operation**, this will contribute to the development of modern psychology and psychiatry as well.

*May you all be liberated from any bondages!*

*May you all be peaceful and happy!*

*May you all practice in your life and achieve the ultimate happiness of Nibbāna!*

*With mettā,*



## 46 Study of Cittanupassana in Vipassanā Meditation: Background Research 1

Many people are interested in meditation and experience its benefits while practicing it, but most of them end up in Samatha meditation to achieve calmness by focusing on a specific object (Dhamma Letters No. 5-6).

Jack Kornfield, a famous Western meditation teacher, practiced meditation in Thailand as a monk during his youth. When he returned to America, however, he found himself in a state of disarray all over again. After that, he shared his story of a more devoted practice of Vipassanā which was introduced in the book *A Path With Heart*.

Jack Kornfield's experience is a very common one. **The calm state of being that Samatha meditation produces is a temporary result because the defilements of the mind have not been fully investigated and properly uprooted.**

Many meditators come to realize the importance of the mind through trial and error in their practice. This may be how the Buddha became enlightened about 2,560 years ago, too.

In this study, the main reason for practicing cittanupassana (心念處) among the methods of meditation is because the Buddha's words always emphasize the mind.

“The mind precedes all dhammas, the mind is their master, and the mind carries out all actions.

As the wheel of a cart follows the footsteps of an ox,

Because of the deed, suffering follows the deed.” - Dhammapada (法句經) 1

This demonstrates, as the first verse of the Dharma Sutra shows, **the mind is the basis of all practice**. Likewise, in Vipassanā meditation too, **if you do not understand the mind, many difficulties will follow in your practice, and any results will not be cultivated into steady mindfulness that can be maintained during daily life activities.**



## 47 Study of Cittanupassana in Vipassanā Meditation: The Four Objects

In Venerable Nanatiloka's commentary, *The Word of the Buddha*, he describes “mind” as a word that means a moment of consciousness – especially the little ones. The mind or consciousness of a meditator who is sensitive to changes points to the moments of mind or consciousness which is not a fixed entity, but **the totality of the mind that is created and then disappears by conditions**. Strictly speaking, the basic position of Buddhism is that **minds change from moment to moment**, so no two minds are identical.

**As time changes, the conditions that created the mind also change.** Since there is no time period which remains the same, then there is no state of mind that can remain the same – **our minds are constantly changing**.

We can only refer to states of mind (ex: happiness, sadness, or tiredness) by naming a certain category for convenience, just as we use “I” in language even though there is no ultimate Self.

The infinite states of mind and processes of consciousness are explained in detail in the Abhidhamma of early Buddhism, so please refer to that text to learn more or submit a question for more resources.

The practice of cittānupassanā is a method of establishing observation and awareness of the mind among the “four objects” of the body, feeling, mind, and dhammas (身受心法). Cittanupassana consists of **observation of the mind**. It is a method of performing more detailed work **by noticing primary psychological phenomena or secondary cognitive phenomena occurring in the mind** as they are.

One may consider the building blocks of mindfulness which can begin with observation of breathing meditation or observation of body movements, which is called “contemplation of the body” (*Kāyanupassana*) in the Four Foundations of Mindfulness.



**This may lead to the next base: observation and awareness of the most primitive psychological phenomenon**, such as feeling, or sensation; pleasant feeling, painful feeling, and dull feeling that is neither pleasant nor painful. This is called “contemplation of feeling” (*vedanāupassana*).

**After observing these phenomena either independently or sequentially, contemplation of the mind is next.** These building blocks help to prepare and calm the mind for observation, so if one is an experienced meditator, one may already be able to begin with *cittanupassana*.

*May you all be liberated from any bondages!*

*May you all be peaceful and happy!*

*May you all practice in your life and achieve the ultimate happiness of Nibbāna!*

*With mettā,*



## 48 Study of Cittanupassana in Vipassanā Meditation

The mind, which is included with the fourth Foundation of Mindfulness, dhammas (conditioned reality), can be defined as the five aggregates (五蘊), which are:

1. Form (*rūpa*, 色)
2. Feelings (*vedanā*, 受)
3. Perceptions (*saññā*, 想)
4. Mental action (*sankhārā*, 行)
5. Consciousness (*viññāṇa*, 識)

It has a very close relationship with the acting structure of existence and cognition explained by the 18 “worlds,” “sense bases,” or “sense spheres” (*āyatana*), which are 12 bases for the arising of consciousness and 6 resulting sense-consciousnesses. The 12 bases consist of 6 internal sense bases (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, mind, 眼耳鼻舌身意) and 6 external sense bases (visibility, sound, odor, taste, touch, mental objects). The 6 sense-consciousnesses are the 6 internal and 6 external bases combined (i.e. eye-consciousness = eye base + visible forms).

It represents a dynamic structure, called Dependent Origination that develops into five aggregates through the contact between the three foundations:

6 internal sense bases, 6 external sense bases, and 6 sense consciousness (Eye consciousness, Ears consciousness, Nose consciousness, Tongue consciousness, Body consciousness, Mind consciousness)

As such, in Vipassanā practices, the meditative body that observes the body and observes feelings **cannot be observed and separated from the functions of the mind.**

Although it can be said that each of the Four Foundations of Mindfulness is integrated into the practice of all (body, feeling, mind, and dhammas), I believe that the practice of *Kāyanupassana* (mindfulness of the body), *vedanānupassana* (mindfulness of the





feeling), *cittanupassana* (mindfulness of the mind) and *dhammanupassana* (mindfulness of *dhammas*, *conditioned things*) should be done correctly – step by step.

In this sense, although the practice of *cittanupassana* is a vitally important step of the Four Foundations, it has not been investigated in depth for the purposes of Vipassanā meditation research so far.

In Mahayana Buddhism, the mind or consciousness has been dealt with in various ways through Confucianism and other Buddhist ideas from various angles.

In fact, now that the Vipassanā meditation practice of early Buddhism is becoming common, there is a need to study all steps of this method in more detail.

Currently, Vipassanā meditation has developed in the West as “mindfulness meditation” and is being applied in various ways in Western psychiatry. I believe, however, that the Buddha's meditation is, at its root and for the proper understanding of Buddhism, centered on mind observation. Therefore, ***cittanupassana* is in a very important position to be integrated, practiced**, and researched further.

Through this study, I have prepared this with the hope that it will be helpful to many modern people who are interested in Vipassanā meditation or mindfulness meditation.

*May you all be liberated from any bondages!*

*May you all be peaceful and happy!*

*May you all practice in your life and achieve the ultimate happiness of Nibbāna!*

*With mettā,*



## 49 Understanding Samatha and Vipassanā (I)

There are two types of meditation offered by early Buddhism (see Dhamma Letter No. 5):

1. **Samatha** (止, concentration) meditation **which seeks stillness by concentrating on an object.**
2. **Vipassanā** (觀, insight) meditation **where one can gain insight and wisdom by observing phenomena that arise, maintain, and disappear in matter (the body) and spirit (the mind).**

First, let's look at the etymology of "Samatha." The Pāli word "Samatha" is a masculine noun derived from "√śam (to be quiet)." Its meaning is "quiet" or "clear," and it is expressed in words such as "calm," "tranquility," "peace," or "serenity."

In Samatha meditation, the meditator's attempt to reach this calmness of mind in a concentrated state is produced with great effort rather than comfortable ease. Samatha meditation means "concentration meditation," which focuses on only one object. It seems to cease. Any unwholesome (不善法) or harmful conditions can be removed with Samatha meditation temporarily. **It's important to know that even though these conditions have stopped, they are still there, but dormant.** This is why, in Chinese, the character "止" (stop) is used.

In the early scriptures, "Samatha" has a very close relationship with "samādhi" and "jhāna" and is used almost as a synonym for both terms. The scriptures do not clearly distinguish between them, but if you look at their usage, you can see the difference between them. In particular, **"samādhi" is used specifically in Vipassanā meditation** (See Dhamma Letter No. 6), and the contents will be discussed in the next Dhamma Letter.

*May you all practice in your life and achieve the ultimate happiness of Nibbāna!*

*With mettā,*



## 50 Understanding Samatha and Vipassanā (II)

As explained in Dhamma Letter No. 12, the etymology of the word “Vipassanā” is a compound word of “*vi*” and “*passanā*.” The prefix “*vi*” has the meaning of separation, distinction, difference, and dispersion. “*Passanā*” has the meanings of gaze, observation, contemplation, and continuous awareness.

Using this etymological analysis, it can be said that “**Vipassanā is the separation and continuous penetration of everything related to perceptual phenomena.**”

In this definition, Vipassanā is called “right intuition,” “insight,” “introspection,” etc. Recently, it has been established as a practice method of early Buddhism, and now in the West, Vipassanā meditation is translated and used as “insight meditation” or “mindfulness meditation.”

Various concepts recently revealed in the English translation process; such as “carving,” “taking,” “mindfulness,” “awareness,” and “seeing through,” refer to “**sati**,” used in the core method of Vipassanā practice.

Additionally, it is used as “**awakening**,” “**concentrating attention**,” and “**keeping the mind**.”

In this study, the original word “sati” will be used as it is, or it will be used as “mindfulness,” depending on the context. In English, it is translated as “mindfulness,” “bare attention,” “noting,” “awareness,” etc.

To be continued...



## 51 Understanding Samatha and Vipassanā (III)

Vipassanā meditation can be said to be a meditation practice that observes all phenomena as they are in reality from **the perspective of impermanence** (*anicca*, 無常), **suffering** (*dukkha*, 苦), and **selfless-ness** (*anattā*, 無我) through *sati* (mindfulness).

Among the meditation practices of the body, feeling, mind, and dhamma for **attaining Nirvāṇa, the state of complete happiness where all defilements disappear**, the meditation on the nature of mind, especially, shows its importance for the **"extinction of defilements"** (see Dhamma Letter No. 11).

Bhikkhus, **I do not say to those who know and see that suffering ceases to exist, but to those who do not know and do not see, I do not say that suffering ceases to exist.**

An example of what the Buddha means by one who "know[s] and see[s]" is one who is able to observe and know why something is happening to the body, how it is happening, and how it feels.

Through observing causes, observing when they disappear, and observing the conditional arising and disappearing of *dhamma*, one can perceive that body, feeling, mind, and *dhamma* only arise and disappear by the ***dhamma-vicaya-sambojjhaṅga*** (擇法覺支, one of the enlightenment factors), which is **investigation of the mind**.

When you do this, **you will come to know that there is nothing but impermanence, suffering, and without-self nature** (無常, 苦, 無我 - Dhamma Letters No. 14-21) .

To be continued...



## 52 Understanding Samatha and Vipassanā (IV)

Samatha Meditation is a method widely known not only in Buddhism, but also in eras before Buddhism. It is an intensive meditation method that can be practiced in other religions.

Buddhism, however, **aims at complete enlightenment and Nirvāṇa (the cessation of defilements)**. Samatha meditation has been used as a foundation for methods for Vipassanā meditation which observes the life and death of phenomena, insight into impermanence, suffering, and non-self (無常·苦·無我). Vipassanā meditation also develops wisdom (*pañña*) (see Dhamma Letters No. 49-51).

***He who does not have wisdom has no jhāna, and he who does not practice jhāna has no wisdom. When jhāna and wisdom coexist, one is near Nirvāṇa.***

- Dhammapada (法句經) 372.

This is to emphasize that the proper harmony of Samatha and Vipassanā (정혜쌍수, 定慧雙修) leads to Nirvāṇa. Therefore, **Samatha and Vipassanā are inextricably linked.**

To be continued...

*May you all be liberated from any bondages!*

*May you all be peaceful and happy!*

*May you all practice in your life and achieve the ultimate happiness of Nibbāna!*

*With mettā,*



## 53 Understanding Samatha and Vipassanā (V)

Since **Samatha meditation** requires concentration, it is best to focus the mind on one, singular object. This prevents the subject from being moved from one object to another which disturbs concentration and creates distraction.

In this process, the five hindrances (*pañcanīvaraṇa*, 五蓋) disappear, and the factors of *jhāna* (*jhānaṅga*) develops (see Dhamma Letter No. 31)

A pure Vipassanā (“dry-Insight”) meditator overcomes the five obstacles through a moment of samādhi (*khaṇika samādhi*) by wisdom. The practice of Samatha (止), however, develops continuous stillness and serenity through concentration and thereby achieves *jhāna* (禪定) in which **the obstacles are temporarily removed**.

This practice of cultivating calmness via concentration can also be viewed as a process of preparation for the next step, which is **entering Vipassanā (觀) meditation through mind development. Finally, the obstacles can be completely removed through the Vipassanā way.**

**Vipassanā meditation aims to gain wisdom by seeing phenomena as they really are.** Vipassanā, which **aims at Nirvāṇa, is a method unique to Buddhism, and it can be seen as the pinnacle of Buddhist practice.**

The Buddhist practice described in the early sutras (Pāli-Nikāya) can be viewed in two ways.

To be continued...



## 54 Understanding Samatha and Vipassanā (VI)

As a perspective for a way to solve problems in life, Samatha and Vipassanā meditation can be explained:

- "Samatha": a method of **forgetting yourself temporarily** : that means to stop thinking about your past, present, and future life situations (restlessness of the mind); by focusing on a singular object and suppressing emotions that are overpowering, whether negative or positive.
- "Vipassanā": a method of **knowing yourself clearly**. To focus inwards, which develops understanding that all phenomena are changing, unsatisfied, and non-self.

The meditation practices of Vipassanā practiced in early Buddhism also include a method called “pure” or “dry” Vipassanā (Suddha Vipassanā, 純觀), in which Vipassanā is practiced directly without cultivating Samatha meditation.

In the early scriptures of the Aṅguttara Nikāya (AN 4.170, PTS: AN.II.157), four ways to cultivate Samatha and Vipassanā are described:

- ① *Practice Samatha (止) first and then practice Vipassanā (觀).*
- ② *Practice Vipassanā (觀) first and then practice Samatha (止).*
- ③ *Practice Samatha and Vipassanā (止觀) together in pairs.*
- ④ *There is a person who has a mind caught by dhamma-uddhacca (excitement about the Dhamma), and when his mind stays only inside his own mind, approaches his object rightly, and concentrates on his object, then he has formed the Path (道, Magga).*

The Buddha described four types of cultivating Samatha and Vipassanā in this way.

**May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!**

*With mettā,*



## 55 Understanding Samatha and Vipassanā (VII)

The last Dhamma Letters (No. 40-54) were about the Contemplation of Mind (Cittanupassana) during the traditional Buddhist retreat called Vassa. It occurs during the monsoon season (i.e. summer).

Since this topic of Cittanupassana was a part of my thesis, it will be continued with more guided information for its application in meditation for the retreat in the next year. In the last Dhamma Letter (No. 54), it quoted the Yuganaddha Sutta (Tranquility and Insight in tandem) in the Aṅguttara Nikāya (AN 4.170, PTS: AN.II.157).

To be brief, **it is about the importance of the balance between Samatha and Vipassanā (tranquility & insight) meditation**: See Dhamma Letter No. 52.

One is focused on developing a foundation for a calm and well-focused mind to generate insight/wisdom into the law of nature and one's own nature. The other is a way to experience insight/wisdom which leads to developing concentration that causes a tranquility of mind.

**Both of these methods help each other to have insight into what is ultimately real about the external environment (the world) and internal environment (yourself).**

*You can practice meditation using whichever method is suitable to you depending on your conditions or use both in balance.* If you find that you have a restless mind, it may be a good strategy to start with Samatha to develop concentration to be able to observe phenomena clearly. If you find that you are able to concentrate easily, it may be a good strategy to dive right into observing the phenomena arising and passing away in mind or body.

**First of all, the quality of your mind is most important** (see Dhamma Letters No. 10 and 46).

*May you develop your concentration and insight through meditation!*





## 56 What is Nibbāna (Nirvāṇa): The Ultimate Happiness?

Most Buddhists have the goal to experience Nibbāna in their current life (see Dhamma Letter No. 23). When I ask them what Nibbāna is, however, they can't answer, their answer is ambiguous, or it's a conceptual perception.

The Buddha described Nibbāna clearly: **the state of no defilements.**

Then, **what are the causes of defilements?**

They are the Three Poisons which are **lobha (craving), dosa (aversion), and moha (delusion)** (Dhamma Letter No. 11).

**What should we practice to get rid of those unwholesome minds?**

The 3 teachings and practices in Buddhism are

1. Sīla (Morality),
2. Samadhī (Tranquility - Dhamma Letter No. 6), and
3. Paññā (Wisdom/Understanding - Dhamma Letter No. 3), which leads to purifying the mind from these 3 poisons.

See previous Dhamma Letters for more understanding (No. 2, No.10, No. 30).

**How did Buddha describe Nibbāna in other ways?**

1. Suññata (**emptiness**)
2. Animitta (**no object/sign/imagination**)
3. Appanīhita (**no wanting**)

More descriptions to express these states of experience are *asankhara* (**no volition**) and **the state of no conditions**. Sankhara (activities by body, speech, and mind) is one of the 5 aggregates for observing non-self and knowing that.



One who has the goal of Nibbāna in this life can check for the qualities of that state of mind with the descriptions by the Buddha. One can progress in one's practice with this knowledge.

*May you understand Dhamma and practice for your happiness!*

*May you practice during your lifetime in silā, samadhī, and paññā!*

*May your practice be a cause for the condition of Nibbāna!*

*With mettā,*



## 57 Q&A No. 15

**Q: Is it wrong if I have the goal of Nibbāna (Nirvāṇa) in this life? Should I postpone the goal until I practice more?**

**A:** Of course, you can keep this as a goal for this life (see Dhamma Letter No. 29 as in Majjhima Nikāya 39). **The Buddha said the wholesome wish for Nibbāna is the source of diligent practice for motivation.** Even a tiny seed becomes a fruit.

**No doubt of Dhamma means that one fully and sincerely believes to be the heir of their kamma** (Dhamma Letters No. 33 and 39). Wholesome seeds result in wholesomeness. Unwholesome seeds result in unwholesomeness.

Therefore, one who practices for Nibbāna never acts in an unwholesome way intentionally. It is only because ignorance/delusion remains to be uprooted that problems continue to arise.

However, if one practices diligently, one can reach the goal of Nibbāna in a future life. Even the Sotāpanna (stream enterer - the first level of enlightened one) may have to go through rebirth up to 7 lives in the Buddha's teaching (this will be discussed in the next Dhamma Letter). **It all depends on the kamma (karma).**

**Only when one has practiced to the point of removing all seeds of ignorance/delusion does one prevent new unwholesome results from arising. That's why we have to keep cultivating the wholesomeness of our mind by body, speech, and consciousness.**

*May you practice diligently!*

*May you reach your goal in this life!*

*With mettā,*



## 58 4 Levels of Enlightenment: Becoming an Ariya 1

One who experiences the state of Nibbāna (Nirvāṇa - Dhamma Letters No. 56 and 57) is called an Ariya (Noble One). There are 4 levels of Ariya who are enlightened. There are four groups of noble disciples when Path (도, 道) and Fruit (과, 果) are taken as pairs and eight groups of individuals when taken separately.

1. Sotāpanna: Stream-enterer (1) the path to stream-entry; (2) the fruition of stream-entry
2. Sakadāgāmī: Once-returner (3) the path to once-returning; (4) the fruition of once-returning
3. Anāgāmī: Non-returner (5) the path to non-returning; (6) the fruition of non-returning
4. Arahant: a Fully Awakened One (7) the path to arahantship; (8) the fruition of arahantship

**The first level of enlightenment** (Sotāpanna - Stream-enterer) requires the removal of one's concept of personality, which means that **one no longer has the wrong view of an "I."** This means that one has fully understood through meditation practice that there's no "I" which controls any physical and mental process. **It is clear that the body is not "me" and the mind is not "me."** All these processes are caused by actions and conditioned within that moment.

**The most important thing to understand through practice is no-self.**

With a deeper understanding of the perception of self as just **being composed of the 5 aggregates, one gains a clearer view of no-self** (Dhamma Letters No. 18 and 19).

*May you develop your concentration and insight through meditation!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*May you be peaceful and happy!*

*With mettā,*



## 59 4 Levels of Enlightenment: Becoming an Ariya 2

The Buddha described each level of Ariya by which defilements have been removed. One can check their progress by studying **the 10 fetters which bind beings to the cycle of rebirth**:

1. Self-Illusion (Sakkaya-Ditṭhi)
2. Doubt (Vicikiccha)
3. Attachment to Rules and Rituals (Silabbata-paramaso)
4. Sensual Lust (Kamacchando)
5. Ill Will (Vyapada)
6. Craving for fine material existence (rūpa-raga)
7. Craving for immaterial existence (Arūpa-raga)
8. Conceit (Mana)
9. Restlessness (Uddhacca)
10. Ignorance (Avijjā)

An anāgāmī (non-returner) has abandoned the five lower fetters (#1-5) but has the last five fetters remaining. An arahant has no fetters at all.

**The entry of stream ariya (Sotāpanna : Stream-Enterer) means that one who has this right view** can automatically get rid of the other 2 fetters (attachments of ritual and ceremony and doubt of the 3 gems - Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha). **It is only with this right view that leads one successfully on the Noble Eightfold Path - Majjhima Patipada (中道, Middle Way) - to Nibbāna.**

When finally one becomes an arahant, one understands thoroughly without hesitation:

***"Birth is over.***

***The practice for purification has been accomplished.***

***I did my job and finished.***

***I will never come back as any being again."*** - Gautama Buddha



## 60 Q&A No. 16 Right View 1

This Dhamma Letter is following from the last letter about the first level of enlightened being, Sotāpanna (Stream-Enterer).

**Q: What is the right view?**

**A:** People will think that "I am right," and then believe they have the right view. People think in this way as their ideology, religion, nationalism, etc. It causes conflict like religious wars, political disputes, and family disharmony, and it breaks apart relationships. **If someone has the *real* right view, however, these kinds of conflicts would never happen.**

So then, **what is the real right view?** It is perceiving things as they ultimately exist - seeing something as it really is. **When one has the right view, one doesn't wear colored lenses on their spectacles.**

Remember the phrase, "seeing with rose-colored glasses." Therefore, with the *real* right view, someone can see things clearly because of the clarity of their view - the way they are looking at things. For example, someone with the right view would understand another person's behavior and the many conditions that might be influencing them to behave in this way and that way, and then they would accept any differences of opinion. No one is the same. Even twins who are delivered from the same womb have different characteristics.

**A Sotāpanna (Stream-Enterer) has obtained the right view which allows them entry into the stream leading to Nibbāna, and this results in their not being reborn in the lower realms of beings anymore. The reason for this is because they have attained the right view - the right way to understand things as they are - which will lead them upwards to the end of the path automatically (Dhamma Letters No. 56 and 58).**



## The Noble Eightfold Path:

Someone who has the right view means they understand *the Four Noble Truths*.

Right view is the first factor of **The Noble Eightfold Path** (the 4th Truth of the Four Noble Truths), which is:

1. **Right View/Understanding (Sammā-Diṭṭhi)**
2. Right Thought (Sammā-Saṅkappa)
3. Right Speech (Sammā-Vācā)
4. Right Action (Sammā-Kammanta)
5. Right Livelihood (Sammā-Ajīva)
6. Right Effort (Sammā-Vāyama)
7. Right Mindfulness (Sammā-Sati)
8. Right Concentration (Sammā-Samādhi).

**Right View is the leader of all paths.** When one has found the right path, they can go the right way as they wish. The right path that involves the real right view is called “**Majjhima Patipada (The Middle Way, 中道)**” which does not tilt to one side or the other.

*May you develop your concentration and insight through meditation!*

*May you be peaceful and happy!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 61 Q&A No.17 Right View 2

**Q: How does one obtain the right view?**

**A:** We discussed the right view in the last Dhamma Letter. How to obtain the right view is like asking, "**How can we get clear eyes?**"

First of all, **observe oneself** - all activities of body, speech, and mind. **Observe the 3 poisons of greed, aversion, and delusion to purify the mind in order to see clearly without the influence of these defilements.**

Dhammapada 1, 2:

1. Mind precedes all mental states. Mind is their chief; they are all mind-wrought. If with an impure mind a person speaks or acts, suffering follows him like the wheel that follows the foot of the ox.
2. Mind precedes all mental states. Mind is their chief; they are all mind-wrought. If with a pure mind a person speaks or acts, happiness follows him like his never-departing shadow.

**The steps of cultivating the mind to perceive clearly:**

- 1. Observe yourself (*nama-rūpa: matter-spirit*) as it is without putting any concept or imagination onto it.**
- 2. Accept the differences as you see them.**
- 3. Investigate the causes.**
- 4. Understand the differences.**

This is Vipassanā meditation.

Buddha said the only way to gain clarity is with Vipassanā (by being able to see through/beyond the distortions), which **develops wisdom** (Dhamma Letter No. 2: *sīla-samādhī-paññā*).

*With mettā,*





## 62 Right View 3: Through Vipassanā Meditation

Continuing from Dhamma Letters No. 60 and 61:

As mentioned in Dhamma Letter No. 50, the word "**Vipassanā**" is **"seeing through" with sati. It is necessary to observe carefully from various angles.** It cannot be properly understood from simply personal feelings (*sañña*) or from one or two perspectives. **Efforts are needed to see not only from one direction, but from multiple directions - another person's point of view. Wisdom arises when you can understand the perspectives of other people as well as your own.**

The heart's ability to rejoice (*mudita*, one of four brahma minds) in the success of others ***without being stingy and jealous comes from the right view.*** Such a mind is the mind of a Sotāpanna, Stream-Enterer, the first stage of enlightenment (Dhamma Letters No. 58 and 59). **Vipassanā meditation begins with self-reflection and self-examination. Until the view is right, a suffering and uneasy mind never ends.**

Quote from Dhamma Letter No. 6 (The Two Ways of *Samādhi*):

**How does *samādhi* relate to Right View?**

*Samādhi* is achieved through understanding and wisdom as a result of the means of seeing things as they are with clarity. "Seeing as it is" means to see without conceptualizations of what one desires to see or has seen previously. It is through Right View, the first step of the Buddha's Noble Eightfold Path, that we come to see clearly. Therefore, **one cannot be in complete tranquility, *samādhi*, until attaining the Right View.**

*May all understand the Dhamma well!*

*May all develop wisdom through meditation!*

*With mettā,*



## 63 Q&A 18: Emptiness (空, Suñña)

**Q: What does "forgetting yourself" in Dhamma Letter No. 54 mean? As a result, does it mean something good or the condition of "Emptiness (空, Suñña)"?**

**A:** When practicing Samatha meditation, which holds one object, it leads to calmness and cuts off the mind's thinking process. In this way, *having an object can temporarily and potentially lead to forgetting one's feelings, memories of the past, the present, or worries of the future.*

If you were in a difficult situation at the time of Samatha practice, you may think that the results obtained through such practices are good results. For the time being, one will not be swayed by any emotions, so one may have the illusion that one has reached a certain level along the path. However, such a state does not last forever, and if some condition arises, one must suffer the consequences in the next life, even if not in this life (Dhamma Letters No. 33-35) because *the underlying root of the difficult situation has not been noticed as it really is.*

It is said that many ancient meditators experienced the state of Nirvāṇa or the state of emptiness in any absolute state experienced through meditation. **Such a believed-to-be Nirvāṇa is regarded as a conceptual experience - as knowledge - and is called "Emptiness."**

**Already, "emptiness in an absolute state" is just a concept, not the emptiness the Buddha speaks of in early Buddhism. They use the same word, but the actual meaning is different.**

As stated in Dhamma Letter No. 57, Nirvāṇa (Nibbāna) is a state in which three things are imminent at the same time:

1. emptiness,
2. no object/imagination, and
3. no wanting/expectation.



In other words, the state of emptiness can be checked with these other expressions with no volition (*asankara*) and no conditions.

The problem for the meditators who say **they have had such experiences is that they can recognize that it is still a conceptual emptiness.**

For more understanding, I quote below:

He regards Nibbāna as Nibbāna, and after he regards Nibbāna as Nibbāna,  
Thinking of Nibbāna, thinking in Nibbāna, thinking from Nibbāna,  
One thinks that "Nibbāna is mine,"  
One is happy about Nibbāna.  
For what reason?

**Because he does not know Nibbāna.**

- *Majjhima Nikāya 1*

If one knows Nibbāna, **it becomes like the wind that doesn't get caught in the net.**

**Like a lotus flower that doesn't get dirty in the mud.**

- *Dhammapada*

In the next Dhamma Letters, we will discuss specific practices for "no defilements," which is the state of Nibbāna.

*May you develop your concentration and insight through meditation!*

*May you be peaceful and happy!*

*May all practice well for Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 64 3 Kinds of Defilements

There are *three kinds of defilements* described in the Nikāyas such as:

1. Defilements caused by sensual desire
2. Defilement from existence
3. Defilements from ignorance

*The three roots of defilement* are:

- *Lobha* (craving/attachment)
- *Dosa* (aversion/anger)
- *Moha* (delusion/ignorance)

First, defilements enter through the six sense organs (Dhamma Letter No. 13). Feelings are associated with good, bad, or neither-good-nor-bad (mental), and feelings are associated with painful, pleasant, or neither-painful-nor-pleasant (physical).

**Defilements can be from memories of the past and worries about the future that haven't happened yet, and they're caused by not being able to stay in the present moment.**

Defilements arise through physical and mental reactions (kamma). **Defilements can be annihilated through Right Thought (Sammā-Saṅkappa), which is part of the Noble Eightfold Path. Right Thought arises through wisdom by having Right View** (Dhamma Letters No. 60-62).

Defilements cause suffering, and their presence results in a longer distance from Nirvāṇa. **Repetition of one thought creates a path, inscribes tendencies, and creates vitality.** Therefore, you should use your sati (mindfulness/awareness) skillfully to generate wise thoughts.

First of all, there should be thoughts of letting go of strong sensual desires, thoughts without malice, and thoughts of not harming others. When the defilements caused by the first wild **sensual desires** are controlled, the strong desire for **existence** still



remains, which then acts as defilements. The defilement of **existence** comes from **ignorance**.

**The reason we need to develop wisdom through Vipassanā meditation is to get rid of this fundamental root, ignorance.**

*May you develop your concentration and insight through meditation!*

*May you be peaceful and happy!*

*May all practice well for Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 65 5 Levels of the Eradication of Defilements

**Defilements are not my thoughts and not my own but enemies that should not stay in the mind.** If there is one ant, it must be removed immediately. Otherwise, many more will come, and they will be difficult to manage. To prevent the onset of the underlying defilements, the Buddha offered five methods when evil and unwholesome thoughts arise in you related to craving (lobha), anger (dosa), and foolishness (moha) (see Dhamma Letter No. 64).

The methods below, as discussed in Majjhima Nikāya 20, belong to the first level with coarse defilements and no wisdom present.

### **How to overcome defilements:**

***The mind always goes to a certain object.** Therefore, we need to deal with the object with the mind when the defilements arrive.*

**1. Change the subject/object.** *Replace the object that causes unwholesome thoughts into an object that causes healthy thoughts.*

- Buddha's metaphor: A coarse nail is pulled out with a fine nail.

**2. Thinking that evil and unwholesome thoughts harm me and others.** *Realize that it is a lose-lose situation.*

- Buddha's metaphor: Thinking that having these evil and unwholesome thoughts is like a man wearing dirt or animal skins all over his body or someone trying to cover up their ugliness with makeup.

**3. Do not engage in mental activity on unwholesome thoughts.**

- Buddha's metaphor: Don't look with your eyes or close your eyes.



**4. Let go of the original idea and try to change.** *When an unintended mental activity occurs, a mental activity that stops the thought activity must be induced in response to the thought.*

- Buddha's metaphor: It's like you here are going in a hurry, "Why am I going in a hurry? Rather, let's go slowly." And go slowly, and if you stand still, you may think, "Why am I standing? Rather, let's sit down."

**5. Clenching your teeth, restraining defilements, and conquering them with your heart.**

- Buddha's metaphor: The stronger one oppresses and subdues.

**We need to cultivate the wisdom that can transform the right thoughts into thoughts toward Nirvāṇa by restraining the defilements. The ideas (cognitive processes) itself are not bad. Without thinking, there is absolutely no wisdom.**

***The purpose of Vipassanā is "not to suppress and eliminate the mind toward the object" but "to remove the defilements that have arisen through the object."*** - Sayadaw U Tejaniya ([www.ashintejaniya.org](http://www.ashintejaniya.org))

*May you develop your concentration and insight through meditation!*

*May you be peaceful and happy!*

*May all practice well for Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 66 Q&A 19 Anger: Vipassanā

**Q: How can I deal with anger?**

**A: Anger is a reflection of wanting/expectation.** In Dhamma Letter No.13, we discussed sadness, which is a part of anger (dosa).

I get angry when things don't go the way I want or expect them to. It can be an expectation that I have of others, or it can be an expectation of myself. **Anger arises because one is trying to get results based on one's thoughts (delusion) or expectations without recognizing the facts and conditions as they are.**

It must be accepted that the root cause is not accepting the facts as they are as well as not having the eyes/wisdom to see the facts as they are.

**Anger stems from thinking that only one's own views are correct.** It is only when we recognize the root cause, we can be completely free from anger.

That is the Eightfold Path we practice which begins with having the right view.

**Lobha (craving/attachment) leads to dosa (aversion/anger).** It is rooted by moha (delusion/ ignorance).

*There are two main ways to manage anger in Vipassanā meditation.*

**Step 1: Notice it and stop the action. Don't let your anger grow any further.**

**Step 2: Once your mind has calmed down and you have a better understanding of the situation, use your investigative mind for wisdom.**

*In the first stage, many meditators set mettā (loving kindness) as an object and temporarily transform their anger into mettā. This is also a way to calm anger as a part of the practice (see Dhamma Letter No. 65 for the 5th method). However, this being*





only temporary relief, the fundamental problems remain unresolved, and one will still live with anger in their hearts. Later, in the same situation or similar conditions, anger still arises.

When the state of anger appears in various intensities from coarse to medium to fine, **you must first recognize your state well. Start by extinguishing your anger as soon as you realize it, then practice calming your emotions with deep breaths.**

*In the second stage*, you should be able to understand yourself and the other person properly **through the mind of investigating the causes and effects after some time has passed and the emotions have subsided.** This takes time and effort.

**Only through complete understanding is anger completely eliminated. When understood correctly, *mettā* (loving kindness) occurs automatically. It is a *paññā* (wisdom) part of practice, and it comes from Right View** (Dhamma Letters No. 60-62).

*May you develop your concentration and insight through meditation!*

*May you be peaceful and happy!*

*May all practice well for Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 67 Q&A 20 Vedanā (Sensations or Feelings)

**Q:** I have a question about vedanā (feeling). Let me use the example of strong fear. When the mind organ comes into contact with a disturbing mind object, a cascade of reactions occur, including bodily tension, sympathetic nervous activity, and even tightening in the digestive tract. Then thoughts start racing, which enhance the stressful response. It seems to me, however, that **unpleasant vedanā precedes this chain reaction. How then does one find this unpleasant reaction to the mental object?**

**A: Vedanā - Buddha mentioned mainly 3 kinds of vedanā (feelings):**

- **pleasant** (lobha: craving/attachment)
- **unpleasant** (dosa: aversion/anger)
- **neutral** (can be moha: delusion/ ignorance)

Please see Dhamma Letters No. 64-66 for more understanding.

Vedanā is from **physical and mental phenomena that are related to each other, correspond with each other, and occur simultaneously.**

It can start from the body or the mind, but vedanā most often manifests itself as sensations in the body through mental processes. A past memory triggered by feeling reacts automatically from the nervous system associated with memories.

To solve this problem fundamentally is **by understanding the conditions/situation of anicca (everything is changing; nothing is fixed), dukkha (dissatisfaction; suffering), and anattā (there is no "I," it is a phenomenon).**

**"Observe it"** and constantly remember to:

1. **Accept the situation without resistance.**
2. **Let it go** because there's nothing that can be done right now.
3. **Relax the body and mind.**

Repeat this again and again with sitting and walking meditation. It takes time to get over it. We will discuss more later when there are related subjects.



*May you be free from stress!*  
*May you be free from suffering!*

*With mettā,*



## 68 Q&A 21 Facing fear

**Q:** I often find it hard to meditate because of **contact with the unpleasant, specifically fear of what we cannot control and might bring pain.** It can be a challenge. I wonder: **How can we cultivate the mind to be able to meditate when times are hard, when contact with the unpleasant is common, or when we are totally afraid?**

**A:** Yes, it is really a **challenge to face the fear.** An unpleasant mental feeling is the **result of the mind expecting an unpleasant mental or bodily feeling that hasn't happened yet.**

Only **accept the situation and let go of it.** Eventually, to go deeper, we have to face the fear that is the root.

**When we are brave and can accept even death, which is the deepest root cause, fear will gradually disappear. Such great courage will be manifested in an understanding of *dukkha* (suffering), *anattā* (no-self), and *anicca* (impermanence) (see Dhamma Letters No. 14-21).**

As we allow our minds **to calmly and patiently know and see** this magical pattern as it plays itself out in absolutely everything, over and over and over again, something in us starts to **let go of the conditioned habit of grasping and pushing away** (see Dhamma Letter No. 4).

It will very likely take some time to see the first fruits of our **bold courage**, but if we hang in there and keep nurturing that seed of **faith**, slowly, slowly, gradually, gradually, we become more and more able to stand firm and unshakable.

*May you be free from any suffering!*

*May you be free from any danger!*

*With mettā,*



## 69 7 Methods for the Eradication of Defilements

We discussed the **5 Levels of the Eradication of Defilements** in Dhamma Letter No. 65.

The Buddha also described the **7 Methods of the Eradication of Defilements** in Majjhima Nikāya 2.

**How do you know and see the cessation of defilements and how do they arise?**

- **By engaging one's mental activity in a way that makes sense:**
  - Defilements that have not yet arisen do not arise, and
  - Defilements that have already arisen are cut off.
- **By engaging in mental activity that does not make sense:**
  - Defilements that have not yet arisen arise, and
  - The created defilements increase further.

**7 ways to break free from defilements:**

1. **Observation:** By exercising your mental activity in a way that makes sense, you break away from the view, doubt, and attachment to the norms and laws of the existence of an individual.
2. **Guarding:** Through reflection, the senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, and mental ability are well-governed and protected.
3. **Acceptance:** Accept the four necessities (in the case of bhikkhus & bhikkhunis) according to reason through reflection, so as not to cause new pain and to be healthy and free from faults.
4. **Patience:** Logical reasoning and perseverance through reflection. If you do not persevere, defilements full of perplexity and anguish will arise, but if you persevere, defilements full of perplexities and anguish will not arise.



5. **Avoidance:** By reasoning and avoiding through reflection, we do not allow suffering full of troubles to arise.

6. **Elimination:** The lust for sensual pleasure, anger, violence, and thoughts tied to the evil and unwholesome state that has already arisen, in a reasonable way through reflection, are not tolerated, discarded, finished, and eliminated.

7. **Practice:** Through practicing to strengthen the seven circles of enlightenment (mindfulness, exploration, exhaustion, bliss, calmness, concentration, and composure) that will lead you to Nirvāṇa, in a reasonable way through reflection, you will no longer be filled with afflictions and anguish.

One who has mastered all afflictions and put an end to suffering is a guardian - one who has broken craving and has loosed bonds – one who has just broken pride.

Through these reflections, we can properly do so.

*May you understand well and practice Dhamma!*

*May you be free from any defilements!*

*May all practice well for Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 70 Q&A 22 Right Efforts 1

**Q: How can I overcome thoughts that arise during meditation?**

**A:** Many meditators view thought itself as an enemy. It is a wrong view that arises from a misunderstanding of complaints about unwanted thoughts that arise during meditation. It's called "thoughts in delusion." For more understanding, see Dhamma Letter No. 65.

Once one has the wrong view, one will waste time for the practice in this life. Of course, you can experience ultimate Nirvāṇa only when all such defilements are removed. That is also the purpose of practice.

However, the important thing is that without thinking, we cannot even try to practice meditation, develop wisdom, and even aim for Nirvāṇa (Nibbāna).

The Buddha presented the Eightfold Path as a way to cease all suffering, and the first factor is Right View (*Sammā-Diṭṭhi*). Then there is Right Thought (*Sammā-Saṅkappa*). **The obvious fact is that right thinking leads to right speech and right actions, and right thinking leads to right views. This leads all the way to the completion of the Eightfold Path.**

Right Samādhi is also impossible without Right Thought. If someone earnestly cultivates samādhi and desires to achieve results, it is possible through the right viewpoint and right thought.

Then, **how do we have the right thoughts?**

The Buddha explained ***four types of right efforts***:

1. **When an unwholesome thought arises, stop immediately.**
2. **Prevent such unwholesome thoughts from reoccurring.**
3. **When a wholesome thought arises, try to increase it more.**



**4. If wholesome thoughts do not arise, you should try to make them happen.**

If thoughts that arise during intensive meditation invade the subject of meditation and interfere with meditation, **you should immediately stop the miscellaneous thoughts and concentrate it repeatedly so that you can focus on the object of meditation.** However, **in the case of insight meditation, which is a Vipassanā meditation, it is necessary to apply these four right efforts.**

To be continued...

*May you understand well and practice in Dhamma!*

*May you reap the fruits of your practice through the right efforts!*

*With mettā,*





## 71 Right Efforts 2

### How to overcome thoughts(defilements) during meditation and lifetime?

I hope that you will once again familiarize yourself with *the content of defilements* discussed earlier in Dhamma Letters No. 64-66. Usually, some try to turn away from it as a mind who hates the thought itself. However, it becomes the root that causes defilement, and the root deepens. In order to completely remove the root, **it must be removed with wisdom and by observing**. That is the greatness aspect of **Vipassanā (Insight) meditation**.

You can see the progress of your practice only **by changing your perception of your own thoughts**. It should be kept in mind that just because we ignore the problem to be solved in the end, **it will not be solved by covering it up for a while**.

**You must first observe the thoughts that occur in your daily life in order to restore and purify the mind so that no unwholesome thoughts arise.**

If you want to stop thoughts that arise during sitting meditation, **do not hide or forcefully suppress deeply ingrained wholesome or unwholesome thoughts**.

You must **face it and investigate. And understand** the causes behind them head on, so that **those thoughts can disappear as soon as you see them**.

**You must have the courage to face the agony head-on and repeat it over and over again. It should be borne in mind that the deeper the root, the more time it will take.**

Therefore, Buddhist practice values precepts (*sīla*: morality) above all else, which is why it is the beginning of the practice. This is because *samādhi* (concentration/tranquility), *paññā* (wisdom) can only arise when a good heart is prepared. This is why *dāna* (giving) is the beginning of the practice of *pāramī* (perfection). See Dhamma Letter No. 10.



## 72 Q&A 23: Right Efforts 3

**Q:** I'm trying to understand anicca, dukkha, and anattā while doing all the housework, attending to other duties, and accepting death as another natural incident to face. However, **I have a fear of what kind of fearful ending I would be faced with when I die.** I always think instant death is good because of my fear of suffering. **How do I get rid of this feeling?**

**A:** There is another Q&A about fear in Dhamma Letter No. 68. It will be helpful as well. We are discussing **defilements which lead to suffering**. It bothers our life. We hope that we are not facing any unpleasant feelings or fear of death or an afterlife. Everything is uncertain. **Even though we plan very well for the future, it never comes out the way we expected. The only certain thing is everybody dies - no exception.**

To keep thinking and worrying are the defilements which never help or solve the problems. As it was mentioned in the previous Dhamma Letters, we need the right efforts:

1. **Effort to bring about wholesome things that haven't happened yet.**
2. **Effort to not bring about unwholesome things that haven't happened yet.**
3. **Effort to increase wholesome things that have already happened.**
4. **Effort to restrain unwholesome things that have already happened.**

***Right efforts will lead to a clear mind every moment. The clear mind leads to paññā, wisdom. Wisdom leads to knowing what to do and what not to do.***

Therefore, there will be a wholesome mind. The wholesome mind brings one to a good state in this life and the afterlife. Or if one who really wishes not to be reborn again, one will practice hard for enlightenment through wisdom (Understanding the 3 Stages of Wisdom: Dhamma Letter No. 3).

The Buddha's teaching is:



**Only be in the present.**

**One who wants to know the past, see this present moment!**

**One who wants to know the future, see this present moment!**

Stop in order to not increase the defilements in thinking. Put your efforts into the 4 methods above. It will change the kamma (habitual actions of body, speech, and mind).

*May you understand well and practice Dhamma!*

*May you reap the fruits of your practice through the right efforts!*

*May all practice well for Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 73 Vipassanā: When Seeing It, It Disappears!

**When you see it, it disappears. Everything is a phenomenon.**

No matter how happy or pleasant things are, they do not last forever. No matter how sad or painful it is, it doesn't last forever. If it continues, it will probably be difficult for us to live our entire lives.

Knowing that it will come to an end someday, we live in hope of the next. If it is clearly understood and fully understood rather than being vaguely aware of it, there is no more suffering. Because **this too is just passing**.

But **to understand clearly (*sati sampajañña*)** is to understand the three characteristics of *anicca* (changing all the time), *dukkha* (unsatisfaction/suffering), and *anicca* (non-self) in Buddhist terms with *bhavana-maya paññā* (wisdom through practice).

Only when the ignorance that is rooted in man is fully realized will such delusions never arise again because its roots are gone. That is the state of arhatship, which is complete enlightenment.

**Rather than setting a goal that is too big, you must first put power toward looking at the defilements of every moment that occurs to you. There is often a big difference between what you think you are and what you actually are. Narrowing that gap is practice - meditation.**

**You have to recognize that it is just a phenomenon.** It is first necessary to understand the three characteristics of the Dhamma presented above. This is because, **as they are understood, the progress of the practice can be accelerated.**

**Being able to see as it is (Dhamma: the natural law); if you don't fall into the memories of the past and let go of your worries for the future, reality can be faithful to the moment. The practice of Buddhism is to stay in the present moment**



– **no matter what.** Only then can you feel happy for yourself. **You can only find peace and happiness within yourself, not through any material object.** That is why we meditate.

*May you understand Dhamma through practice!*

*May you be well and happy!*

*With mettā,*



## 74 Vipassanā: The Relationship Between Mind and Object 1

"Momentary" refers to the temporal meaning of when the mind takes on an object, stays on the object, and leaves the object. A moment can be one second, shorter, or longer; it is a transliteration of the Sanskrit word "*ksana*," which refers to an extremely short amount of time (see Dhamma Letter No. 47).

**Vipassanā meditation sees instantaneous creation and disappearance, momentarily (a phenomenon that is constantly changing), knowing that it is suffering because it changes and disappears rather than staying stable perpetually. One will realize a non-self nature from this perspective with nothing to insist on being "me" because it is just changing phenomena.**

Many meditators are accustomed to concentrating on one object but not accustomed to Vipassanā meditation in which they let go of the object and view and switch to the "ultimate reality" as an objective phenomenon.

It is a rudimentary step to intensively observe only one object or a few objects, and furthermore, **the practice to develop wisdom is a highly advanced level that allows observation and insight into all objects that exist in an instant, instantaneously.** It is a training that requires "momentary concentration," *kanika samādhī*.

**Many meditators try to get rid of thoughts because it is believed that thoughts cause defilements. This is an erroneous view, and it also goes against the Eightfold Path of Buddhism. Right Views and Right Thinking are important factors along this path, but their importance is overlooked** (Dhamma Letter No. 70).

Another common issue for meditators is an obsession against or dislike for the meditation object. **There is nothing wrong with the object at all.**

**This is because the view based on one's own stereotypes about the object is wrong (Right View, 正見: Dhamma Letter No. 60).**



To be continued...

*May you understand Dhamma through practice!*

*May you be well and happy!*

*With mettā,*



## 75 Vipassanā: The Relationship Between Mind and Object 2

This letter continues from the last Dhamma Letter.

For example, meditators can be sensitive to sounds they hear while meditating, and they feel angry or think they messed up their meditation. There is nothing wrong with the sound itself. **The anger (*dosa*) of the heart (craving, *lobha*) towards that sound is the problem.**

In this case, according to the Vipassanā way,

1. Since a disturbing sound (*sota-dhātu*, 耳境) is just an object, it is necessary to change the mind about the object.
  2. When the mind concentrates on the sound, switch to an object of the ear-consciousness (*sota-viññāṇa*, 耳識).
  3. The sound is no longer bothersome because it becomes the hearing-consciousness, which is an object in itself.
  4. You will experience equanimity through the "knowing mind."
- You can apply it like this towards all other objects of the 6 sense bases, not only about sound (see Dhamma Letter No. 48).*

**In Vipassanā, one needs to see the mind separately from the object.**

I encourage you to try it yourself right now.

Try walking meditation on a walking trail or in a quiet place near your home. Please take a look at how much your mind is directed toward the object being seen and heard.

**Just see what you see, hear what you hear, without intention to change it or any judgment! And just know it!**

**Make sure you don't have the desire to grab or push away the object in the mind.**





The next Dhamma Letters will introduce the content of Satipaṭṭhāna for using sati (mindfulness/awareness) in every moment.

*May you understand Dhamma through practice!*

*May you be well and happy!*

*With mettā,*



# Satipaṭṭhāna

- the establishment of mindfulness

*“Bhikkhus, this is the only way for the purity of all beings, to overcome grief and sorrow,  
to get rid of suffering and dislike, to achieve on the right path, to realize Nibbāna.”*

*- Digha Nikāya (DN) 22 -*



## 76 Satipaṭṭhāna 1: What is Sati?

According to the Pāli dictionary, **sati** (usually translated as mindfulness) means **"memory, recognition, consciousness."** To remember is the number-one meaning. It can't cause memory loss. **If there is no memory, no sati is there or sati is not strong enough.**

*We, human beings, keep an object all the time, continuously. If you don't have the sati (mindfulness) on a wholesome object, the mind follows the tract of your kamma.* Then the mind is having an unwholesome object, like worry about the future or memories of the past, without your intention. Therefore, you need to keep your sati as much as you can for a wholesome mind.

In the Digha Nikāya, the Buddha described **sati with 3 conditions: being**

1. **Necessary or not**
2. **Beneficial or not**
3. **Appropriate or not**

**When you realize that your mind is wondering or thinking about something you are not sure about, you can check these 3 conditions at that moment.**

**Sati is not just attention or mindfulness; it is a beautiful mind with wisdom.**

*May you cultivate your mind with sati!*

*May you have a beautiful mind through Vipassanā meditation!*

*May you develop wisdom with sati!*

*With mettā,*



## 77 Satipaṭṭhāna 2: What is Sati?

Sati was described as a term of mindfulness/awareness in Dhamma Letters No. 12 and 76. Furthermore, sati is the beautiful mind in 52 mental factors (*cetasika* in Abhidhamma), which **is associated with wisdom**.

“The beautiful mind” means a wholesome mind which is led by the Eightfold Noble Path to Nibbāna. It is called “yoniso manasikara” in Pāli. This indicates correct attention.

People translate sati into “mindfulness.” However, this mainly means attention – focusing on the object. For example, a cat focusing on a mouse or a soldier aiming a gun. This can be called “concentration of attention,” not “sati.”

However, modern “mindfulness meditation” naturally uses the term for such things as well. Of course, you will be able to achieve more in the work you want to achieve, and you will be able to produce results that can help you pursue health and material happiness. However, **“sati meditation,”** which has its essence in Buddhist meditation, has more meaning than that. This is a means of achievement, and **it has great significance in dealing with the essence of life and death beyond physical and mental health.**

Therefore, the meaning of mindfulness must be **“yoniso manasikara,”** that is, **correct attention: Sammā-Sati** (Right-Mindfulness, 正念正智), beyond the simple meaning of “awareness/mindfulness;” **Sammā-Sati is from Sammā-Viriya** (Right Effort, 正精進 正智正進 – Dhamma Letter No. 72).

*Ayoniso manasikara*, incorrect attention: You should not use sati’s terminology if you concentrate on the unwholesome.

**The purpose of mindfulness is that it can only be used as a tool toward Nirvāṇa (ultimate and supreme happiness).** If you know the etymology and original purpose of



mindfulness that has been translated, modernized, and used in various ways, you will be able to work on more detailed meditation.

Whenever you become aware of mindfulness, you must simultaneously **check the three conditions** presented in the Dhamma Letter No. 76.

*May you cultivate your mind with sati!*

*May you have a beautiful mind through Vipassanā meditation!*

*May you develop wisdom with sati!*

*With mettā,*



## 78 Satipaṭṭhāna 3: Q&A 24

**Q: How does one keep sati (mindfulness)?**

**A:** In English translation, sati is called "mindfulness." When we practice Satipaṭṭhāna (4 foundations of mindfulness meditation), **people try hard to be mindful if we say that one should be mindful.**

Sayadaw U Tejaniya describes **"re-mind" as sati, rather than "mindful."** **As soon as trying mindfulness, one has tension and too much focus on the mind as "mind-full."** It is against the purpose of meditation.

If the mind is getting tired during or after the practice, something is wrong with the way you are practicing. **Just remind yourself, "what is the mind doing right now?" "Am I thinking? Or being aware?" "Where is the mind now?" "Observing the mind or holding an object?" "What kind of object is with the mind?"** **If you ask like that, sati is already there. Then the mind can be in the present in the moment.**

As mentioned in Dhamma Letter No. 74, **when the mind always takes on an object, it keeps changing the objects, and doing this sustains the mind.**

Therefore, **if you do not keep an eye on your mind at every moment, you will be drawn to your karma and take the object, so it is difficult to maintain a healthy and wise state.**

The Buddha left a will of the importance of sati until just before his death:

**Conditioned things are perishable (vayadhammā sankhārā);  
with vigilance strive to succeed (appamādena sampadethā).**

*May you cultivate your sati continuously!*

*May you achieve Sammā-Sati through Vipassanā meditation!*



## 79 Satipaṭṭhāna 4: Sati as a Beautiful Mental Factor

Mind rises like the sun rises every morning. It is a natural phenomenon. If you can control not to have the sun or mind arise, it is not natural. It arises from natural conditions. **Everything is dependent on conditions.**

**The mind holds only one object in the one moment.** It never happens to two or more objects with one mind at the same time. If one says, "I do things at the same time," the time has already accumulated a lot.

When we look at the light of a light bulb, it feels as if the light is constantly on, but the fact is that the light keeps on turning on and off at an incredibly fast rate. It is as if we are looking at a single line, but it is as if countless dots are combined to form a single line.

The mind is like this. **We think that one mind and one thought continue, but this is also a myriad of minds that arise, have momentary objects, and are maintained through continuous change.**

As mentioned in Dhamma Letter No. 77, sati is a beautiful mind.

When sati is working, several mental factors are arising at the same time for an object.

The third basket of the Tipiṭaka, Abhidhamma, describes one mind and mental factors that arise and hold one same object at the same time. There are 52 mental factors.

When sati is there, it becomes a beautiful mind because **sati leads only to Nibbāna.**

There will be no more suffering as a result. If it causes suffering as a result, it is not called sati. It can be mindfulness, but it is a different story.

**The mind works restlessly and always holds an object. When sati is there, the mind is in a wholesome state. When no sati is there, the mind is in an unwholesome state.**



## 80 Satipaṭṭhāna 5: 4 Foundations of Mindfulness

The Maha-Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta (The Great Discourse on the Foundations of Mindfulness) from the early scriptures begins with the following passage:

“Bhikkhus, ***this is the only way for the purity of all beings***, to overcome grief and sorrow, to get rid of suffering and dislike, to achieve on the right path, to realize Nirvāṇa (Nibbāna).” - Digha Nikāya (DN) 22

**Sati meditation, which cuts off all defilements and leads to the path of Nirvāṇa, must be started based on the precepts.**

“Purify the very starting point of wholesome states. And what is the starting point of wholesome states? Virtue that is well-purified and view that is straight. Then, bhikkhu, ***when your virtue is well-purified and your view straight, based upon virtue, established upon virtue, you should develop the four establishments of mindfulness in a threefold way.***”  
-SN 47.3

The Buddha's threefold training is to the threefold grouping of the Noble Eightfold Path. See Dhamma Letters No. 2 and 10.

If there is a right view, there will also be a private view. **What the Buddha said as a right view was premised on a private view** (for more understanding, see Dhamma Letters No. 60-62).

The right view means following the teachings of the Buddha. **Knowing the Four Noble Truths is also called the Right View.** However, it was said that **if you gain the right view, you can practice the 4 Foundations of Mindfulness** (四念處, 네 가지 마음확립 명상).

**The right fruit will be possible when you have the right view.**





There are four objects to observe:

1. Kāyanupassana (Mindfulness of the body)
2. Vedanānupassana (Mindfulness of feeling[s])
3. Cittanupassana (Mindfulness of the mind)
4. Dhammanupassana (Mindfulness of dhammas).

These are the four things for the establishment of awareness.

From the next Dhamma Letter, we will discuss more about the establishment of mindfulness (sati).

*May you cultivate your mind with sati!*

*May you have a beautiful mind through Vipassanā meditation!*

*May you develop wisdom with sati!*

*With mettā,*



## 81 Satipaṭṭhāna 6: Fruits of Satipaṭṭhāna Meditation

The Buddha said that meditation to establish mindfulness is very fruitful. It is very important to understand **why beings are reborn in the next life by their own karma**, discussed in Dhamma Letters No. 33-39, and **why we should practice meditation in our lives**. In Dhamma Letters No. 56-59, we looked at the stages of enlightenment for Nirvāṇa, the state of greatest happiness.

**If you experience the happiness of complete peace rather than happiness through simple sensual desires, you can perceive why the results of mindfulness meditation practice are so great.**

As said in DN22 (Maha-Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta):

"If anyone, bhikkhus, practices the establishment of contemplation of these four things in an accurate way for seven years, he can expect one of two fruits. If he attains the highest wisdom (Arahat: a fully awakened One) in this very life, or if some of the foundations of the five heaps remain, he can expect the stage of Anagami (non-returner).

Bhikkhus, it may not be seven years. Bhikkhus, it may not be six years.

Bhikkhus, it may not be five years. Bhikkhus, it may not be four years.

Bhikkhus, it may not be three years. Bhikkhus, it may not be two years.

Bhikkhus, it may not be one year. Bhikkhus, it may not be seven months.

Bhikkhus, it may not be six months. Bhikkhus, it may not be five months.

Bhikkhus, it may not be four months. Bhikkhus, it may not be three months.

Bhikkhus, it may not be two months. Bhikkhus, it may not be a half month.

For this reason, monks, I have said the following: ***This is the one and only way to purify sentient beings, to overcome grief and sorrow, to extinguish suffering, to attain the path of truth, and to attain Nirvāṇa directly.***"



I hope that everyone can achieve their respective benefits by learning and practicing the meditation methods suggested by the Buddha through the establishment of mindfulness.

*May you cultivate your mind with sati!*

*May you have a beautiful mind through Vipassanā meditation!*

*May you develop wisdom with sati!*

*With mettā,*



## 82 Satipaṭṭhāna 7: The Contents in 4 Foundations of Mindfulness

The Great Sutra (大念處經: Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta on the establishment of awareness) consists of the following:

1. **Observation of the body (kāyānupassanā)**
  - 1) breath (ānāpāna)
  - 2) body posture (iriyāpatha)
  - 3) the continuous and thorough understanding of impermanence (sampajañña)
  - 4) reflection against disgust (paṭikūlamanasikāra)
  - 5) the observations of the four material elements (dhātumanasikāra)
  - 6) the contemplations of the nine in the cemetery (navsivathika)
2. **Observation of the feeling (vedanānupassanā)**
3. **Observation of the mind (cittānupassanā)**
4. **Observation of dhammas (dhammānupassanā)**
  - 1) the Hindrance (五蓋 Nīvaraṇa)
  - 2) the Five Aggregates (五蘊 Khandha)
  - 3) the Six External and Six Internal Sense-Bases (六處 Āyatana)
  - 4) the Seven Factors of Enlightenment (七覺支 Bojjhaṅga)
  - 5) the Noble Truths (四聖諦 Catu Ārya Satya)

It should be noted here that the aforementioned phenomena of the body, feeling, and mind are none other than Dhamma (natural law).

Now, the entire process of meditation is summarized here, and it is intended to observe the Dhamma. It is important to note that these doctrines are **not theoretically discriminated against, but rather, the Dhamma is actually experienced in a concrete phenomenon.**

**In Vipassanā meditation, the most important thing is to try to separate the mind from the objects and observe each object objectively.**



*May you cultivate your sati continuously (Sammā-Viriya)!*

*May you achieve the Sammā-Sati through Satipatthāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*With mettā,*



## 83 Satipaṭṭhāna 8: Kāyanupassana 1: Q&A 24

**Q:** Should the four foundations of Satipaṭṭhāna be cultivated one by one over time (for instance, just Kāyanupassana for months or years), or can they be used as needed depending on whatever is strongest? I've read that the foundations move from coarse to refined objects, but I'm not sure about this.

**A: It depends on personal pāramī and conditions.** It can be cultivated one by one and all together at the same time. Yes, it can be used as needed **depending on whatever is strongest.**

Kaya (body), vedanā (feeling), citta (mind) and dhammas (conditioned reality) are through body and mind only. **Body and mind (nāmarūpa) reflect each other simultaneously.** But it is easiest to observe the body first.

**The more you practice each one by one, the clearer you will understand.**

And then, you will see that they go all together at the same time.

*May you cultivate your sati continuously (Sammā-Viriya)!*

*May you achieve the Sammā-Sati through Satipaṭṭhāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 84 Satipaṭṭhāna 9: Kāyanupassana 2: Q&A 25

**Q:** So one can start with kāyanupassana (observation of the body) since it is relatively easy to observe. But in what way can one practice all the foundations at once? This is not clear. With regard to the breath exercise in kāyanupassana, how does one tell the difference between long and short breaths? And at what point does one switch to calming bodily fabrication or sensitivity to the body? Or is the switch a natural result of practice?

**A:** While you observe an object of the "body," the "feeling" arises. And the "mind" knows the feeling/sensation and object. **Object itself is "Dhamma" itself in the right view, not in the personal view. The moment to observe and know it is already in the 4 foundations at the same time.**

As the beginning of body observation, when observing breathing,

1. Breathing in long, one understands: "I breathe in long," or breathing out long, one understands: "I breathe out long."
2. Breathing in short, one understands: "I breathe in short," or breathing out short, one understands: "I breathe out short."

You can do it in the first and second steps in 16 levels of breathing first. Gradually, you can progress to the next level. **It is at an experiential level, not just knowledge.**

**Through practice, you will understand it step-by-step.** By repeating the first and second steps in this way, **you can gradually move on to the next step. If you do not rush, focus on the moment, and observe and manage your own mind, you can move on to the next step naturally.**

**The important thing is to keep practicing in your life without stopping.** Whenever you have some free time, for example, when you go to the bathroom, **you should take a few moments to create your own routine and continue to meditate.** Another important tip is **not to have any intentions to change what you're observing or tension, but to let it be in the natural flow with sati.**



*May you cultivate your sati continuously (Sammā-Viriya)!*

*May you achieve the Sammā-Sati through Satipatthāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*





## 85 Q&A 26: How to Deal With a Life Pattern

**Q: I am a Buddhist student and would appreciate it if you would kindly arrange to offer some guidance?**

I always work hard to get to a good place (i.e. top school, top university etc.), then after getting inside that institution, I forget all the hard work that I have done to get in. Then I start comparing myself with others (i.e. fellow students). Then I think they are better than me, and I am not as smart as they are. That is the start of my downfall. No matter how much hard work I have done to reach that stage, after getting in, I will compare myself with the fellow people and think they are good, they know what to do, they are super clever, I am not like them, how can I compete with them, they will pass the exams, and I will fail the exams, then I will start to procrastinate.

This is like a train wreck that I cannot stop inside my mind. Just because of this thought process I have missed so many golden opportunities in my life. This is my pattern of downfall behavior. I am clever enough to understand what is going on inside my mind but cannot help myself to put a stop to this negative thought process. My mind gets filled with negative pessimistic thoughts.

Is it past karma? Is it due to low self esteem? After I lose a golden opportunity, I think like I should have done that, I would have done that, I could have done that. But then, it is too late.

**A: Most people live by that pattern. Such a pattern is called kamma, and the repetition of life without breaking free from the working aspect of life is called saṃsāra.** Those who deviate from that pattern will overcome themselves and produce results.

As you know, the reason you fall back into the pattern without overcoming it even though you're recognizing it is because **such a mindset (karma) is stronger than your**



**will to overcome it.** So, we need **to develop a stronger will to overcome it.** How could that be?

You have to let go of the desire to be the best and the competitive mind. You have to focus on yourself and have fun with yourself. A person who works hard cannot beat a person who enjoys it. Do what you love to do, and let it be enjoyed. **If you have too strong a will, you become more tense, your mind becomes complicated, and you lose your peace of mind.** When that happens it is more difficult to get things done. It doesn't even give you the results you want.

**You have to focus on yourself.** One way to do that is to meditate. Meditation can keep your mind and body peaceful and healthy. **You must train your mind through meditation. Wisdom must arise.**

**Try to be in the present, not thinking too much about the past and future.** It is a Buddhist practice. Finally, it accumulates wholesomeness and becomes a base.

*May you be free from any physical suffering!*

*May you be free from any mental suffering!*

*May you be well and happy!*

*With mettā,*



## 86 Satipaṭṭhāna 10

The Buddha had already gained insight into the mutual acting relationship of body and mind through a meditative method about 2,600 years ago. Here, the body refers to matter. If I can summarize the five aggregates that are my components into two, they are body and mind, or materiality and consciousness. Man, who is a being of the sensual world, has a material body, so **the mind arises depending on the material foundation.**

By becoming aware of the body and mind (materiality and consciousness), **the mind is tamed by binding it to the body, which wanders here and there in search of sensual pleasures.** It is **through awareness that we fundamentally perceive the cause of suffering and practice the path of eliminating suffering.**

From Dhamma Letter No. 76, we are discussing the four foundations of mindfulness. The objects of mindfulness are body, feeling, mind, and psychological phenomena (dhamma). **The concept of “I” conceived by sentient beings as “I” or “mine” was deconstructed and presented in four ways.**

Through ***yoniso manasikāra* (correct attention)**, we come to know the original nature of the mind and body, and we come to know that they are **ephemeral (anicca), unsatisfactory (dukkha), and non-substantial (anattā).** Through the practice of mindfulness, **samādhi (tranquility) and paññā (wisdom) arise, and one can be freed from all desires and anguish.**

In fact, everyday life is the main stage we have to perform. When you return to your daily life, your mind is scattered. So we need to wake up right here at home, at school, and at work.

From the next Dhamma Letter, we will discuss specific methods of practicing Satipaṭṭhāna and how to continue to be mindful.

***May you be well and peaceful through sati practice!***



## 87 Satipaṭṭhāna 11: Kāyanupassana 3: Ānāpānasati 1 (Mindfulness of Breathing)

Quotation from the original text of Satipaṭṭhāna (DN22) from the Korean translation:

“Observing the body from the body (身), **diligently having continuous and thorough knowledge and awareness of impermanence, and living while eliminating desire and aversion to the world of mind and matter.**

When exhaling a deep or long breath, we correctly know that we are exhaling deeply or long, and when exhaling a shallow or short breath, we correctly know that we are exhaling in a shallow or short breath.

In this way one cultivates oneself as follows.

“In one breath one will breathe in, feeling one’s whole body.” And one practices oneself, saying, “In one breath, feel the whole body and breathe out.”

“One will breathe in while calming the body” and “One will breathe out while calming the activity of the body” one practices oneself.

In this way, one dwells contemplating the body **from the inside**, observing the body **from the outside**, and observing the body **from the inside and outside**.

One spends the time observing phenomena occurring in the body, observing phenomena that disappear from the body, and also observing phenomena that arise and disappear simultaneously in the body.

The awareness that “this is the body” is established in oneself. **In this way one develops the awareness to a level where there is wisdom and right awareness.**

In this way one **lives detachedly, without attachment, to anything in the world of mind and matter.** This is how a bhikkhu lives by observing the body from body as a body.”

If you are looking for something more profound because this is too simple to practice, then you are mistaken. **If you do this consistently and iteratively, you will see results. Doing simple things consistently is a great practice in itself.**

Among the mindfulness of the body presented in the "Satipaṭṭhāna," the most basic is to establish "mindfulness on breathing," that is, concentration and awareness of inhalation and exhalation.



Breathing takes place in a dynamic and autonomous way without resting for a moment, but unlike the body, **the mind is relatively unconstrained in time and space.**

Therefore, **It is easy to miss this living, breathing moment. Train the mind. Here! Moment by moment!**

In short, **the body and mind are separate: the body is grounded in reality and breathes, while the mind is not anchored to the body and wanders into thoughts.** Consciousness is entering and leaving, wandering without awareness.

**Train the mind, instead, by holding it as an object and leading it to establish awareness through concentration of attention (such as on the breath).**

*May you cultivate your sati continuously (Sammā-Viriya)!*

*May you achieve the Sammā-Sati through Satipatthāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 88 Satipaṭṭhāna 12: Kāyanupassana 5: Ānāpānasati 2 (Mindfulness of Breathing)

The practice of noticing **the body tames the mind by anchoring it to the body**, which is wandering here and there in search of things to enjoy through the senses. After all, **you can control your mind by controlling your breathing**, and when you control your mind, you control your body. In that sense, these three are inseparable. The Buddha compared it in this way: "It is like an untamed wild elephant who wants to go out and play in the forest."

The elephant has a strong body, so it often breaks the string and runs away. So, what should you do? Do you give up and sit down because the elephant ran away? **You have to chase it and catch it again.** That's the only way.

**If our mind goes out as a delusion, it should be caught again. It is called "sati (mindfulness/awareness)." It is tied to a stake called "concentration on breathing" with a string called "sati."** Breathing is one of the focus points. Even if it is tied to the stake, the string is weak, and the elephant breaks it off and goes out. **You must bring it to you ten, one hundred, or one thousand times or more a day, whenever it goes out.**

In particular, if we recall the Buddha's aphorism, **"respiration is between life and death,"** its importance can be fully guessed. The mind wanders here and there in the past and future, but the breath is moment-by-moment! **It only happens in the present moment.**

*May you cultivate your sati continuously (Sammā-Viriya)!*

*May you achieve the Sammā-Sati through Satipaṭṭhāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 89 Satipaṭṭhāna 13: Preparation 1: Forgiveness and Protection

It is helpful to first **remove the impurities within one's inner self in order to bear the fruits of proper practice**. For example, if you have negative feelings about yourself or others, it is difficult to enter a state of deep meditation. Therefore, it is better to ask forgiveness from yourself or others and have a purified state of mind.

How to do it :

1. Asking for forgiveness - **to yourself/to a specific person/to everyone - for all wrongdoing knowingly and unknowingly:**

From the past without knowing during the beginning, to reincarnation, and now life, there are things that I did wrong in body, speech, and mind because of my foolishness and ignorance. Now, I respectfully ask you to forgive me for such a mistake. Please forgive me.

2. Forgiveness:

Also, I forgive all wrongdoings that others have committed to me knowingly and unknowingly with a good heart.

3. Protection of the Four Heavenly Kings:

Buddha, during this inscription-establishing Vipassanā practice preached by the Buddha, please ask the Four Heavenly Kings to protect me from bad blessings and bad people disturbing me.

4. Devotion to the Buddha:

Buddha, I will devote myself and my life to the Buddha during the training period.

5. **Resolve:**

**May I also know, see, and realize the Path, Fruition, and Nirvāṇa** that all Buddhas, monasteries, Arahants, and holy priests have known, seen, and realized.

- *Quoted from Mahasi Sayadaw's teaching*

*With mettā,*



## 90 Satipaṭṭhāna 14: Preparation 2: Mettā (Loving-Kindness)

Anger or negative emotions destroy performance efforts. **It must be remembered that the anger that is expelled towards others will eventually return to itself.** It is the way to build up your own bad karma.

Before full-fledged body observation and mindfulness, have a mind of forgiveness and loving-kindness. **I do my best to benefit myself and understand others with an open mind, and I want them to feel comfortable and pain-free, just as I want to be free from pain and at ease.** As a result, **this process of purification of the mind becomes the basis for meditation and bears fruit.**

May I be free from all suffering and be truly healthy and happy!

May you be free from all suffering and be truly healthy and happy!

May the meditators who practice together be free from all suffering and be truly healthy and happy!

May the angel who protects me be free from all suffering and be truly healthy and happy!

May all beings in this region be free from all suffering and be truly healthy and happy!

May all beings be free from all suffering and be truly healthy and happy!

May all living things be happy!

**Always remember the principles of kamma before starting to practice, and have a heart of charity for yourself and everyone else. It will make a better condition for your deep meditation.**

*May you cultivate your sati continuously (Sammā-Viriya)!*

*May you achieve the Sammā-Sati through Satipaṭṭhāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*





## 91 Satipaṭṭhāna 15: Kāyanupassana 6: Ānāpānasati 3 (Mindfulness of Breathing)

“How does a monk live by observing the body from body to body? A monk who follows my teachings goes to a secluded place under a tree in the forest, straightens his upper body on a cross-legged chair, and with an awake mind he closely adheres to the breath and notices the inhalation and exhalation. Just as a skilled potter turns the wheel slowly and notices ‘Turn slowly’ and turns it fast and notices ‘Turn fast’” (DN22).

When rough breathing is observed, we look at it as it is and know that it is rough; when fine and soft breathing is observed, we look at it as it is and we know that it is "fine and soft."

**It is important to feel your breathing as it is, without any control or intention.**

Breathing can be used anytime and anywhere as a meditation object, so it is most important to keep this in mind until the end of this life, whether you are a beginner, an intermediate, or an advanced meditator.

**It is so simple and easy that it is often overlooked!**

For those who are not satisfied while searching for another meditation topic, **I hope that they will return to the original mind of a meditator and strengthen their will to practice.**

Please take a good look at the breathing meditation that the Buddha suggested to Rāhula at 16 levels. **Start again every day from the first and second steps.** We hope to achieve satisfactory results through continuous practice.

Quotation of Mahārāhulovādasutta (MN62):

1. “When I breathe in long, I know clearly that I am breathing in long, and when I breathe out long, I know clearly that I breathe out long.



2. When I breathe in short, I know clearly that I am breathing in short, and when I breathe out short, I know clearly that I breathe out short.
3. Experiencing the whole body, I commit to inhaling, and experiencing the whole body, I commit to exhaling.
4. As I calm the formation of the body, I commit to inhaling, and while calming the formation of the body, I commit to exhaling.
5. Experiencing joy, I commit to inhaling, and experiencing joy, I commit to exhaling.
6. Experiencing pleasure, I commit to inhaling, and experiencing pleasure, I commit to exhaling.
7. Experiencing the formation of the mind, I commit to inhaling, and experiencing the formation of the mind, I commit to exhaling.
8. In calming the formation of the mind, I commit to inhaling, and in calming the formation of the mind, I commit to exhaling.
9. Experiencing the mind, I commit to inhaling, and experiencing the mind, I commit to exhaling.
10. As I rejoice in the heart, I commit myself to inhaling, and in rejoicing in the heart, I commit myself to exhaling.
11. Concentrating the mind, I commit myself to inhaling, and concentrating the mind, I commit myself to exhaling.
12. As I let go of the mind, I commit myself to inhaling, and as I let go of the mind, I commit to exhaling.
13. Observing impermanence, I devote myself to breathing in, and observing impermanence, I devote myself to exhaling.
14. Observing the cessation of desire, I commit to inhaling, and observing the cessation of desire, I commit to exhaling.
15. Observing the cessation, I commit myself to inhaling, and observing the cessation, I devote myself to exhaling.
16. Observing letting go, I commit myself to inhaling, and observing letting go, I commit myself to exhaling.

“Rāhula, if you practice breathing meditation like this and repeat it like this, you will get great results and great merit. Rāhula, if you practice this breathing note and repeat it this way, even when the last in-breath and out-breath disappear, you are noticing it and not disappearing without knowing it.”



If you put all your strength into taking care of the object without giving up, the moment you come to know its true nature and understand it clearly, you will control your greed and anger for the world (five aggregates) while also being able to let go of it.

All four observations of the practice of the Four Foundations are contained here. It is possible to do **Samatha meditation** to focus on one object within these observations with each content, and it can also be used as **Vipassanā meditation** to observe the whole objectively (what are the differences between Samatha and Vipassanā as they relate to samādhi? See Dhamma Letters No. 5 and 6).

*May you cultivate your sati continuously (Sammā-Viriya)!*

*May you achieve the Sammā-Sati through Satipatthāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 92 Satipaṭṭhāna 16: Kāyanupassana 7: Ānāpānasati 4 (Mindfulness of Breathing)

There are many variations of this breathing meditation. A very basic one is to focus on the sensation of the breath when you can feel it brush against the tip of your nose, and **to be keenly aware of the entire breath; both in-breath and out-breath are to be watched from beginning through the middle to the very end.** This awareness can also be found through the abdomen as it rises and falls with each breath. Another way is by using simple two-syllable mantras like "bud-dho" as aids or counting numbers on each breath for beginners.

In this way, if you observe the breathing in and out as you see it, the deeper your concentration will be and **the more you will come to know the actual phenomena and their causes in the bodies, the disappearances and their causes, and the phenomena of life and death and their causes clearly.** Also, **the more you take care of your breathing, the more you realize that your body is merely a medium for nurturing pure knowledge and mindfulness,** and that **there is no eternal reality in it.** As wisdom rises, cravings and personal opinions disappear, and they live without dependence or attachment to anything in this world (DN22).

After six years of asceticism, the Buddha began to meditate on breathing again, remembering the comfortable state he experienced through breathing meditation while sitting under the shade of a tree at an agricultural ceremony as a child.

**Through his breathing meditation, the Buddha attained the state of Nirvāṇa, where all defilements were removed, and achieved enlightenment.** And at the end of his life, he also practiced breathing meditation.

After entering the first jhāna (禪), knowing clearly with wisdom, then entering the second jhāna, again knowing clearly through wisdom, then entering the third jhāna, knowing clearly through wisdom, and then after entering the fourth in this way, **like this, samādhi (定) and paññā (慧) were cultivated at the same time (定慧雙修).**



Breathing meditation has many benefits. In this way, I hope that everyone will be free from all suffering through the practice of breathing. It is directly from the words of the Buddha, which can serve as a practical example for Buddhist practice. I hope **to light the inner lamp of each person through sharing this practical meditation.**

“Bhikkhus, make yourselves an island, make yourself a refuge, and do not stay with others as a refuge. Let the Dhamma be your island, and the Dhamma as your refuge, and do not let others be your refuge.

Bhikkhus, those who do not make themselves an island, not a refuge for themselves, and not one who does not make the Dhamma an island by abiding in others. **We have to look closely at how the source of ‘worry, lamentation, physical pain, mental pain, and despair’ arises.”** - Attadīpasutta (SN22:43)

*May you be free from any suffering through sati practice!*

*May you understand all phenomena in Dhamma for your peace!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 93 Satipaṭṭhāna 17: Kāyanupassana 8: Ānāpānasati 5

### Q&A 27 How to Deal With Headaches From Mindfulness of Breathing?

**Q:** When I do breathing meditation by focusing on the tip of my nose, I get a headache. Am I doing something wrong? Or is breathing meditation not right for me?

**A:** In the Nikāyas (suttas) it is said that the focus is on "parimukham satim" (around/in front of the mouth or face or where you are facing directly); this refers to the tip of the nose or around the upper lip, where breathing begins. However, modern people often have headaches due to a lot of stress, so they often stop breathing meditation.

Therefore, Mahashi Sayadaw, a well-known meditation teacher in Myanmar, used **the method of observing breathing through the movement of the lower abdomen, making it easy for modern people to engage in meditation.** The beginning and end of the breath are under the same nostrils, but the entire breath starts from the tip of the nose, goes through the bronchi, and goes down from the chest to the lower abdomen. Various breathing meditations have been developed and practiced.

**If you have a headache and it is difficult to do breathing meditation, it is recommended to observe the breathing by targeting the lower abdomen (one of the chakras) that lowers the energy.** Concentrating on the lower abdomen not only has the effect of physical health, but also has **the effect of stabilizing the mind.** For beginners, starting with the method of counting in-breath and exhalation while breathing, there is a method to follow the flow of breathing naturally as a whole after breathing has stabilized to some extent. In Thailand, when inhaling and exhaling, the word "bud-dho" is often used to focus on respiration. Paying attention to the sensation of the tip of the nose or the movement of the lower abdomen through breathing, **the mind stays in the present in harmony with the body and leads to establishing awareness.**



First of all, before meditating, **check how tense you are, and allow each muscle and cell to relax.** Mainly check that the shoulders are not stiff, and relax each part of the face and body comfortably.

In the end, “**awareness of the body (身念處, 신념처)**” means **being aware of the phenomena occurring in the body as it is through the thought of entering and leaving the body.** Through this, the body and mind are harmonized, and the mind dynamically stays in the present moment through breathing. In this respect, **awareness of the body becomes a cornerstone for the development of peace of mind, stillness, and wisdom in daily life through meditation.**

*May all understand Dhamma and develop wisdom!*

*May all beings be free from any suffering!*

*May all beings be well and happy!*

*With mettā,*



## 94 Satipaṭṭhāna 18: Kāyanupassana 9: The Posture 1

DN22: When a bhikkhu is walking, he knows "walking," when standing he knows "standing," when seated he knows "sitting," and when lying down he knows "laying down." Also, he knows clearly when going forward or turning back, he **knows clearly** when he is looking forward or looking back, he **knows clearly** when he bends or extends his limbs, and he **knows clearly** when to wear robes or carry an alms-bowl.

**Observe the body from the body (身), diligently have continuous and thorough knowledge and awareness of impermanence, and live while eliminating desire and aversion to the world of mind and matter.**

We know when to eat or drink, when we taste and digest, and when to urinate. And we **know clearly** when we fall asleep and when we wake up as well as when we speak or when we are silent.

Because **body movements are moved by the action of the mind**, specific methods of performing body postures and movements **will proceed along with mind observation**. Here, body observation can be briefly explained by limiting awareness to the body itself, and only the movement of the body and its posture are observed. Observe the body from the body, whatever the object or in any position.

**Observing the body, noticing the body, binds the mind wandering in search of sensual pleasure to the body and tames the mind.** It can be said that it is an important basic practice to move the body and mind as one so that **the mind does not separate from the body**.

It's about being aware of every movement of your body and keeping an eye on your actions. For those who find it difficult to note in the language every movement, they just **need to re-recognize the detailed perceptions in their mind**.

You can try it right now. **Know what you are doing.**





## 95 Satipaṭṭhāna 19: Kāyanupassana 10: The Posture 2:

### Sitting Posture 1

#### 1. Sitting position

Legs: Sit peacefully so that your legs do not overlap. If sitting is uncomfortable, sit on a chair and place your feet on the floor so that they are comfortable. Those who need a cushion use it appropriately.

Eyes: Close gently.

Hands: Place them on your lap or place your palms on top of each other in front of your lower abdomen. Leave them as they are comfortable for you.

Waist & spine: Push your back slightly forward and straighten your spine so that you stand straight.

#### 2. To observe: sitting with touching

Recognize the sensations in your body while you are sitting. When you sit down, you become aware of sitting and touching through the physical sensation of touching buttocks to the floor/chair.

#### 3. Notice the body:

Observe each part of the body or the whole body.

#### 4. To observe breathing:

Observe where your breathing starts, where it goes through the entire process of breathing, and where and how it ends. **Recognize one's breathing state as it is without any intention or control.**

If the in-breath is long, we know it is long, and when it is short, we know it is short. If the exhalation is long, we know that it is long, and when it is short, we know that it is short.



Observe the entire process of breathing in this way. I recommend that you re-read the breathing observations introduced earlier (Dhamma Letters No. 87, 88, 91, 92, and 93).

Practical implementation method:

I would like you to apply the observation method of the body and practice it. For those who are starting to practice for the first time, or if it is difficult for the mind to adhere to their body, they can increase their concentration by noting them in the language at every moment for recognition (example: "I am sitting." --> recognize as "sitting," "My buttock is touching on the floor" --> recognize as "touching feeling," "my breathing is short." --> recognize as "short" ...) For those who find it difficult to note in the language every movement, they just **need to re-recognize the detailed perceptions in their mind** (Dhamma Letter No. 94).

*May you cultivate your sati continuously!*

*May you achieve Sammā-Sati through Vipassanā meditation!*

*With mettā,*



## 96 Satipaṭṭhāna 20: Kāyanupassana 11, The Posture 2:

### Sitting Posture 2

In Vipassanā meditation (sati practice), the most important thing is to separate the mind from the objects and try to observe each object objectively (Dhamma Letter No. 82).

If you look at this body from head to toe while sitting, you will find parts that are moving on their own. This is the movement of the abdomen (or chest) by breathing. When you inhale, your abdomen rises, and when you exhale, your abdomen goes in. It is also important to **constantly observe the feelings that appear in the process of movement.**

Naming "rising" and "disappearing" with the mind is a way **to easily drive the mind while moving the abdomen so that the mind stays on the object.** If the naming gets in the way, you can observe the feeling by moving the abdomen **without giving it a name.**

Gazing at the belly is observing the breath, but also looking in detail at the various phenomena that occur in the moving abdomen due to breathing is observing the breath. It is important to see exactly how the movement or feeling changes as the belly rises and disappears and the process of that change. **You can see the change in detail only when your mind is closely attached to the object.**

If you observe the movement of the abdomen, many other phenomena such as "pain," "itching," and "numbness" occur in different parts of the body. When these phenomena occur, the meditator shifts their **attention to the most prominent one among them.** **The object of meditation changes depending on where the mind is focused.**

If you keep looking closely at a phenomenon in this way, **you will see the state and change processes of the phenomenon, and you will see the phenomenon disappear.** If you observe the phenomenon of the abdomen, **you will find yourself wandering in idle thoughts or delusions.** Not only the movement of the abdomen,



pain, itching, etc. that appear in the body, but also **the mind is the subject of attention.**

Observe clearly that the mind of idle thoughts or delusions arises, and when the delusion disappears, **it returns to the rising and disappearing of the abdomen.** Still, if the distractions or delusions do not go away, **strengthen the mind again and repeat this process, and the idle thoughts and delusions will also decrease gradually.**

Also, even if a certain thought arises, if that thought is helpful to meditation, and if it is a very important thought in life, in Vipassanā (insight meditation) the thought itself is only an object of attention. In other words, **it is just a phenomenon that appears as an object of attention.** Therefore, **no matter what thoughts arise, you should recognize the "knowing the thinking mind" itself, not the content of the thoughts.** If you follow the content of your thoughts, it will not stop. **When you see it, it disappears!** (Dhamma Letter No. 73).

The meditator only **needs to breathe naturally and look at the phenomena** that occur **with a balanced mind, relaxed and free from tension.** Guessing or expecting something doesn't help.

*May you cultivate your sati continuously (Sammā-Viriya)!*

*May you achieve the Sammā-Sati through Satipatthāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 97 Satipaṭṭhāna 21: Kāyanupassana 12: The Posture 3:

### Walking Meditation 1

The Buddha recommended walking meditation and explained **the benefits in five ways**.

First, it is beneficial on long journeys as **it brings health, strong endurance and strength**. At the time of the Buddha, there were no vehicles or means of transport, so one had to walk long distances while on alms-round. It was necessary to have strong endurance.

Second, **it develops energy for mindfulness practice**. This is because walking meditation requires twice as much effort as doing sitting meditation in order to be mindful. In other words, it takes twice as much effort **to firmly establish mindfulness with an object that changes from moment to moment**.

Third, leaning only on sitting meditation can cause disease. **It relaxes the muscles and helps blood circulation**. Therefore, **balancing sitting meditation and walking meditation is good for health** and can be very helpful for the growth of mindfulness.

Fourth, **it is good for food digestion**. When indigestion becomes a disease, it brings great obstacles to mindfulness meditation. In particular, if you practice meditation right after waking up in the morning, you can **easily get rid of drowsiness and effectively develop mindfulness during sitting meditation**.

Fifth, **you will double your concentration power**. This increased concentration plays a decisively important role in sitting meditation. There is a tendency to neglect the practice of walking, which is a mistaken idea. **If you practice walking first and then sit down, you can double your concentration and achieve deep samādhi**.

A meditator finds it difficult to maintain strong samādhi and unwavering mindfulness when meditating. **Walking meditation is another subject of focused meditation**, and there are cases where you can focus on your feet slowly. This method is not recommended except for those who are particularly distracted.



**Just walk at a comfortable, natural pace, but this requires awareness. All sensations arising from the sixth sense already exist, and all phenomena of the body and mind that occur naturally should be targeted.** You should be able **to see *what is happening inside yourself***, without focusing on the outside scenery or passing by other people or sounds. To meditate in any posture with movement, whether sitting or lying down, you are ***targeting the phenomena of the body and mind that occur within you.***

It's just different from the usual walks. A walk will focus your mind on objects other than yourself, and you will fall into delusions and into a daydream. This is not different from sitting, standing or mindfulness of daily life.

**Mindfulness meditation aims to develop wisdom.** Walking meditation also develops wisdom **by understanding impermanence and non-self nature through body and mind (materiality and consciousness).** **To the extent that wisdom arises, one is freed from all defilements and the enlightenment that leads to Nirvāṇa is manifested.**

In the sutta, we can often see cases of *attaining enlightenment through walking meditation*. I hope that all of you will be freed from pain in body and mind through continuous practice repeatedly.

In the next Dhamma Letter, I will introduce a more detailed walking meditation method.

*May you cultivate your sati continuously (Sammā-Viriya)!*

*May you achieve Sammā-Sati through Satipatthāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 98 Satipaṭṭhāna 22: Kāyanupassana 13: The Posture 4:

### Walking Meditation 2

Last week, we looked at the five benefits of walking meditation and its purpose (Dhamma Letter 97).

Walking meditation can be introduced in two ways:

First, as I explained last week, instead of focusing on the gait itself, **walk with a comfortable and natural gait**. In this case, **you must be able to simultaneously target and notice all the phenomena already occurring in the body and mind**.

Instead of being distracted by the scenery outside, by people passing by, or by sounds, **be mindful of what is happening inside you**. It would be good if all the six sense organs could be observed: **seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, feeling touch, and being conscious**. However, since this is an advanced stage of practice, you can start **by noticing each sensation**. As awareness becomes more and more clear, **you can know all six sense elements at the same time**. In the case of walking, however, only four elements are known: seeing, hearing, feeling, and consciousness.

The second method is mainly a rudimentary step that many people do. **If you are starting walking meditation for the first time, or if your concentration is low and you are distracted, focus only on the gait itself**.

If you lift up your steps, push forward, and be mindful of every moment you put them down in slow motion, you will double your concentration power.

If, mindfully, along with concentration, awareness continues undispersed with the intention to lift the foot, then, mindfully, extend it forward, lower it, hit the ground, release it, etc.

Concentration increases with every step. **This increased concentration plays a decisively important role in sitting meditation**. It is good to be able to do it several



times consistently for 10 to 40 minutes at a time. **It is important to practice regularly in parallel with sitting meditation and observation of daily life.**

If you go to the place where the Buddha and his disciples, bhikkhus, used to practice (in India), you can see that there are paths for walking meditation all over the place. It is recommended to set a certain distance at your home/workplace, indoors and outdoors, and in a park to practice walking meditation repeatedly; there will be many benefits.

*May you cultivate your sati continuously (Sammā-Viriya)!*

*May you achieve Sammā-Sati through Satipatthāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*





## 99 Satipaṭṭhāna 23: Kāyanupassana 14: Sati Practice in Daily Life

DN22:

While a bhikkhu is going forward or returning, whether looking forward or sideways, even while bending or straightening (body or limb), even while wearing robes or carrying an alms-bowl, while eating, drinking, chewing, or swallowing (food), when urinating or having a bowel movement, while walking, standing, sitting, sleeping or waking up, and while speaking or silent, **he notices and understands it.** In this way, he dwells contemplating the body **from the inside**, observing the body **from the outside**, and observing the body **from the inside and outside.**

He spends his time observing phenomena occurring in the body, observing phenomena that disappear from the body, and also observing phenomena that arise and disappear simultaneously in the body.

**The awareness that "this is the body" is established in him.**

**Thus he develops his awareness to a level where there is only wisdom and right awareness. In this way, he lives detachedly without attachment to anything in the world of mind and matter.**

This, bhikkhus, is the way a bhikkhu lives by observing the body from body to body.

**Mindfulness practice should be continued in all daily life 24/7**, not just sitting and walking meditation. When getting up from a sitting position, you need to be aware of getting up from your seat and moving while you get up. Whether you are sitting or standing, driving, eating, or any other daily activity, awareness must continue.

**When mindfulness is followed, unwholesomeness can be prevented from arising.**

If you enter the stage of deep meditation and look at it in a pure state, **all actions performed without mindfulness can be viewed as unwholesome.** We must continue our mindfulness toward the state of Nirvāṇa, where **all defilements have been**



**removed by uprooting all the three poisons** (lobha, dosa, moha – Dhamma Letter No. 64). Then, you are free from any suffering.

You have to practice noticing all the actions of the rough state so that you can gradually reach the pure state. **Small awareness repeatedly is more important than grandiose awareness. Ask yourself what you are noticing right now over six senses. The more you become aware of the moments, the stronger the power of mindfulness will be.**

*May you cultivate your sati continuously (Sammā-Viriya)!*

*May you achieve Sammā-Sati through Satipatthāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 100 Satipaṭṭhāna 24: Kāyanupassana 15: Clear Understanding of Impermanence

DN22:

While a bhikkhu goes forward or returns, he constantly notices and understands impermanence.

Whether looking forward or looking sideways, he constantly notices and understands impermanence. Even while bending or stretching (body or limb), he constantly notices and understands impermanence. Even while wearing a robe or carrying an alms-bowl, he constantly notices and understands impermanence. Even while eating, drinking, chewing, or swallowing (food), he constantly notices and understands impermanence. Even when he urinates or defecates, he constantly notices and understands impermanence. Whether walking, standing, sitting, sleeping, or waking up, while speaking or silent, he constantly notices and understands impermanence.

In this way, he dwells contemplating the body from the inside, observing the body from the outside, and observing the body from the inside out.

He spends his time observing phenomena occurring in the body, observing phenomena that disappear from the body, and also observing phenomena that arise and disappear simultaneously in the body.

The awareness that “this is the body” is established in him.

Thus he develops his awareness to a level where there is only wisdom and right awareness. In this way, he lives detachedly without attachment to anything in the world of mind and matter.

This, bhikkhus, is the way a bhikkhu lives by observing the body from body to body.

The purpose of our mindfulness meditation is **to develop wisdom in human life, to end all suffering** (Dukha: dissatisfaction), and to reach Nirvāṇa (Dhamma Letters No. 23, 24, and 56) of ultimate happiness. Therefore, it is difficult to achieve such a result by simply noticing during the previously discussed sitting meditation, walking meditation,



and meditation in everyday life. **It must be accompanied by clear awareness, and in every action done with the body, speech, and mind, continuous awareness of impermanence (*anicca*) arises.**

You have to have a soft, **relaxed mind that doesn't cling to what you like and doesn't push or defend against what you don't like.** This is because only **by reducing such three poisons can you see the object as it is in a pure state of mind.** You can see things in a wide and transparent state **without being trapped in your ego.** The fact that continuous **knowledge of impermanence arises is based on the right view,** so that **you can have right thoughts and lead a right life** (Dhamma Letters No. 60-62).

*May you cultivate your Sati continuously (Sammā-Viriya)!*

*May you achieve Sammā-Sati through Satipatthāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



# 101 Satipaṭṭhāna 25: Kāyanupassana 16: Reflection on Repulsiveness 1

DN22:

A bhikkhu should observe this very body, covered with skin from the soles of the feet below to the hairs above, and full of all kinds of filthiness.

“This body contains hair, body hair, nails, claws, teeth, skin, flesh, tendons, bones, bone marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, pleura, spleen, lungs, intestines, contents of the intestines, the stomach, the contents of the stomach; Feces, bile, sputum, pus, blood, sweat, solid fat, tears, liquid fat, saliva, runny nose, joint fluid, urine.

In this way, he dwells contemplating the body from the inside, observing the body from the outside, and observing the body from the inside and outside. He spends his time observing phenomena occurring in the body, observing phenomena that disappear from the body, and also observing phenomena that arise and disappear simultaneously in the body.

The awareness that “this is the body” is established in him.

In this way he develops his awareness to a level where there is only wisdom and right awareness. In this way, he lives detachedly without attachment to anything in the world of mind and matter.

This, bhikkhu, is the way a bhikkhu lives, observing the body from body to body. Many modern meditators are reluctant or find it difficult to observe 32 body parts while observing the body. First of all, they have a hard time accepting the word “disgust.” Ordinary people think that their body should be considered beautiful - nurtured and taken care of. Why should one observe one's own body as an unclean part?

Some people put time and effort into maintaining "beautiful hair," but when the hair is drenched in food, they feel disgusted. As such, **we have fantasies about our own bodies**. If we observe the real thing, we can realize that it is matter and that matter is



changing. **When we desperately feel and understand the process of being born, getting old, getting sick, and dying, our attitudes toward life can change.**

**If you are a person who has the desire to face reality and to see and eradicate the source of suffering in body and mind, this practice will bring great results. In particular, a person who has difficulty in carrying out the meditation because the greed (lobha) is too strong for himself/herself, practicing with this meditation topic will bring many benefits while letting go of attachment and observing himself/herself objectively.**

*May you cultivate your Sati continuously (Sammā-Viriya)!*

*May you achieve Sammā-Sati through Satipatthāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 102 Satipaṭṭhāna 26: Kāyanupassana 17: Reflection on Repulsiveness 2

Here, the word “disgust” or “repulsiveness” refers to the realm of wisdom outside the world. It changes the way you look at the world.

Earlier, in Dhamma Letter No. 23, the three stages of happiness were discussed. The first stage refers to recognizing the limitations of the material world and not becoming content with the joy that comes from the fulfillment of desires.

The second stage of happiness, which is beyond the world of desire, can be said to be viewed from the perspective of pursuing a peaceful mind that comes from the experience of meditation in the microscopic material world or the immaterial spiritual world. It is a view from the point of view of the spiritual world that seeks to break free from the rough state of material desires, the root of suffering.

It is an observation that can lead to the wisdom that can be viewed in the realm of pure spirituality beyond the world of rough material. Since the ultimate goal of Buddhism is to achieve Nibbāna (ultimate happiness: Dhamma Letter No. 56), *it can be recognized that happiness in the first stage driven by worldly desires is inevitably impermanent and unsatisfactory. This reflective meditation can be very helpful when there is a volition to reach a higher state rather than stay with a blissful sensation of a rough or more coarse stage.*

By observing the unclean parts of the body, we can recognize the animal and material elements of humans.

When observing each part, you can know the discomfort or disease caused by imbalance through the sensory feeling of the body, and you can expand the area of treatment yourself. **By understanding your body, you can observe yourself objectively and find the right balance.**



**When you intensively observe how your body is structured and what phenomena it creates, you can put away your attachment to your body and recreate yourself in a peaceful state.**

Therefore, this is a part connected to the next observation of the four elements of matter and meditation on death.

In the next Dhamma Letter, I will introduce Samatha and Vipassanā meditation in brief through observation of 32 parts of the body.

*May you cultivate your sati continuously (Sammā-Viriya)!*

*May you achieve Sammā-Sati through Satipatthāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*





## 103 Satipaṭṭhāna 27: Kāyanupassana 18: Reflection on Repulsiveness 3: Kasiṇa Meditation (Samatha) and Vipassanā

As previously mentioned, by observing 32 body parts, you can recognize each color. **When you focus on a part of your body, you stop and focus on that part.** *For example, if you observe a bone with your mind and stop there, the shape of the bone disappears, and only white, the color of the bone, comes to mind. The white color becomes a representation and remains a meditation subject, concentrating only on white.* This is called Samatha (concentration) meditation.

10 Kasiṇa (4 elements + 4 colors + light + space = earth, water, fire, wind, blue, yellow, red, white, light, limited space) is among the 40 Samatha meditation themes presented in the book of "the path of purification." **Kasiṇa meditation is one of the most common types of Samatha meditation for calming the mind of the yogi and starting a basis for practicing Vipassanā meditation.**

Concentrating on a single object and cultivating meditation is a meditation that was practiced in India and other countries before the Buddha attained enlightenment. Satipaṭṭhāna (Vipassanā) is a decisive way to present the Buddha's attaining enlightenment from his previous practice. **For Nibbāna (enlightenment or liberation), Vipassanā meditation (Satipaṭṭhāna) refers to the observation of the body and mind as the Dhamma itself.**

It is the first verse of Maha-Satipaṭṭhāna sutta (DN22, 大念處經):

*Bhikkhus, this is for the purification of all sentient beings, for sorrow and lamentation. The right way to get rid of suffering and hatred is to overcome it. It is the only way to realize Nirvāṇa.*

As mentioned earlier in walking meditation (Dhamma Letter 98), **it is very helpful for those who are somewhat distracted or for beginners to use this Samatha method to calm their minds first.** In modern society, many people have stress and a busy daily life, so it is a good way to start meditating by focusing on one object. However, in the case of advanced meditators, **if they practice for the purpose of liberation and**



**Nirvāṇa, they need Right Sati (Sammā-Sati) in Vipassanā.** Then, they will attain Right Concentration/Tranquility (Sammā-Samādhi), Right Wisdom (Sammā-Panna), and achieve great fruit.

**When one is able to see things clearly and perceive things as they are (Right View) based on a still mind and begin to understand the impermanent, dissatisfactory, and non-self nature, one's meditation is converted to Vipassanā meditation.**

The Buddha taught two kinds of meditation:

1. For concentration or tranquility (Samatha)
2. For insight or understanding (Vipassanā)

**If one practices Samatha, one's mind becomes pure and concentrated. When the mind is in tranquility, the mind can see things as they truly are. It will be connected to the Vipassanā way (insight meditation).**

1. Samatha Meditation: **Setting one object and continuing to focus (Paññatti: concept).** What the mind is fleeing from must be caught and bound to the object so that the mind does not wander. **You need to relax your body and mind and practice over and over again. It is aimed at sinking and calming the mind.**

2. Vipassanā Meditation: **Understanding impermanence (*anicca*), dissatisfaction (*dukkha*), and non-self (*anattā*), with ultimate reality (Paramatha: Truth) rapidly changing at every moment as the object.** Therefore, *it can be carried out by noticing it 24/7 anytime, anywhere.* **Through the development of wisdom, we get rid of even the finest defilements completely and achieve liberation from Saṃsāra.**

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 104 Satipaṭṭhāna 28: Kāyanupassana 19: The Reflection on the Material Elements 1

DN22:

A bhikkhu should **observe this body as it is composed**, contemplating it according to **the characteristics of each element**. “**In this body there is an earth element, a water element, a fire element, and an air element,**” he said. Just as a skillful butcher or his assistant, after slaughtering an oxen and dividing it into pieces, sits and observes them at the crossroads, so, you should observe this body while contemplating.

“In this body there is an element of earth, there is an element of water, there is an element of fire, and there is an element of air.” In this way, he dwells contemplating the body from the inside, observing the body from the outside, and observing the body from the inside and outside. He spends his time observing phenomena occurring in the body, observing phenomena that disappear from the body, and also observing phenomena that arise and disappear simultaneously in the body.

The awareness that “this is the body” is established in him. **In this way one develops one’s awareness to a level where there is only wisdom and right awareness.** In this way, **one lives detachedly without attachment to anything in the world of mind and matter.** This, bhikkhus, is the way a bhikkhu lives, observing the body from body to body.

In the Old Testament of Christianity, there is a story that God formed man out of clay and breathed air into it to create life. Many people accept it as a myth, but in fact, if we decompose the material, **the human body is composed of four elements: earth, water, fire, and wind.** When we realize that we do not stand for ourselves, we realize the four elements are what stand. I do not go, four elements go. I do not sit, the four elements sit. **We realize that there is only matter & consciousness with conditions. And with understanding, you are freed from body and mind.**



**In order to realize the wisdom of knowing and seeing how the body and mind are conditioned to each other, we firmly hold onto the body (materiality) as an anchor of the mind and disassemble and observe the ideal body into fundamental and derivative materials.** You need to understand the four causes of each substance, namely **the relationship between kamma, mind, temperature, and food.**

The Blessed One said, “Bhikkhus, how then does a bhikkhu know the substance? Here, bhikkhus, the bhikkhus say, 'whatever it may be, it is all about the four fundamental substances (mahā-bhūta) and the substances derived from them (upādāya-rūpa) as they are.’” **By deconstructing and observing the body, if you can see the body as a component rather than as a being, you will not be attached to this body as "I" or "mine." When you let go of attachment, there will be no more suffering and you will be freed from body and mind.**

*May you cultivate your sati continuously (Sammā-Viriya)!*

*May you achieve Sammā-Sati through Satipatthāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 105 Satipaṭṭhāna 29: Kāyanupassana 18: The Reflection on the Material Elements 2

The body here refers to the matter (rūpakāya). I can summarize **two components of the five-aggregates** (5 Khandhas, 五蘊: **Form, feeling, concept, volition, consciousness**: Dhamma Letter No. 48): **body and mind, or matter and spirit**. Man, who is a being of the sensual world, has **a material body**, so **when the mind arises, the mind arises depending on the material foundation**.

Already over 2,600 years ago, the Buddha had an insight into the mutual-acting relationship between body and mind through a meditative method.

In the Samaññaphala Sutta: The Fruits of the Contemplative Life (DN2),

**This body is made of matter, it is composed of the four fundamental substances [the earth element, the water element, the fire element, and the wind element = the four great elements], it is born of parents, and it has grown out of food, and it is impermanent, destroyed, crushed, dismantled, and disintegrated. But the consciousness [識, 心] depends on it and is bound here.**

This is proven by modern science of atomistic or quantum mechanics.

According to the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta: The Foundations of Mindfulness (MN10),

**We have an inverted perception that the body is clean, so in order to get rid of that wrong perception, he preached the first establishment of mindfulness (sati) for the body.**

To explain a little more, **observe the mass of limbs or parts in the body as if observing the parts of a wagon**, and observe only the fundamental and derived substances **as if separating the stem, leaf, and skin of a plant**.



## 106 Satipaṭṭhāna 30: Kāyanupassana 19: The Reflection on the Material Elements 3: How to Observe 4 Elements

The body and mind can be observed through these four elements. Since mind observation is an advanced stage, first observe the elemental characteristics through the body, which is in a rough state. **It can be observed in sitting meditation, walking meditation, and daily life.** Again, you can do **Samatha meditation, which focuses on taking only one object**, and **Vipassanā meditation, which observes all the phenomena occurring in all six senses** (see Dhamma Letter No. 103).

An object is formed by the combination of these four elements. **The four elements, earth, water, fire, and wind, are not a concept commonly thought of but rather refer to the properties and characteristic actions of each element.**

- **Earth (地) - Hard and yielding / Rough or soft / Heavy or light:** Think about the parts of the body that can sense hardness in 32 parts of the body (Dhamma Letter No. 101) - especially the bones. So, where can you feel the softness? Flesh. Concentrate on your body in this way, observing each characteristic of earth.
- **Water (水) - The property of Flowing or Cohesive (a physical force that maintains a constant shape).** Water flows without sticking to any shape and has the property to bind other substances. It is made by clumping the soil to make it hard or by clumping the flour to make it into a lump. The nature of water is that it has no form, but it has the property of creating form. **Think about how to combine and form.**
- **Fire (火) - Warm / Cold:** Heat causes melting, and cold causes coolness and freezing. Your body may feel hot or cold.
- **Wind (風) - Movement / Pause:** If any movement is detected, it is the action of the wind. The wind shakes and scatters other objects, but sometimes it stands still. Our temple is located in a remote California desert, and the internet works well on a windy day. However, on days when a very strong wind blows or the air is unusually still, the Internet doesn't work. I'm not a scientist, but here's an



example I've gained empirically by living here. In this way, the elements interact to create phenomena.

**Life in the cosmic world or on Earth is a relic created through the action of energy by these four elements.** It can be said that this was empirically derived already from the Buddha 2600 years ago through deep meditation. **It is being revealed in modern times through atomic and quantum science.**

**If you recognize the properties of each of these four elements through your senses and thoughts in your daily life, you can practice Samatha meditation by focusing on one intense sensation, or you can practice Vipassanā meditation by observing the ever-changing feelings.**

*May you cultivate your sati continuously (Sammā-Viriya)!*

*May you achieve Sammā-Sati through Satipatthāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 107 Satipaṭṭhāna 31: Kāyanupassana 20: The Nine Cemetery

### Contemplations - Asubha 1 부정관 (不淨觀, Asubhnupassin, Meditation on Impurity)

This is connected with the previously-presented 32 body parts observations (Dhamma Letters No. 101-103).

In modern times, it is difficult to see a person's dead body up close. In Thailand, there are places that open mortuary rooms for meditators, so you can see and meditate on the actual dead body.

**In life, everything is uncertain, but only death is certain.** When we face death, we realize that this body we cherish is just material, nothing more, nothing less. When this body, which is considered beautiful or precious, eventually dies, **only material elements remain and return to the soil as natural phenomena.**

It is also a good meditation for immediately acquiring **impermanence (*anicca*)** and **selflessness (*anattā*)**. **You can reflect on how much a human being is attached to one's body and has to suffer through it oneself.**

MahaSatipaṭṭhāna Sutta (Digha Nikāya 22):

- 1) Every time you see a corpse that has been abandoned in the cemetery, a day or three days after the death it has swelled up, turned dark blue, and started decomposing,
- 2) Whenever I see a corpse dumped in a cemetery eaten by crows, eagles, hawks, herons, dogs, tigers, leopards, jackals, and many other animals,
- 3) Every time I see a corpse dumped in a cemetery turned into a skeleton (bone) attached to one another with blood-stained flesh and tendons,
- 4) Every time I see a corpse dumped in a cemetery, with no flesh, only blood, turned into a skeleton attached to one another by tendons,
- 5) Every time I see a corpse dumped in a cemetery turned into a skeleton attached to each other by tendons, without a single piece of flesh or blood,





6) The bones of the corpse dumped in the cemetery are separated from each other and scattered in all directions, here and there, hand bones, leg bones, ankle bones, knee bones, shin bones, thigh bones, vertebrae bones, spine bones, shoulder bones, cervical bones, jaw bones, teeth, whenever you see the skulls,

7) Every time I see a corpse dumped in a cemetery turned to bone as white as a seashell,

8) Every time I see a corpse dumped in a cemetery, piled up as a pile of bones for over a year,

9) Whenever I see a corpse left in a graveyard, decayed to bone dust,  
He must also think of his own body.

**“Indeed, this body is of the same nature. This body will be like him, and it cannot be avoided.”**

In this way, he dwells contemplating the body from the inside, observing the body from the outside, and observing the body from the inside and outside. He spends his time **observing phenomena occurring in the body, observing phenomena that disappear from the body, and also observing phenomena that arise and disappear simultaneously in the body.**

**The awareness that “this is the body” is established in him.**

**Thus, he develops his awareness to a level where there is only wisdom and right awareness. In this way, he lives detachedly, without attachment to anything in the world of mind and matter.**

This, bhikkhus, is the way a bhikkhu lives **by observing the body from body to body.”**

In the next letter, I will briefly present a more detailed method of meditation and **death meditation.**

*With mettā,*



## 108 Satipaṭṭhāna 32 : Kāyanupassana 21: The Nine Cemetery

### Contemplations - Asubha 2 부정관 (不淨觀, Asubhnupassin, Meditation on Impurity)

A continuation from the last Dhamma Letter:

This contemplation was the most practiced by the disciples during the Buddha's time. When taking an object during meditation, the object can be selected according to each person's temperament. **It reduces attachment to one's body and overcomes greed. This is because the strong ego of the stereotype of "me" and "mine" prevents us from escaping from our own thoughts and encourages suffering not only for ourselves but also for those around us.**

Persistent craving for the body is the cause of rebirth, and rebirth in the world of desire must constantly suffer from hunger, sickness, fatigue, sometimes trembling with fear, old age, and death. **If you think that your body is eternal and good, you cling to it, but if you realize that you are not really liking it, you can go on living your life as a master of yourself and no longer as a slave to your body.**

**Although this meditation practice may cause discomfort or disgust and make you want to avoid it, it will give you the courage to overcome yourself.** The "recognition" that this meditative subject is harsh and disgusting is a way to experience the first jhāna. This is because there is a thought caused by the elements of the first jhāna, and it sustains because there is a continuous reason for it. However, focusing on the subject brings joy and happiness. This experiential meditative state is called the first jhāna.

In the process of figuring out that the body is not clean and beautiful but dirty and filthy I think of that image I presented in The Nine Cemetery Contemplations (Asubha) last Dhamma Letter No. 107.



Although it is difficult to come into contact with human corpses in modern times, there are still opportunities to see them in India, Myanmar, and Thailand. If you can actually see it, it will have a strong impact on your practice. However, in modern times, you can learn about it through representations in photos or media, as follows:

- After the end of life, the body swells and changes shape.
- After that, the skin color fades to dark blue and decays.
- Pus flows down through the 9 body's openings and gets spread.
- It turns into a skeleton (bone) that is attached to each other with blood-stained flesh and tendons.
- The bones of the corpse separate from each other and are scattered everywhere.
- The body turns white like a shellfish and turns into bones.
- The corpse is decayed into bone powder.

DN22:

This body becomes like this, and it will be like that, and it will swell and turn black, and it will not break free from bruising.

Thus, **one develops one's awareness to a level where there is only wisdom and right awareness. In this way, one lives detachedly, without attachment to anything in the world of mind and matter.**

This, bhikkhus, is *the way a bhikkhu lives by observing the body from body to body*.

This practice **leads to the meditation of death**. In the next letter, the death meditation method is briefly presented.

*With mettā,*



## 109 Satipaṭṭhāna 33: Kāyanupassana 22: Maranasati (Death)

### Meditation

Previously mentioned about death in Dhamma Letter No. 32, it will be helpful to understand more:

This Maranasati (awareness of death) is a mindfulness meditation based on the nine meditations on death (Dhamma Letters No. 107 and 108). **Everything is uncertain in our lives, but the only certain truth is that everyone faces death.** This is the fundamental reason that makes us terrified and afraid.

**It is important not to reject death as a fear object but to accept it as a fact. No matter how much you reject it, it is a clear fact that everyone will die, so it can only be overcome with great courage. I don't know when I'll die, but I'm sure I'll die too.**

### Reflections:

1. ***When I die, I take nothing with you. I can't take anything I've worked hard to build up, such as wealth, fame, or loved ones. I just go empty-handed the same as I came into this world empty-handed.***
2. ***When I die, I take only my karma with me.***
3. ***Only the karma I built with this body and mind will remain as my assets.***
4. ***Tendency of the mind and habits (only the mind of the karma that worked for wealth, pride, human relationships, etc.) remains.***
5. ***How did I practice through this body and mind? Only the hard work and results remain.***

**Realize what you can do rightly and live your life meaningfully.**

1. *Be meaningful without wasting time.*
2. *I understand that not only myself but also others are in the same position as me, and I value relationships and treat them kindly.*



3. *Get out of your distracted mind and practice **kamma-changing meditation** (Vipassanā, insight meditation).*

You can do concentrated Samatha meditation to free yourself from distracted minds. To change your karma, you change your habits through awareness (Vipassanā) at every moment. Therefore, we need to develop the power of the mind and become aware of the momentary mind with sati.

1. *Keep your mind at ease, not resisting anything.*
2. *The moment you relax and notice, the delusion disappears.*
3. *Be aware and awake of everything you see, hear, touch, and that arises in your daily life; it is more important to **be aware of what is being noticed** than to focus on the object. **This is the only way to annihilate and change the karma.***
4. *It always awakens a good heart to practice: dāna (giving) and to keep the precepts (morality).*

As for the specific meditation, the 32 kinds of body parts observation and the observation of the four major elements, which were discussed earlier, are applied and practiced repeatedly (Dhamma Letters No. 101-106).

**Getting to know yourself through life is meditation. Only when you are clearly aware of yourself can you be completely free from yourself.**

The four themes of Satipaṭṭhāna Meditation are observation of body, feeling, mind, and dhamma so that **mindfulness/awareness can always stay in one's own body and mind.**

**When sati (awareness) and pañña (wisdom) are there, defilements disappear.**

*With mettā,*



## 110 Satipaṭṭhāna 34: Vedanānupassanā (Observation of Feeling) 1

From Dhamma Letters No. 83-109, we learned about the observation of the body. The body is a concept. The meaning of existence is lost only when the body is decomposed into the four major elements. When the meaning of existence is lost, there is a recognizable feeling in its place, and these are the four elements: earth, water, fire, and wind. Here it develops into Vipassanā meditation, which is the practice of feeling.

The Buddha instructed us not to observe more than one of the four objects of mindfulness (sati) at the same time, but to observe (sati) only the body when observing the body. When the power of disassembling and observing the body increases, the power of Vipassanā to observe feelings [受] or mind [心] naturally arises. Feeling the superficial sensations of the body is one of the overall feelings. **The sensory sensations of the body represent the state of the mind. Therefore, if you focus on the senses of the body, you can observe the mind naturally and find a point of harmony between the body and the mind.**

**When we classify and observe our body into the four elements of earth, water, fire, and wind, we find that there is no person or ego, there are only conditions and only perceptible feelings.**

"One may consider the building blocks of mindfulness which can begin with observation of breathing meditation or observation of body movements, which is contemplation of the body (Kāyanupassana). **This may lead to the next base, which is observation and awareness of the most primitive psychological phenomena, such as feeling/sensation:** pleasant feeling, painful feeling, and dull feeling or sensation that is neither pleasant nor painful. This is contemplation of feeling/sensation (vedanānupassana)" – Dhamma Letter No. 47.

As in the answer to the question about feeling briefly addressed in the previous Dhamma Letter No. 67, the Buddha defined the observation of feeling into three broad categories.



Here in the MahaSatipatthāna Sutta (大念處經, 대념처경), it is presented in 9 subdivisions:

- Three feelings - **pleasant, painful, and neither-pleasant-nor-painful** observed by the body and the mind
- Three feelings - pleasant, painful, and neither-pleasant-nor-painful **in the mundane: obsessive** (i.e. lust for fame, sex, wealth, and appetite) to be good success
- Three feelings - pleasant, painful, and neither-pleasant-nor-painful **in supramundane: no attachment**

**Body observation and feeling observation cannot be separated while you observe. They are connected.**

*May you cultivate your sati continuously (Sammā-Viriya)!*

*May you achieve Sammā-Sati through Satipatthāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 111 Satipaṭṭhāna 35 : Vedanānupassanā (Observation of Feeling) 2

Digha Nikāya 22:

How, then, bhikkhus, does a bhikkhu live **observing feeling from feeling**?

Bhikkhus, here are some bhikkhus.

While experiencing **pleasurable feelings**, we correctly know that “I experience pleasurable feelings.”

While experiencing a **painful feeling**, we know rightly, “I experience a painful feeling.”

As long as I experience **neither pleasant nor painful feeling**, “I experience neither pleasant nor painful feeling.”

While experiencing the **pleasurable feeling of attachment**, we rightly know that we “experience the pleasurable feeling of attachment.”

While experiencing a **pleasurable feeling without attachment**, one correctly knows that “I experience a pleasurable feeling without attachment” and rightly knows that while experiencing a **painful feeling with attachment**, “I experience a painful feeling with attachment.”

While experiencing **painful feelings without attachment**, we correctly know that we “experience painful feelings without attachment,”

While experiencing a **neither-painful-nor-pleasurable feeling with attachment**, one experiences a neither-painful-nor-pleasurable feeling with attachment.”

While experiencing a **non-painful, non-pleasant feeling without attachment**, one experiences a non-painful, non-pleasant feeling without attachment.”

In this way he lives observing feeling in **feeling inside**, observing feeling in **feeling outside**, and observing feeling in **feeling inside and outside**.

He lives **observing the phenomena that arise in the feeling**, he lives **observing the phenomenon that disappears in the feeling**, and he also spends observing the phenomena that **arise and disappear simultaneously in the feeling**.





The awareness that “this is a feeling” is established in him.

*In this way he develops his awareness to a level where there is only wisdom and right awareness. In this way, he lives detachedly without attachment to anything in the world of mind and matter.*

This, bhikkhus, is how a bhikkhu lives contemplating feeling from feeling.

**Feelings can be said to be the medium through which the body and mind can be known.** However, as the Buddha previously presented three types of feelings (pleasant, unpleasant, neither-pleasant-nor-unpleasant feeling), **feelings/sensations manifest themselves through perception.**

In Pāli, the language of the Buddha, "**sukha**" is a pleasant feeling for the body, and "**somanassa**" is a term for a pleasant feeling for the mind. A painful feeling on the body is called "**dukkha**," and a painful feeling on the mind is called "**domanassa**." A feeling that is neither pleasant nor unpleasant is called "**abyakata**" & "**upekkhā**."

The climax state of *upekkhā* is one of the four holy minds (*brahma mind*) and can be said to be *the supreme mind* in the three realms of rebirth (Dhamma Letter No. 35).

Through moment-by-moment awareness, one should be able to perceive the respective states of *sukha*, *dukkha*, *somanassa*, *domanassa*, *abyakata*, and *upekkhā*.

I hope that you can make the right effort to achieve the best state of **upekkhā with wisdom.**

*May you cultivate your sati continuously (Sammā-Viriya)!*

*May you achieve Sammā-Sati through Satipatthāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 112 Satipaṭṭhāna 36: Vedanānupassanā (Observation of Feeling) 3

**As long as there is body and mind, there is always feeling.** As mentioned earlier in the Dhamma Letter, **one mind** among *sukha* (pleasant feeling) & *dukkha* (unpleasant feeling) in the body, *somanassa* (pleasant feeling) & *domanassa* (unpleasant feeling) in the mind, and *abyakata* & *upekkhā* (neither pleasant nor unpleasant) **always exist in each moment.**

**The mind always has one object.** *If you have something you want, you try to have it and keep it for a little longer. And anger arises when you don't get what you want.*

**What if there is something you don't like?**

**The object you don't want is rejected, and you want it to disappear.** *You hope it goes away quickly and you try to get rid of it. When things don't go the way you want, anger arises. In this way, anger (dosa) is a relative state of mind that arises when something desired (lobha) is not achieved. They are inseparable, like two sides of a coin.*

That is why the Buddha referred to this as the three poisons.

- Tam (탐貪) means **craving/attachment (lobha)**
- Jin (진瞋) means **aversion/anger (dosa)**
- Chi (치癡) means **delusion/ignorance (moha)**

What is delusion (moha)?

An ignorant mind, a foolish mind.

*What do you not know? It is not knowing yourself. It is the foolishness that arises because we cannot grasp all the phenomena that occur in our own body and mind. Therefore, you must practice to know.*

*What is the opposite of moha (delusion/ignorance)?*

**It is wisdom.** *A wise person maintains a harmonious body and mind and has the leisure to take care of himself and others.*



**The state of one who has been perfected through complete knowledge** is called an Arahāt. This is the final stage of becoming an Enlightened One (Ariya), covered in Dhamma Letters No. 58-59.

**The purpose of this practice is to develop wisdom through mindfulness and awareness** and to reach Nirvāṇa, which is called ultimate happiness, the highest state one can have as a human being.

*May you cultivate your sati continuously (Sammā-Viriya)!*

*May you achieve Sammā-Sati through Satipatthāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 113 Satipaṭṭhāna 37: Vedanānupassanā (Observation of Feeling) 4

This is continued from the last Dhamma Letter.

The state of Arhatship is *a state in which even these feelings have all disappeared, and extinction is experienced*. **You are free from all the concepts (*sañña*) you have built up, you are no longer bound by anything, and you are therefore free from the feelings that come from those concepts.**

**The only thing we can do is to become aware of and keep being aware of all phenomena occurring in the body and mind as *impermanent, suffering, and selfless*. This was always emphasized by the Buddha. It is also his last will, "*ātāpī sampajāno satimā*!": aware and clear comprehension, keep aware of it!**

*So, how do you recognize a feeling?*

- **For any feeling, simply notice it as a feeling.**
- **Know yourself through your feelings/sensations.**
- **But a feeling is not someone nor does it have any substance.**
- **It's just a phenomenon that has nothing to do with you.**
- **Observe the feeling objectively that it has nothing to do with me. In other words, practice to see the body and mind separately.**

A more specific way to practice is to be **aware of the Five Aggregates (form, feelings, perceptions, mental activity, and consciousness)**, which is a way to practice in **the observation of dhamma**, which will be dealt with later, so it will be omitted here.

*May you cultivate your sati continuously (Sammā-Viriya)!*

*May you achieve Sammā-Sati through Satipaṭṭhāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



# 114 Satipaṭṭhāna 38: Vedanānupassanā (Observation of Feeling)

## 5: Q&A 28

**Q:** In feeling observation, there is a method of **observing only bodily sensations** and a method of **observing feelings with emotions**. Which method should I follow?

**A:** With the method from Goenkaji, only bodily sensations are observed. He explains that this is because in the Pāli language, which is the original text of the Mahasatipattana Sutta, feeling observation is only specified as dukkha and sukha. As stated previously in Dhamma Letter No. 112, we use “sukha” (pleasant) and “dukkha” (unpleasant) for the body and “somanassa” (pleasant) and “domanassa” (unpleasant) for the mind.

This is because each person is different in how they feel comfortable with themselves. **Being aware of the sensations in your body is very important. It is a key practice**, especially for beginners but also as you progress along the path. As emphasized earlier in the Dhamma Letters, ***feeling observation is an essential element that must be passed through on the way to cessation and Nirvāṇa.*** However, **as the practice progresses, the mind is overlooked, and progress in practice is difficult and comes with limitations.** This is because, above all, **in the Buddhist method of practice where wisdom is emphasized, the development of wisdom is the practice of mind observation.** This is emphasized every time in Goenkaji's discourse; it is constantly emphasized that the mind is important and that its pollutants must be removed. Therefore, it is an inseparable part.

Just like the Buddha's teaching to observe the four subjects (body, feeling, mind and dhamma), these four subjects are also inseparable. **While you observe an object of the “body,” a “feeling” arises. The “mind” knows the feeling/sensation and object.** The object itself is “dhamma” in the right view, not in the personal view. **The moment of observing and knowing it is already in the 4 foundations at the same time.** - Dhamma Letter No. 84



**Vedanā is from physical and mental phenomena that are related to each other, correspond with each other, and occur simultaneously. It can start from the body or the mind, but vedanā recognizes mostly through sensations.** A past memory triggered by feeling reacts automatically from the nervous system associated with memories. To solve this problem fundamentally is by understanding the conditions/situation of anicca (everything is changing; nothing is fixed), dukkha (dissatisfaction; suffering), and anattā (there is no “I;” it is a phenomenon). - Dhamma Letter No. 67

If you feel the senses of the body, which are six senses that enter through the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and consciousness of the six gates, they will soon change according to the state of mind. So, you can know the senses of the body through the mind. **This can be known through experience.**

**If you feel the sensations of the body, they change according to the state of the mind, so you can recognize the sensations of the body through the faculty of perception. This perspective can be accepted according to the level of wisdom of each person.**

**The truth does not control or suppress you, so if you practice naturally, you will understand how to do it yourself.**

May everyone be free from body and mind!

May you be happy through sati practice!

*With mettā,*



## 115 Satipaṭṭhāna 39: Vedanānupassanā (Observation of Feeling) 6

**As long as there is body and mind, there will always be feelings/sensations.** As suggested earlier, the Buddha said that **only three feelings should be observed.** One of the three feelings; pleasant, painful, and neither-pleasant-nor-painful; always exists at any given moment. **As long as the body is alive, pain, suffering, or disease cannot be avoided. So, is there any way to overcome these?**

Yes, it is possible when **mindfulness and wisdom** are together. You must be able to observe three poisoning minds. **You must cultivate the power of practice to observe without being swayed by craving and not reacting to aversion/anger feelings.**

According to the arrow discourse, SN36.6 Salatha Sutta:

Bhikkhus, it is like, for example, that a person is pierced by an arrow and then pierced again by a second arrow in succession.

So that person will suffer all the pain that comes from the two arrows.

Bhikkhus, when such an unlearned-dhamma man experiences painful feelings physically, he is anxious, heartbroken, grieved, beats his chest, howls, and goes mad. So, he suffers a double feeling.

That is, a physical feeling and a mental feeling.

**As for the first arrow, it is true that we must accept the disease of the body that we have already received from birth, but we can avoid the disease of the mind, which is the second arrow.**

**All you have to do is notice whatever feeling/sensation just as a feeling/sensation. A feeling is not someone and it does not have any substance. It has nothing to do with you. When you have wisdom and mindfulness, you can remain calm and not get carried away by your feelings.**



**You must not crave the object you want, and you must not have the desire to reject and eradicate the object you do not want. Cultivating the strength to accept things as they are without being obsessed with one's views is the practice.**

**Through constant observation, the power of mindfulness (sati) and wisdom (paññā) must be developed.** The practice of **Satipaṭṭhāna (Vipassanā)** suggested by the Buddha **is the only way to achieve liberation** from all defilements.

*May you cultivate your sati continuously (Sammā-Viriya)!*

*May you achieve Sammā-Sati through Satipaṭṭhāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*





## 116 Q&A 29 Discrimination Against Women in Buddhism

**Q: In a total enlightenment of the Buddhist truth, how come there's discrimination against women and the female community? If discrimination always existed since the lifetime of the Buddha, how do you call your religion totally enlightened?**

**A:** The Buddha was the one who revolutionized the acceptance of women as monastics in India's four-caste culture at that time. This decision was very influential and even changed the religious values of India back then.

After he passed away, however, it wasn't long before such a powerful and spiritual action was tainted by the culture and customs of each country that couldn't keep up with spiritual growth. There are problems like that in this era as well.

Reality falls short of that awareness, but we are trying to practice with this realization and continue with our best effort.

It is understandable that at the mundane level, one may doubt the path to enlightenment because of the reality of human nature. **Remember that the Buddha taught us that we must not follow the actions of others but only of ourselves as realized through the Noble Eightfold Path.** Gender is a worldly concept, so it is only through meditation taught by the Buddha that **we can liberate ourselves from this concept. Keep observing with a sincere heart. You will understand why things are the way they are if you keep meditating.**

*May everyone be free from body and mind!*

*May you be free from any suffering!*

*With mettā,*



## 117 Q&A 30: Forgiveness 1

**Q:** I once bullied a person at work and hurt a friend by saying hurtful things. As time goes by, my regret and sorrow for him grow. But a lot of time has already passed, and there is no going back. **How can I ask for forgiveness?**

**A:** A lot of time has passed and you haven't contacted him for a long time, but if you still feel deeply sorry for him, **you have to resolve it now. You must be free from that unhealthy mind.** Contact him now to apologize and ask for forgiveness. If you can't meet in person, it's a good idea to express your apologies at least by phone or email. **Whether or not that friend accepts an apology, you have to do as much as you can. Then it's up to your friend.** It is wonderful to have the courage to speak up without covering up your mistakes.

**After asking for forgiveness, don't beat yourself up too much.** To tell the truth, you yourself would have said and acted that way to your friend at that time, though unsound, as a way to protect yourself from any danger. Because **everyone is full of fear and doesn't know how to deal with their fear, they instinctively express it to the other person.**

*The essential stupidity of human beings is expressed in the form of harming oneself or harming others.* Therefore, **you must also ask for forgiveness from yourself.** And **please love yourself and comfort yourself.** In Buddhism, “no-self” is emphasized, and “I” is observed as “**5 aggregates (pañca khandha: 5온, 五蘊)**.” However, in order to see the truth right away, **sīla must be based on the fundamental morality of human beings.** It is because of this morality that *you can realize the reality of that “no-self” through a pure mind.*

**Cultivate loving-kindness toward yourself. When you are full of loving-kindness towards yourself, respect and loving-kindness for others will already be with you.**

*With mettā,*



## 118 Forgiveness 2

It is a natural act to ask for forgiveness for the unwholesome behaviors of the body, speech, and mind while living in the world. Also, it is a must in the process of spiritual practice. **There should be no unwholesome state of mind left with one another.** Therefore, it is very important to express your feelings to others. If there is a misunderstanding between you and others, you need to clear it up wisely (Dhamma Letter 117).

Forgiveness meditation was introduced earlier in Dhamma Letter 89, so please refer to it.

This has developed into another religious practice. Each religion emphasizes its importance. However, if you understand Buddhism deeply and see it from the level of enlightenment, it also becomes a fetter.

This is because all reality is accepted as the principle of nature as it is. **The law of karma itself has already become nature, and ultimately those who are forgiven and those who seek forgiveness will disappear.** As I emphasized in the last letter, **forgiveness is ultimately about cultivating a loving heart toward oneself. When you are full of loving-kindness for yourself, respect and loving-kindness for others will already be in you. So, nurture a heart of charity within you!** (practice of loving-kindness: Dhamma Letter 90).

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 119 Forgiveness 3 and Mettā Bhavana 1 (Practice of Loving-Kindness)

This is connected to the last Dhamma Letters No. 117 and 118.

**Mettā Bhavana** is to have unconditionally benevolent hearts toward all beings, including oneself. It starts with **forgiveness**. *If you can't forgive your own faults and the faults of others unconditionally, this loving-kindness will be limited.* Therefore, **cultivate loving-kindness toward yourself first. This is the opposite of nourishing the ego. Start by observing your body and mind and letting go of tension.** *When you are full of loving-kindness for yourself, respect and loving-kindness for others will already be in you.*

### ◆ Forgiveness

If I have wronged myself or another person by body, speech, or mind (thought), I seek forgiveness so that I can live in peace and happiness.

If someone has done me wrong by body, speech, or thought, I forgive them so that they may live in peace and happiness.

### ◆ Practice Mettā (Loving-Kindness)

I wish you comfort, happiness, and peace.

Just as I wish for comfort, happiness, and peace, I wish all beings to be comfortable, happy, and peaceful.

May I be free from malice.

Just as I wish to be freed from malice, so may all beings be freed from malice.

May I be free from mental and physical pain.

Just as I pray for relief from mental and physical pain, I pray for all beings to be free from mental and physical pain.

I wish you a peaceful and happy life.

Just as I wish to live in peace and happiness, I wish all beings to live in peace and happiness.

*With mettā,*



## 120 Mettā 2: Non-Aversion

People replace their anger or aversion with mettā, but this isn't the real practice of mettā.

Mettā means NON-AVERSIVE.

**Mettā comes automatically when there is complete understanding of "cause." Without this understanding, true mettā can't follow.**

*But just cultivating mettā is better than nothing. It can be a good habit, though it might be developed as a form of ego. You should be careful. Therefore, **you should check your mind to see if there is aversion or not when you cultivate mettā.***

People are deluded/ignorant. They just follow their own kamma. They might have some knowledge about Buddhism but have never cultivated it in the right way. **It is hard to find a real yogi and a good teacher. It is very rare.**

Like Jesus asked God before he died, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." Human beings' planet is the best place to practice. All beings from the low and high planes come and meet here with all kinds of beings with their own kamma. If you understand it, you can be more focused on yourself and not waste time as a human being. And we know what we have to do in our lives.

**Paññā means wisdom** and also can be translated as *understanding*. **Keep trying to understand cause and effect. There will be no suffering if you understand cause and effect without a colored perspective. No color means having Right View (Sammā-Diṭṭhi).**

**Right View leads to the Middle Way.**

If one has the right view, 3 fetters can be removed automatically. It is called a Sotāpanna (1st stage of enlightenment) which can never be reborn in the four woeful states.

*With mettā,*



## 121 Mettā 3: The Steps of Mettā Bhavana

Mettā Bhavana is to have unconditionally benevolent hearts toward all beings, including oneself. **It starts with forgiveness.** *If you can't forgive your own faults and the faults of others unconditionally, that loving-kindness is bound to be limited.*

If you want to cultivate unconditional loving-kindness, you must practice loving-kindness meditation. It doesn't just happen. It requires constant effort.

To start the mettā meditation correctly, **you have to extend love and warm-heartedness to yourself first. It is very hard to send mettā to other people when your own mind is not full enough of mettā or love and warm-heartedness toward yourself first.**

First, sit comfortably and close your eyes. Then think for yourself and read the following words in your mind or aloud:

"I hope that by not committing bad karma, accumulating many good karmas, and living according to the teachings of the Buddha, **my body will always be healthy, my hopes will be fulfilled, my mind will always be calm and happy, and I will finally be liberated.**"

1. Thinking of **a person closest to you**, one by one, as you did to yourself, together with the previous words, arouses a heart of love. You can do it for family or friends.
2. After that, repeat it with an earnest heart for **a person you feel neutral** about in your neighborhood, country, humanity, and all living things.
3. Lastly, remembering **the person you hate**, send the energy of loving-kindness with "the same mind."

### ◆ To the hated one:

*I know this person has suffered in life just like me.*



*I know this person has gone through the same sadness, loneliness, and frustration as me.*

*This person is looking for happiness just like me.*

*This person is trying to learn something just like me.*

*This person has the same infinite nature as me.*

At first, it is not easy to show kindness to people you hate, but after repeating it a few times, you will soon get used to it. You will feel that the hatred in your heart gradually disappears. **The most important thing here is that there should be no difference between the person you like and the person you hate.**

Therefore, it is better to spend more time practicing the mettā mind sufficiently on the object of #1 and getting used to the state of mettā. Then, practice #2 targeting a neutral person, and practice #3 so that everyone is in the same state of mind.

One thing to note is that it is better to avoid the deceased or those with physical/romantic attraction when choosing a subject.

Once you get used to loving-kindness, it is best to do it for about 10 minutes every morning, and you can do it anytime, anywhere.

***May you understand more and more!***

***May you attain paññā (wisdom)!***

***May your paññā (wisdom) be brought to Nibbāna!***

*With mettā,*



## 122 Mettā 4: The Benefits of Mettā Bhavana

In particular, the Buddha said that if you consistently practice loving-kindness, you can fall asleep comfortably, have no nightmares, wake up comfortably, be loved by others, be loved by non-human beings, and be protected from such as fire, poisons, and weapons. He also directly revealed that there are benefits of asceticism, being protected by the heavenly gods, being able to enter samādhi easily, having a clear complexion, being able to die peacefully, and being reborn in a good place after death.

Mettā Bhavana is a cultivation of loving-kindness. It is to develop, send and spread a heart of loving-kindness. **Mettā is to change your position and understand that other people want to be happy, comfortable, and well. You want others to be happy, prosperous, and comfortable the same as you want this.**

If you send mettā, or loving-kindness, and wish for the benefit of others to grow, your selfish mind will diminish. **When the selfish mind decreases, the benefits increase to both sides.** Then, **the mind of patience, sacrifice, and forgiveness, and understanding (wisdom) will increase** and take its place. The benefit of doing so is to go to sleep happy and wake up happy, and to be loved by many. **If you understand and care for others, others will love you, and there will be no obstacles or hindrances. There will also be no obstacles to your practice.** Life will unfold without difficulty. It protects the practitioner from the selfish mind, and the Buddha's "four protective meditations" include mettā meditation.

If you send mettā frequently, you will never do anything that is disadvantageous to the Dhamma because everywhere and in every way, **by understanding others, your selfishness will diminish and your anger will disappear.**

If you think of such a beautiful mind from time to time in your life, **you can accumulate a lot of good karma. This practice is to present a way for everyone to be happy.**

*With mettā,*





# 123 Satipaṭṭhāna 40: Objects of Meditation: Paññatti & Paramatṭha

## 1: The Essence of Vipassanā Meditation

In order to practice Vipassanā earnestly, the essential parts to think about are “paññatti” and “paramatṭha.” This is because **the object of Vipassanā meditation is to see paramatṭha, the ultimate reality. So, this must be clearly arranged so that one can go straight without falling into errors in practice.**

The difference between paññatti and paramatṭha is that **“paññatti” refers to the state of concept, while “paramatṭha” refers to ultimate reality.**

**Vipassanā meditation is to see ultimate reality. This refers to the state of seeing things (dhammas) as they are.** It can also be said **to see the Natural law (Dhamma).** Since the ultimate goal of Vipassanā is to develop wisdom and attain Nirvāṇa, where all suffering disappears, **one must correctly understand the paññatti seen in the course of practice. Through this practice, wisdom is developed, and one comes to know and see paramatṭha, ultimate reality.**

The actual object in Vipassanā practice can be understood as **impermanence and no-self.** This is because all objects are in a constant state of change, and cannot be fixed, thus demonstrating impermanence. **If an object is perceived as fixed, it is seen through the lens of concept, not reality. This conceptual perception is called paññatti.**

In practice, **the development of mindfulness and clear comprehension** should be cultivated consistently, naturally, and with increasing dedication. By practicing in this way and **putting forth our best effort, we come to experience the ultimate reality, paramatṭha.**

Buddhism speaks of emptiness (空, 공), but many people interpret it as “all-empty” or “all-one,” which is a conceptual understanding – paññatti. However, **emptiness, as a profound experience of reality, paramatṭha, arises through correct practice.**

*May you cultivate your sati continuously (Sammā-Viriya)!*



*May you achieve Sammā-Sati through Satipatthāna (Vipassanā meditation)!  
May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果,  
the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 124 Satipaṭṭhāna 41: Objects of Meditation (Paññatti & Paramatṭha) 2

The purpose of meditation is insight into the truth. Because the truth sets us free. The practice of insight is called Vipassanā meditation. The discussion of the two types of meditation (Samatha and Vipassanā) as suggested by the Buddha also considers whether **they are aimed at paññatti (concepts, fixed things) or paramatṭha (ultimate reality).**

**Samatha meditation is concentration on a fixed object (paññatti).** Through this, you can cut off your consciousness of the outside world and take in the stillness. **Vipassanā meditation sees the world with an open mind and ultimate reality as it is, understanding that all objects change and nothing is fixed (paramatṭha).** As a result, you can continuously maintain an egoless equanimity of mind.

In the Theravāda text, the Visuddhimagga ("The Path of Purification") by Buddhaghosa, 40 themes are presented as objects of Samatha meditation. In Abhidhamma, **ultimate reality, which is the object of Vipassanā meditation, is classified into four types (mind, mind-action, materiality, and Nirvāṇa).**

**Samatha meditation and Vipassanā meditation are interactive, not separate.** However, in the end, **through insight wisdom, they reach the state of Nirvāṇa by targeting Nirvāṇa.**

Therefore, Vipassanā meditation, which **penetrates the impermanent (anicca) and selfless-nature (anattā) through the body and mind, can be said to be the only way to reach Nirvāṇa.**

Depending on each person's state of practice, either Samatha or Vipassanā meditation can be done first. **At first, it is difficult to distinguish between concept and reality, so it is difficult to see reality, paramatṭha, as an object.** Just as it is impossible to live without concepts in living life, at first the idea, which is paññatti, becomes the object. **As**



**your practice deepens, you will notice the nature of paññatti. Then paramatṭha, the natural principle itself, will become your object.** There is no suffering; there is only the understood phenomena and awareness without any “me.”

**To meditate is to maintain the relationship between the two elements: the mind and the object. Thus, the ultimate state of Nirvāṇa is the disappearance of the object as previously described (a-nimitta: no object). Therefore, the distinction between paññatti and paramatṭha, which is central to meditation, is an essential concept to understand.** For this reason, it was discussed beforehand, prior to beginning the observation of the mind and observation of dhamma in the next stage of practice.

*May you cultivate your sati continuously (Sammā-Viriya)!*

*May you achieve Sammā-Diṭṭhi (Right View) through Satipatthāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 125 Satipaṭṭhāna 42: Objects of Meditation (Paññatti & Paramatṭha) 3: Emptiness (空, Suñña) 2

This continues from previous Dhamma Letters No. 123 and 124.

Many meditators experience “emptiness” as paññatti (concepts) mostly (see Dhamma Letter No. 63).

**Emptiness (공, 空) is not something we learn by trying or imitating.** We should not try to clear the mind or brighten the mind or anything like that. This is not something we should practice. **If one engages in practice with a deliberate attempt to achieve it, they will remain in paññatti (concepts).** Many yogis stay in this state of paññatti and often have the illusion that they have seen the truth.

Brightness, equanimity, and emptiness; all of these are manifested as pleasurable results of our correct practice. **You have to do it the right way to achieve that result. You shouldn't try to create the most ideal state imaginable.** What meditators need to do is **to see our own body, mind, matter, and spirit as they really are.** We need to **look at what we are actually experiencing. When you see the facts as they are, you can experience the state of paramatṭha (ultimate reality).**

In order to be able to see the Dhamma as it is when examining the practice, **one should also check the state of the paññatti (concept) and paramatṭha (reality)** during the practice interview.

*May you achieve Sammā-Diṭṭhi (Right View) through Satipaṭṭhāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 126 Satipaṭṭhāna 43: Vedanānupassanā (Observation of Feeling) 7

This follows from previous “observation of feeling” discussions in Dhamma Letters No. 110-115.

The fruit of Buddha's enlightenment is the twelve links:

1. ignorance or delusion (avijjā)
2. kamma-formations (sankhara)
3. consciousness (vinnana)
4. mind and matter (nama-rūpa)
5. six sense bases (salayatana)
6. contact or impression (phassa)
- 7. feeling/sensation (vedanā)**
- 8. craving (taṇhā)**
- 9. clinging (upadana)**
10. becoming (bhava)
11. rebirth (jati)
12. old age and death (jara-marana)

Feeling/sensation is a very important factor that conditions birth at the point of putting an end to suffering. It is also crucial in training to avoid transitioning **from feeling/sensation to craving and attachment.**

In the sensory observation of the body, there are five senses. When each of the five sensory gates – the eye, ear, nose, tongue, and skin (body) – meets their corresponding objects of matter, sound, smell, taste, and touch, contact occurs. In this interaction, the desire to crave and the aversion to reject arise within the eye consciousness, ear consciousness, nose consciousness, tongue consciousness, and body consciousness. The sixth consciousness, which recognizes the objects perceived by these five sensory doors, works in conjunction with them.



**Through the senses and feelings, sañña (one's accumulated ideas or beliefs) is revealed. These emotional states can make the body tense and uncomfortable, leading to suffering.**

**So, how can we shift from a state of suffering or dissatisfaction to one of calm bliss?**

Eliminating such causes through continuous observation through sati sampajañña is Vipassanā meditation. You have to get rid of the rooted sankhara (行蘊: volitional actions/formation) that has been accumulated through many births.

**Get out of the polluted and habitual patterns and also be calm without reacting to new sensations. In order to do so, continuous awareness, as well as wisdom, must be applied at the same time.**

Be aware of the sensations coming from the six gates (六門). It is good to be aware of all six senses, but it's good to focus on just one sense at first. Once you get used to one sense, you can try the others.

*May you cultivate your sati continuously (Sammā-Viriya)!*

*May you achieve Sammā-Diṭṭhi (Right View) through Satipatthāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 127 Satipaṭṭhāna 44: Vedanānupassanā (Observation of Feeling) 8

In the practice of observing feelings, one should not move from the initial stage of Phassa (contact) to the subsequent stage of reacting to sensation/feeling. This is essential for blocking craving and attachment.

This approach is beneficial not only for beginners in meditation but also for advanced practitioners who have nearly eliminated all impurities, as it helps maintain a pure state and move towards final **Nirvāṇa (a state in which all defilements are removed)**.

During the middle stage of practice, it is important to observe more active feelings rather than merely remaining with the sensations that come into contact with the body. **The process of removing pollutants or karmic obstacles, which are often deeply rooted, requires observing the three feelings (like, dislike, and neutral) that arise through the senses. This is a practical exercise that must be *integrated into daily life*.**

It is the principle of achieving a state of pure consciousness through the removal of deeply rooted impurities. Such careful observation will significantly aid in the progress of your practice.

Even if you cover up impurities and postpone observing them due to your own discomfort, when conditions are right, they will raise their heads again and make it difficult for you. If you truly want to reap the fruits of your practice in this life, and if you want to lead a prosperous life free from suffering or dissatisfaction, **you need the courage to observe yourself and put them down even if you are facing a little discomfort now.**

Feeling/sensation observation plays a decisive role in mind observation and dharma observation, which are the next stages of mindfulness practice. **Observing dhamma as it is without manipulating anything** is key 101 of Satipaṭṭhāna.

With mettā,





## 128 Satipaṭṭhāna 45: Vedanānupassanā (Observation of Feeling) 9

### How to Practice in Daily Life

The **body and mind** (matter and consciousness: rūpa-nama) emphasized in Vipassanā meditation **are connected and interact, resulting in cause and effect.**

**Feelings/sensations** arise as a **medium between body and mind.** Through the sensations felt in the body, **three feelings/sensations – craving, aversion, and neutral – are revealed, allowing us to see the source of pollution.** Through this process, the path-fruit of enlightenment is **achieved through the removal of impurities (kilesa).**

The state of the accumulated pollutants (kilesa: anguish) must be recognized through the sensations of the body. This is because the goal is to avoid experiencing suffering by preventing craving (taṇhā), which is the starting point of suffering, from progressing further into attachment (upadana).

**Recognizing all feelings as “anicca” (nothing is fixed, only changing) and repeatedly practicing is required.** However, if observation of feeling is limited to bodily feeling, sensation, there may be limits to the progress of the practice. It is necessary to observe more expanded, concrete feelings.

Even from a biological point of view, **emotions also belong to the senses of the body. This is because all the nerve substances that are spread throughout the body are revealed as the emotional state of the mind.** Therefore, it can be seen that feeling observation is expressed only as *dukkha* (displeasure/dissatisfaction in the body) & *sukha* (pleasure/satisfaction in the body) in the original text of Satipaṭṭhāna, which includes bodily sensations and emotional states of the mind. **Being able to notice not only the sensations in the body but also feelings felt in the mind, the fundamental source of pollution can be removed, and there will be progress in the practice.**

*May you cultivate your sati continuously (Sammā-Viriya)!*



*May you achieve Sammā-Diṭṭhi (Right View) through Satipatthāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



# 129 Satipaṭṭhāna 46: Vedanānupassanā (Observation of Feeling)

## 10 How to Practice in Daily Life 2

The beginning of my “observation of feeling” practice began 30 years ago when I came into contact with Buddhist books and **noticed pleasant and unpleasant feelings**.

I reflected on what I liked and disliked in a famous Buddhist monk's Dharma collection in South Korea. Starting with the idea that both pleasant and unpleasant experiences are merely images (concepts), I sought to cultivate a neutral mind.

Through my exploration of early Buddhism and Abhidhamma, I realized that a **neutral mind can also be associated with moha (ignorance)**. More specific types and functions of the mind will be discussed later.

### How to perform feeling observation:

1. It is always good **to be able to feel the sensations of the body**. Observe whether there is relaxation or tension and be mindful every moment so that **you can relax**.
2. **By noticing likes/craving and dislikes in daily life**, one **understands one's conceptual image** of pleasant and unpleasant feelings and **reduces sankhara (行蘊: volitional actions/formations)**.
3. **Try to keep the gears of your mind in neutral so you don't lean toward either side**.

**To practice is to know and understand oneself. As much as you know yourself, your understanding of others deepens, and you can lead a harmonious life. It's good to take the time to focus on yourself – to observe yourself and befriend yourself.**

*With mettā,*



## 130 Satipaṭṭhāna 47: Cittānupassanā (Observation of the Mind) 1

We are still discussing Satipaṭṭhāna meditation (the four mindfulness meditations), which is the way to reach Nirvāṇa, the ultimate happiness suggested by the Buddha. *Dhammanupassana* (observation of dhamma) is the ultimate way **to see everything literally as it is** through mindfulness. For dhammanupassana, mind-seeing (cittānupassana) is an essential practice. **Having a perspective to see things as they are is because there is an indispensable relationship between the mind and the object.**

An overview of the practice of cittānupassana was introduced in Dhamma Letters No. 40-48 by quoting from a thesis I wrote. Now, we will introduce how to perform cittānupassana (observing the mind) in detail.

**This method of practice is “watching the mind with the mind,” but it does not separate from the rest of the mindfulness meditations of body, feelings, and dhammas. If you practice observing the mind, you are doing all four things.**

Cittānupassana practice, whether it is *kāyanupassana* (observing the body) or *vedanāupassana* (observing the feeling) or any combination of them, **must reach the “knowing mind,” because without the “mind's intention,” no movement or feeling can be known.**

The basic practice is **to be mindful with the mind as an object.** Going further, it is **watching with a mind that knows the “awareness of knowing the object” again (“watching mind”).** In other words, **everything that enters through the six gates are the objects, but “the knowing mind” eventually becomes the host object.**

*May you cultivate your sati continuously (Sammā-Viriya)!*

*With mettā,*



## 131 Satipaṭṭhāna 48: Cittānupassanā (Observation of Mind) 2

In the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta (大念處經, 대념처경), it is emphasized to observe the mind over and over again (*anupassī*) in order to establish mindfulness of the state of mind being observed.

*How does one notice this again and again?*

**It is suggested to observe while controlling the mind of greed and hatred for the world with diligent (*ātapi*) clear knowledge (*sampajañña*).**

Here are the 16 phrases to be mindful of:

- (1) Knowing a mind with greed as a mind with greed.
- (2) He clearly knows a mind without greed as a mind without greed.
- (3) Knowing a mind with anger as a mind with anger.
- (4) He clearly knows a mind without anger as a mind without anger.
- (5) Knowing a mind with ignorance as a mind with ignorance.
- (6) He clearly knows a mind without ignorance as a mind without ignorance.
- (7) He knows a depressed mind as a depressed mind (by dullness and drowsiness).
- (8) He clearly knows a distracted mind as a distracted mind (with excitement).
- (9) He knows an elevated mind as an elevated mind (by *jhāna*).
- (10) He clearly knows that the mind that is not elevated is the mind that is not elevated (completely clearing *jhāna*).
- (11) Knowing the superior mind as the superior mind (there is still *jhāna* to be cultivated).
- (12) He clearly knows the superior mind as the superior mind (there is no *jhāna* left to cultivate).
- (13) Knowing a concentrated mind as a concentrated mind (by *jhāna*).
- (14) He clearly knows that an unconcentrated mind is an unconcentrated mind.
- (15) A mind freed is known as a free mind (temporarily freed from defilements by *jhāna*/completely freed from defilements).
- (16) He clearly knows an unfree mind as an unfree mind.



In this way, one lives observing the mind from within. Or they live by observing the mind from the mind to the outside.

Or they live by observing the mind from the heart, inside and out.

Or they live by observing the phenomena that arise in their minds. Or they live by observing the phenomenon that disappears from their mind. Or we live by observing the phenomenon that arises and disappears in the mind.

The awareness of "there is only the mind" is established. That mindfulness only enhances wisdom step by step, and only allows a higher level of mindfulness to arise. He is not dependent (on craving or wrong views) and is not attached to anything in the world (me or mine). In this way, a monk, a bhikkhu, lives contemplating the mind in the mind.

In this sutta, there is a very simple explanation of mind contemplation. **Using the 16 methods above, you can understand how the three characteristics of defilements - tam (貪, *lobha*, desire), jin (瞋, *dosa*, anger), and chi (痴, *moha*, delusion) - are recognized in every moment of awareness, how they function, and how to overcome them to move towards liberation.**

*May you cultivate your sati continuously (Sammā-Viriya)!*

*May you achieve Sammā-Diṭṭhi (Right View) through Satipatthāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 132 Satipaṭṭhāna 49: Cittānupassanā (Observation of Mind) 3

The key to “mindfulness” is to be aware of what is happening in the mind as it is. *It is simply to note and notice the mind as it arises and disappears, as it is.*

**Awareness that habitually identifies with one's thoughts or feelings strengthens the ego and produces suffering.** Through the practice of looking at oneself objectively through clear awareness, one can understand the thought of selflessness. This is the fundamental doctrine of Buddhism, and knowing it can help solve fundamental problems.

In Abhidhamma, **there is only one mind that arises in an instant**, and that **mind is defined as “knowing the object.”** “Object” is everything the mind knows. The meditation method of **observing the mind does not focus on one specific object.** In every moment, **the object already exists continuously through the sixth gate (mind).** Therefore, there is no need to focus on a specific object intentionally. **The practice is to contemplate whether or not the mind is acting from defilement – greed (*lobha*, desire), anger (*dosa*, hatred), or delusion (*moha*, foolishness) – on those objects.** *The purpose is to create the wisdom of alobha (non-greed), adosa (non-anger), and amoha (non-delusion).*

**When observing an object, a perceived distance arises between the object and the mind. You must reach a point of “knowing again” – clearly recognizing both your awareness of the object and the “knowing mind.”** *Only then can one attain the Dhamma nature, where the object can be seen as it truly is, without attachment, and one can experience paramatṭha, the ultimate reality.*

Above all, the **“right attitude”** is the most important when practicing. When you practice, **don't focus too much, don't control it, don't try to create something, don't restrain your mind, don't make it happen, and don't deny what happens.**

*With mettā,*



## 133 Satipaṭṭhāna 50: Cittānupassanā 4: Five Spiritual Faculties 1

In the seeing mind, there are the **Five Spiritual Faculties (Pancha Indriya)**: **Sati** (mindfulness), **Samādhi** (concentration/tranquility), **Viriya** (effort/energy), **Saddha** (faith), and **Paññā** (wisdom).

Observing the “knowing mind” means seeing the mind while it is actively functioning. When you are aware of your mind, the object is already present, and your field of awareness expands. *Whether knowing, seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, feeling, or thinking, you will realize that the mind performs all these functions.*

The Five Strengths (identical to the Spiritual Faculties) are part of the 37 factors of enlightenment and play a **directly related and practically important role in the practice of Vipassanā insight**. In the following, we will discuss how each of these strengths – **Sati** (mindfulness), **Samādhi** (concentration/tranquility), **Viriya** (effort/energy), **Saddha** (faith), and **Paññā** (wisdom) – manifests during observation.

The Five Strengths (same as Spiritual Faculties) belong to the 37 factors of enlightenment and occupy a **directly related and practically important part in the practice of Vipassanā insight**. In the following, we will discuss how each of the strengths (Sati: mindfulness, Samādhi: concentration/tranquility, Viriya: effort/energy, Saddha: faith, and Paññā: wisdom) appears in relation to observation.

*May you cultivate your sati continuously (Sammā-Viriya)!*

*May you achieve Sammā-Diṭṭhi (Right View) through Satipaṭṭhāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*





## 134 Satipaṭṭhāna 51: Cittānupassanā 5: Five Spiritual Faculties 2: Sati 5

Please refer to the definition and discussion of “sati” discussed in former Dhamma Letters No. 76-79. Here, I will use “sati” to refer to mindfulness.

In this Dhamma Letter, I will introduce it as a practical aspect of Cittānupassanā practice.

**There are two types of sati** (mindfulness):

1. **placing sati**
2. **being sati**

First, it is most important to **recognize that you have sati** (mindfulness). Secondly, once you observe this, **you become aware of what is happening in your body**.

Thirdly, you can **recognize the mind that holds sati**. It's not about becoming more mindful because you are too focused; rather, it's about becoming more aware.

Gradually, you should reach a state of “mindfulness with being” rather than simply being mindful. *When mindfulness is well-developed, intentions can become visible.*

There are two types of intentions, **both of which can be recognized as mindfulness and wisdom improve**. For instance, when I forcibly open my eyes and then close them without realizing it, the act of opening my eyes is driven by my “intention to force it,” while the “unconscious intention” causes me to close my eyes unknowingly.

**The intention for breathing exists because the mind is present** – dead people don't breathe. *Breathing with the intention of inhaling and breathing naturally differ in nature.* A mind that deliberately wants to breathe is a rough or coarse mind.

In this way, **intentional “mindfulness of placing”** and **natural “mindfulness of having”** are different in nature. The relationship between breathing with purpose and breathing spontaneously parallels the difference between these two types of mindfulness.



U Kosalla Sayadaw, a great teacher at the Shwe Oo Min Meditation Center in Myanmar, often emphasized the importance of mindfulness (sati). He said, "With mindfulness, you will reach Nirvāṇa without death; without mindfulness, you will reach death. A person with mindfulness will not die, and a person without mindfulness is no different from a dead person."

*May you cultivate your sati continuously (Sammā-Viriya)!*

*May you achieve Sammā-Diṭṭhi (Right View) through Satipatthāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 135 Satipaṭṭhāna 52: Cittānupassanā (Observation of Mind) 6: Q&A 31 Who is Fit to Practice Cittānupassanā?

**Q: What kind of meditator is suitable for practicing Cittānupassanā?**

**A:** Anyone can do it. However, it is difficult for beginners or practitioners who prefer Samatha (concentration or immersion meditation) practice to target the mind directly. **Even beginners who are introspective through their religion or philosophy can easily practice Cittānupassanā.**

If a *cittānupassanā* practitioner makes mistakes on their own without the guidance of a teacher, side effects such as thinking too much or having a headache may occur. **The purpose is to remove the defilement through observation**, but it is said that you may increase defilements and lose the way of practice because you are immersed in thoughts that come to mind.

**Those who find it difficult to directly observe the mind as an object are advised to first focus on the movement or sensations of the body.** However, *anyone can begin right away*. **For those who struggle to observe the mind due to distractions, it is recommended to first calm the mind through concentration meditation, a commonly practiced method.**

**At first, I recommend just observing what you are thinking. Don't get caught up in stories surrounding angry or intense thoughts. The first step is to objectively recognize what you are thinking.**

The Buddha said that nothing moves as fast as you think. It could even be said that your mind moves faster than the speed of light. Therefore, **it is recommended that beginners write down thoughts that occur to them in a notebook as if they were writing in a journal.** You'll probably be surprised by things you haven't noticed before. It is important for you to know what is going on in your mind as if you were looking through a microscope. This will reveal the root of all afflictions. You can see why Buddhism mentions impermanence and selflessness as the characteristics of ascetic



practice. It helps to observe and understand the root source from which karmic birth arises.

**Understanding the difference between the self you desire, the self you aspire to become, and your actual self – and cultivating them to eventually align as one – is the practice.** This process takes time. If it is not completed in this life, it will continue into the next. The enlightened ones say that an Arahant is one whose external and internal states are unified in body, mind, and action. As a result, one can experience clarity without falling into suffering or dissatisfaction.

*May you cultivate your sati continuously (Sammā-Viriya)!*

*May you achieve Sammā-Diṭṭhi (Right View) through Satipatthāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 136 Satipaṭṭhāna 53: Cittānupassanā (Observation of Mind) 7: Q&A 32

### What is the Difference Between Thinking and Observing the Mind?

**Q: What is the difference between thinking and observing the mind?**

**A: Just as it is said that the sun rises, thoughts also arise.** This is a principle of nature that arises as long as a human being has a body. This is inevitable.

Among meditators, thoughts are often seen as afflictions or negative due to a misunderstanding of their nature. As a result, they may try to eliminate them unconditionally or suppress them by focusing intensely on a specific object, often with resistance. However, thoughts cannot be eliminated in this way.

In addition, the purpose of meditation is to reach Nirvāṇa through the development of wisdom insight, but wisdom or insight cannot arise without thinking. **Wisdom also happens through thinking.**

**Thoughts arise spontaneously when various conditions are generated by the body and mind.** Vipassanā meditation, which involves observing the mind, serves to **remind the mind to focus on these thoughts as objects.** The goal is to develop a mindset that observes thoughts in each moment as an objective observer, without becoming entangled in them. This involves being mindful of **thoughts as objects.** **When awareness is clear, thoughts no longer act as afflictions; instead, they are seen as conditional phenomena.**

The purpose of Vipassanā meditation is to be free from suffering and to attain peace of mind, or Nirvāṇa. **You should not mistake your thoughts for your true self but rather see them as objects that arise.**

Observing the mind means being aware of thoughts in the present moment. Therefore, **simply ask yourself, "What is your mind aware of right now?" This practice fosters moment-to-moment awareness.**



**Just notice the thoughts without analyzing them or getting lost in their stories.**

*When a thought arises and the mind observes it, the previous thought has already disappeared. Although the next thought will emerge, **if that thought also becomes an object of observation, it will fade away as well.***

When the mind is taken as an object, it manifests as a thought. It becomes clear that **thoughts do not arise from intentions but rather emerge according to conditions.**

*Cittanupassana* involves observing all objects that arise from the six senses: the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind.

*May you cultivate your sati continuously (Sammā-Viriya)!*

*May you achieve Sammā-Diṭṭhi (Right View) through Satipatthāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 137 Satipaṭṭhāna 54: Cittānupassanā 8: Five Spiritual Faculties 3: Samādhi

We looked at the etymology and meaning of **Samādhi** in detail in Dhamma Letters No. 6 and 49, and to refresh, **Samādhi means “Tranquility”** and can be explained in two ways: Samatha and Vipassanā.

- **Samatha Samādhi** is for the purpose of jhāna through a state of concentration on one object.
- **Vipassanā Samādhi aims at developing wisdom**, knowing everything that happens in the six sense organs (the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind: 眼耳鼻舌身意), and it refers to **“the serenity that naturally follows through proper understanding.”**

Samādhi of Vipassanā refers to momentary samādhi (kaṇṇika samādhi), **a calm state of mind that comes from insight wisdom through correct understanding of impermanence, suffering, and no-self**. The awareness that arises moment by moment is continuous, uninterrupted awareness, and deep concentration arises from it.

Only with deep concentration can a yogi **perceive the true nature of mental and physical phenomena, and this realization gives rise to the wisdom leading to the cessation of suffering**.

*May you cultivate your sati continuously (Sammā-Viriya)!*

*May you achieve Sammā-Diṭṭhi (Right View) through Satipaṭṭhāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 138 Satipaṭṭhāna 55: Cittānupassanā 9: Five Spiritual Faculties 4: Samādhi 2

The breaking of samādhi (tranquility) should be understood as **the breaking of samādhi by dislike (*dosa*), not because of a specific object or sound**. This happens because **the mind is agitated if the thoughts are not right. If the mind goes outside, the mind is excited, and if the mind is kept inside, it becomes calm**. This is how to attain samādhi (tranquility of Vipassanā).

**Just by looking at the object with Right View (Dhamma Letters No. 60-62), and knowing that everything is natural and as it is with clear understanding, a calmness that does not cause agitation of the mind arises.**

So, **the samādhi of Vipassanā comes *through understanding (wisdom: paññā)***.

This can be seen in the book, [Satipaṭṭhāna](#), by the German monk, Bhikkhu Analayo, which explains the state of samādhi in the first jhāna in the same context. It is emphasized that **Right Samādhi (Sammā-Samādhi) needs to be understood within the Noble Eightfold Path**.

Only samādhi uncontaminated by desire can lead to the cessation of suffering (dukkha) as a fully functioning element of the Noble Eightfold Path.

*May you cultivate your sati continuously (Sammā-Viriya)!*

*May you achieve Sammā-Diṭṭhi (Right View) through Satipaṭṭhāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*With mettā,*





## 139 Satipaṭṭhāna 56: Cittānupassanā 10: Five Spiritual Faculties 5: Samādhi<sup>3</sup>

As explained in previous Dhamma Letters, **samādhi** is presented in two ways. In **Samatha** meditation, it refers to concentration, through which we can achieve temporary stillness. In **Vipassanā**, however, it refers to a state of mind that is naturally calm.

This is because when wisdom is applied with mindfulness (**sati**), **correct understanding leads to a state of tranquility, free from afflictions**. The purpose of **Vipassanā** is to attain **Nirvāṇa by exhausting suffering**, which **requires insight into impermanence (anicca) and selflessness (anattā)**.

Here, **samādhi** refers to momentary concentration. If moment-to-moment awareness is sustained, the deeper **samādhi** of **Samatha** can be realized, which can also be called **Sammā-Samādhi**.

**Sammā-Samādhi comes from Sammā-Diṭṭhi (Right View)**. A right view means a right attitude. **Cittānupassana practice continuously maintains the right mindset by observing the mind. To consistently have the right attitude is to have the right effort (Sammā-Viriya) and the right mindfulness (Sammā-Sati). The Eightfold Path works.**

In the next Dhamma Letter we will discuss Right Effort (Sammā-Viriya).

*May you cultivate your sati continuously (Sammā-Viriya)!*

*May you achieve Sammā-Diṭṭhi (Right View) through Satipaṭṭhāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 140 Satipaṭṭhāna 57: Cittānupassanā 11: Five Spiritual Faculties 6: Viriya 1

In Vipassanā meditation, **viriya (effort/energy)** does not mean exerting oneself forcefully; rather, it means **“continuously leading to sati (mindfulness or awareness).”** Once momentum begins, wisdom must be applied; without wisdom, viriya will weaken. The mind becomes confused when viriya loses its strength.

How do we maintain continuous sati? **Every moment, when you ask, “What do I know?” viriya is present in the “inquiring mind” (vīmaṃsa) that poses the question.** The yogi’s (meditator’s) task is to learn how to cultivate sati (mindfulness), samādhī (calmness), and paññā (wisdom). The results will naturally follow from this practice.

**The mind’s investigation of “What is happening in your body and mind?” constitutes Right Thought (Sammā-Saṅkappa) in the Noble Eightfold Path. Right Thinking inclines the mind towards the appropriate object.** When the mind is investigative, you know and see more, and this plays a crucial role in sustaining sati (awareness). **By investigating and observing whatever arises, sustained sati becomes the fruit of effort (viriya).**

The method of investigation (vīmaṃsa or dhammavijaya) will be introduced in the future. The key point is that **you should never become lost in the content or story.**

To achieve the goal of enlightenment (liberation from Saṃsāra), **the mind must continue sati (awareness). Sati (awareness) inspires observation and investigation of dhamma. Dhamma is the phenomenon that occurs in the body and mind.** When greed, anger, or foolishness arises, observe and investigate the causes. **No matter what afflictions arise, recognize their cause and cultivate wisdom; this is the mind that investigates,** and it aligns with the function of attaining the Path (*Magga*, 道) and Fruition (*Phala*, 果).

With mettā,



## 141 Satipaṭṭhāna 58: Cittānupassanā 12: Five Spiritual Faculties 7: Viriya 2

Earlier, as discussed in Dhamma Letters No. 70-72, the Buddha spoke of Right Effort in the Eightfold Path as follows:

The four Right Efforts (Sammā-Vāyama) are the subject of [Right Effort Saṃyutta \(sammappadhāna, SN.49:1\)](#) in the SaṃyuttaNikāya.

Bhikkhus, there are four Right efforts. What are the four?

1. generates desire for **the non-arising of unarisen evil unwholesome states**; makes an effort, arouses energy, applies his mind, and strives.
2. generates desire for **the abandoning of arisen evil unwholesome states**; makes an effort, arouses energy, applies his mind, and strives.
3. generates desire for **the arising of unarisen wholesome states**; makes an effort, arouses energy, applies his mind, and strives.
4. generates desire for **the maintenance of arisen wholesome states** for their non-decay, increase, expansion, and fulfillment by development; makes an effort, arouses energy, applies his mind, and strives.

Bhikkhus, just as the river Ganges slants, slopes, and inclines towards the east, so too a Bhikkhu who develops and cultivates the four strivings slants, slopes, and **inclines towards Nibbāna**.

**If mindfulness continues every moment with Right Mindfulness, Right Effort naturally follows.** Therefore, **through the practice of observing the mind as an object, an unwholesome mind no longer arises, and a wholesome mind continues to create conditions in which suffering no longer arises.**

*May you cultivate your sati continuously (Sammā-Viriya)!*

*May you achieve Sammā-Diṭṭhi (Right View) through Satipaṭṭhāna (Vipassanā meditation)! With mettā,*



## 142 Satipaṭṭhāna 59: Cittānupassanā 13: Five Spiritual Faculties: Paññā 1

There are **three types of wisdom**: the wisdom **to know by hearing** (*suttamaya paññā*: 문혜, 聞慧), the wisdom **to think of and apply while practicing** (*cittamaya paññā*: 사혜, 思慧), and the wisdom **to experience and realize through practice** (*bhāvanā paññā*: 수혜, 修慧).

You have to remember all three of these and practice them together at the same time. **The wisdom to know how to practice through *cittamaya paññā* (wisdom from right thinking) must arise first.** *If you practice with wisdom, wisdom arises, and if you have sati (mindfulness/awareness), samādhī (tranquility), and paññā (wisdom), what you see gradually expands.*

In “A Little Analysis of Karma” (MN135), it is said **that asking questions, such as about the benefit and appropriateness of developing wisdom, leads one to become wise.**

“ . . . This very act of not asking questions leads to the fate of the stupid.  
 . . . This very act of asking such questions leads to the fate of the wise.”

Thinking correctly in this way and observing the arising of the mind is a crucial factor in eliminating defilements and walking the path of pure asceticism.

“Once you see it with wisdom, the defilements completely disappear.”

It is also said in the Majjhima Nikāya that wisdom to have a correct understanding of the Dhamma is an important factor.

**Wisdom through correct understanding refers to non-greed, non-aversion, and non-ego (無貪·無瞋·無癡), and it becomes a tool leading to Nibbāna (Nirvāṇa).**

*May you achieve Sammā-Diṭṭhi (Right View) through Satipaṭṭhāna (Vipassanā meditation)! With mettā,*



## 143 Satipaṭṭhāna 60: Cittānupassanā 14: Five Spiritual Faculties: Paññā 2

**Insight (*paññindriya*), or wisdom**, is one of the beautiful mental factors (*sobhana cetasika*) and serves as the faculty of insight. This can be explained in three steps.

The first step is **recognizing the three characteristics of reality: impermanence, suffering, and non-self**. In the second step, **these characteristics are examined more deeply** as one gains greater insight into these three *dhammas*.

**The third and final stage of wisdom transcends intellectual understanding and refers to insight gained through direct Vipassanā meditation. This stage represents the wisdom of investigation, understood as the five aggregates (*pañca-khandha*: 오온, 五蘊).**

When Vipassanā wisdom develops, if one does not gain insight into the knowledge of cause and effect but only observes the arising and passing away of *saṅkhāra*, the attachment to the concept of “I” may still persist. **Therefore, insight that correctly understands conditions is essential.**

**Synonyms of wisdom are “non-delusion” (*amoha*) and “non-ignorance” (*Paññā*). Through the gradual maturation of wisdom, the wisdom of Vipassanā must increase gradually so that the wisdom of the Path and Fruition of the Supramundane (*lokuttara*) may arise.**

*May you cultivate your sati continuously (Sammā-Viriya)!*

*May you achieve Sammā-Diṭṭhi (Right View) through Satipaṭṭhāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 144 Satipaṭṭhāna 61: Cittānupassanā 15: Five Spiritual Faculties: Paññā 3

**How does one develop *paññā* (wisdom)?** The development of the third stage of wisdom, mentioned in **the previous Dhamma Letter**, is closely related to *vīmaṃsa* (verification), one of the four limbs.

**Verification (*vīmaṃsa*)** corresponds to one of the four means of accomplishment (4 *iddhi-pāda*, 四如意足) among the 37 enlightenment factors. Among the 7 enlightenment factors (七覺支), it corresponds to **investigation of mental phenomena (*dhamma-vicāya*, 擇法覺支)**.

**The investigative mind plays an important role in gaining wisdom**, so it is an emphasized faculty of the mind. **There is a separate "knowing it" and a separate "investigative mind" behind the scenes.** *The way to investigate is to ask, "Why is that so?" You can check "Do I have mindfulness?"*

It's like riding a bicycle. When you start pedaling, the bicycle accelerates. If there is acceleration, the bicycle will go even if it is stationary. But when it gets slower, you have to pedal again. ***It knows what to do. If I try to notice a little bit and check it, it will do the work itself and proceed as it is.***

**You have to check again and again to see if you have mindfulness.** *When awareness proceeds naturally, don't try to do anything more, just check what you know. And then you have to do some research from time to time.*

- *How much do you know about the object?*
- *Has the quality of your seeing mind changed?*
- *When and how did it decrease and how did it improve?*
- *How calm has your mind become?*
- *Has the quality of your mind improved? Did it get worse?*
- *Is your understanding better? Did it get worse?*



Sometimes the mind knows one thing, and other times it knows several things at the same time. There is a difference between being able to know the fine things and being able to know the rough things.

*May you develop your wisdom continuously!*

*May you achieve Sammā-Diṭṭhi (Right View) through Satipatthāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 145 Satipaṭṭhāna 62: Cittānupassanā 16: Five Spiritual Faculties: Paññā 4

### Q&A 33: How Do Wisdom and Discernment of Consciousness Relate to Each Other (*Dhamma-Vijaya and Vimansa*)?

**A:** As I said in Dhamma Letter No. 76, **sati** (mindfulness) is emphasized to look out for “**beneficence, appropriateness, and necessity**” when generating an inquisitive mind in every moment (according to the Digha Nikāya). In addition, Kuttaka Nikāya Udāna emphasizes **the practice of wisdom to understand the conditions of cause and effect**. Udāna 1:2: “*As phenomena grow clear to the brahman – ardent, in jhāna – his doubts all vanish when he penetrates the ending of requisite conditions.*”

Investigation allows us to understand the conditions for cause and effect. Wisdom is a prerequisite for Nirvāṇa, and an investigative mind is essential for wisdom to develop.

**Wisdom is in the mind that investigates. Wisdom leads to an inquiry into cause and effect.** The beginning of the Buddha's practice began with questions. “Why should humans suffer from aging, sickness, and death?” to find the answer, he left home. And he attained enlightenment. **The manifestation of that realization is the completion of wisdom.** Buddha's enlightenment is *paṭicca-samuppāda (dependent origination)*, and Dependent Origination speaks of cause and effect. **The Four Noble Truths** also show *paṭicca-samuppāda*. It recognizes suffering, knows the cause of suffering, talks about the extinction of suffering, and suggests the way to its extinction.

If you want a state without dissatisfaction or discomfort, you need to figure out the root cause, and if you follow the path to eliminate the cause, you can remove the cause and create a comfortable and satisfactory state.

As Buddhist practice is explained in three ways (*sīla, samādhi, & paññā*), **the first is to try to live an upright moral life, and the pure mind resulting from it results in a state of calm mind called *samādhi*. When the mind is in a state of stillness, wisdom (*paññā*) arises based on it.**





***People who find it difficult or avoid the method of mind observation***, which involves observing their thoughts as targets for the development of wisdom, is often because they have too many thoughts and it is difficult for them to handle themselves. Applying an investigative mind with mindfulness may not be easy for beginners. In this case, first of all, I hope you ***start with concentration meditation (a method of suppressing temporarily arising thoughts for a while: Samatha Meditation) to calm your mind. Or it will be helpful to practice keeping the sīla (precepts), which cultivates an altruistic mind rather than a selfish mind, while doing volunteer work or healthy activities for others.***

The goal of developing wisdom through a pure mind is the goal of perfect bliss, Nirvāṇa, full enlightenment, happy in this life and happy in the next, or without rebirth. A state of satisfactory composure of 10%, 50%, or more is proportional to the degree of each ***sīla*** and ***samādhi***. Therefore, you need to develop your skills little by little.

*May you develop your wisdom continuously!*

*May you achieve Sammā-Diṭṭhi (Right View) through Satipatthāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 146 Satipaṭṭhāna 63: Cittānupassanā 17: Five Spiritual Faculties: Paññā 5

**Right understanding is wisdom (paññā).** To understand reality correctly is to understand the Four Noble Truths. Dukkha (suffering/dissatisfaction) of feeling is present whenever a defilement (kilesa) arises. This is only dukkha as suffering/dissatisfaction (here-on just “dukkha”), not suffering among the Four Noble Truths.

Dukkha in the Four Noble Truths is the dukkha of kilesa and dukkha of samādhi as well. Pīti (pleasure) is also dukkha, and both pleasant and painful feelings can be seen as dukkha (see Dhamma Letter No. 9).

The Buddha only spoke of the truth of dukkha, not the truth of pleasure/satisfaction. The average person only knows the dukkha (suffering) of feeling and does not know the whole truth of dukkha.

**A “right understanding of the Dhamma” comes from seeing the Dhamma as it is. The mind that knows the object through the method of *cittānupassana* is the ordinary mind that knows the object.** To know the characteristic of an object is to know from the mind. **Wisdom does not see the characteristic of the object but understands it. Seeing is just seeing, but understanding is a lot different. Paramatṭha (ultimate reality) is not what is seen but what is understood and experienced** (see Dhamma Letters No. 123-125).

**The object and the knowing mind are together.** If you look at the mind you know and see the target as well. However, **their characteristics are different. The object is to be noticed, and the knowing mind is to be aware.**

When you understand this clearly, you can see **the two (the object and the mind) are separate. You must be able to see if there is a pollution source (kilesa, defilement) as an object in the mind of the seeing. If you don't see this, wisdom won't come**



**out. When kilesa enters the mind of seeing, the mind of seeing changes. Knowing this, kilesa is powerless.**

*May you cultivate your sati continuously (Sammā-Viriya)!*

*May you achieve Sammā-Diṭṭhi (Right View) through Satipatthāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 147 Satipaṭṭhāna 64: Cittānupassanā 18: Five Spiritual Faculties: Saddhā (Faith)

The elimination of doubt about the Three Treasures is also one of the elements of becoming a **Sotāpanna (Stream-Enterer), the first stage of enlightenment (Dhamma Letter No. 57)**. Doubts about this can be removed by faith that arises spontaneously through solid experience and practice of the Dhamma (see Dhamma Letter No. 26) through ascetic practice.

Also, **doubts are removed when attachment to the body is eliminated through Right View. This occurs simultaneously with the removal of another fetter, attachment to precepts and rituals (*sīlabbatûpādāna/sīlabbataparāmāsa*).**

When you have a “**right understanding of the Dhamma**” – when you know that the Dhamma is right and practice it – **faith arises as a result**. Through this belief, doubts about the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha (the Three Jewels) can be removed.

Only the one who **sees** the *Dhamma* **sees me**.

One who does not **see** the *Dhamma* does not **see me**.

– Buddha

**A right understanding of the Dhamma comes through actual practice, not ideological understanding.** The practice of *cittānupassana* leads naturally to the practice of *dharmānupassana*, and this becomes complete only **when one can see the object, the mind of knowing, the mind of seeing, and the mindset of the seeing mind.**

**To broaden your horizons, you must be able to view your body, mind, and feelings together, yet only those with wisdom can perceive them in this way. Observing the entire process allows you to understand cause and effect, revealing how each element connects as part of a continuous chain.**

When you have a right understanding of the Dhamma from direct experience, your **faith in practice deepens**.



The one who frequently feels joy and is devoted to the Teaching of the Buddha  
will realize Nibbāna — the Tranquil, the Unconditioned, the Blissful.

– Dhammapada 381

*May you cultivate your sati continuously (Sammā-Viriya)!*

*May you achieve Sammā-Diṭṭhi (Right View) through Satipatthāna (Vipassanā  
meditation)!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果,  
the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 148 Satipaṭṭhāna 65: Cittānupassanā 19: Attitude and Practice

### Time When Practicing Vipassanā (Insight)

*Everything about the body and mind that occurs in people's daily movements (行住坐臥) – such as walking, staying, sitting, and lying down – is an object to be aware of. In particular, since **the mind functions without resting even for a moment, there is no fixed time for mind observation practice.** From the time you wake up to the time you fall asleep, you practice every moment, wherever you are, without forgetting – that is, 24 hours a day is the time for meditation.*

Shwe Oo Min Meditation Center in Myanmar formerly sets out the timetable as in other places of practice, but it is more autonomous than other places of practice because ***it considers the observation of the mind in every moment of daily life important.*** Depending on the individual, some strictly adhere to the timetable, while others practice with a more relaxed mind regardless of the timetable. This is because **daily life itself is a time for meditation.** Therefore, **it is emphasized that the “right mindset” (Right View) to practice is more important than anything else.**

They say that **it is important to keep mindfulness connected**, but they **do not force mindfulness to be connected.** It means that you are **making the right effort to keep awareness going**, but you **do not have a strong intention that it must be so.**

**You shouldn't practice with a fixed view of how it should be done.** *The attitudes of mind to the object are:*

- *do not focus,*
- *do not resist,*
- *do not force it to look,*
- *it should not be suppressed.*
- *Do not make it arise,*
- *do not make it disappear,*
- *as it arises, if it arises,*
- *as it disappears, if it disappears,*
- *Do not forget to be aware.*



- *You have to be aware of the present moment,*
- *do not go back to the past.*
- *You shouldn't even think about the future.*

The right mindset is to know that **the object is not important**, and that **the mind that is working behind the scenes, that is, the mind that observes, is more important**. This is because objects always appear and disappear and only exist in the present moment. It should be recognized that this is supported by the Buddhist principle of "impermanence, suffering, and non-self" that places attachment to the object.

*May you cultivate your sati continuously (Sammā-Viriya)!*

*May you achieve Sammā-Diṭṭhi (Right View) through Satipatthāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 149 Satipaṭṭhāna 66: Cittānupassanā 20: How To Observe the Mind in Sitting Meditation

As I explained about the time of meditation, **one should not attach much importance to a specific form of body posture. This is because the mind always works in any posture.**

Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta: Foundations of mindfulness includes not only the movements of going, standing, sitting, and lying down but also when looking back and forth, bending and unfolding, dressing, eating, drinking, chewing, swallowing, and urinating. **It is emphasized to be clearly aware of everything – whether talking or being silent and going to bed or getting up.**

Therefore, in the method of insight, Vipassanā, the posture is not important – **just check in to know if you're mindful.** Constantly ask yourself questions like:

- *Are you nervous?*
- *How is your mind?*
- *How does your body feel?*
- *What do you know about your body and mind?*

In seated meditation, there's no need to pay special attention to one's posture. Of course, it's important to maintain a correct posture, such as straightening the spine, but above all, **try to practice in a comfortable posture without tension.** The practitioner who sits in the most comfortable position may say, "I will sit for an hour. I will sit for two hours." However, **if you set a time length or an object of awareness, you will become intensely conscious, so your mind will not be calm (*samādhī*). Then wisdom (*paññā*) cannot arise.**

**Since it is more important than anything else that sati continues,** it is acceptable to get up and walk if you cannot maintain sati while sitting. However, **it is more important to have a proper understanding of the cause and effect of the current phenomena and check yourself.**





For beginners, it is helpful to observe the state of the body and mind with the main object of the breath during sitting meditation. When breathing, it does not matter whether the object of observation is placed on the abdomen, the tip of the nose, or the entire breath. This is because **“the knowing mind” of the object is more important than any specific object in this method of practice.**

*May you cultivate your sati continuously (Sammā-Viriya)!*

*May you achieve Sammā-Diṭṭhi (Right View) through Satipatthāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 150 Satipaṭṭhāna 67: Cittānupassanā 21: How To Observe the Mind During Walking Meditation

Even during walking meditation, **walk naturally as you usually do**, and **try not to walk slowly or let your thoughts or intentions interfere**. Don't just focus on your feet; **watch your whole body as a whole** (see **Dhamma Letter No. 98**).

If your mind goes to your feet, let it go to your feet, and if it goes to your hands, let it go to your hands. It is good to be able to **know what one hears, sees, smells, and even thinks while walking; where one wants to go and to stop**, and even to **know the intention of “what are you going for?”**

Just **know things as they are** as:

- *What do you know every moment?*
- *What is your state of mind?*
- *Is the mind calm?*
- *Is the composure maintained?*

Walking meditation has **many benefits**. See **Dhamma Letter No. 97**.

*May you cultivate your sati continuously (Sammā-Viriya)!*

*May you achieve Sammā-Diṭṭhi (Right View) through Satipaṭṭhāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 151 Satipaṭṭhāna 68: Cittānupassanā 22: Observation of Daily Life

**Observation of daily life does not produce any strong intention** like in sitting or walking meditation. **We seek to know nature as it is and practice it naturally** by targeting everything created by the three karma - body, speech, and mind - arising from the six bases (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind).

**Be clearly aware of the state of your body (materiality) and mind (consciousness) in every moment**, such as when talking, going to the toilet, going up the stairs, opening and closing the door, falling asleep, and waking up.

For example, when eating food, **you can know everything** from holding, touching, opening your mouth, placing in and chewing, sweetness, sourness, etc., and **knowing the state of mind and feelings such as likes and dislikes**, hunger and desire to eat, etc.

Also, if you have sati before going to sleep, sati is likely to continue when you wake up in the morning. When you speak, you can be aware of your voice, mouth movements, and thoughts.

Whether it is sitting meditation, walking meditation, or activities in daily life, **you must practice noticing and wanting to know all phenomena that occur and disappear in the present, regardless of time or place**. You must practice **to know what the relationship between your mind and this object is in the present moment**.

If you focus only on the purpose of practicing to become enlightened or something else, right knowledge/understanding (*sampajañña*) of the object, body, and mind (materiality and consciousness) cannot occur. **One must observe the object correctly (*yoniso manasikāra*), and continue to observe rightly with mindfulness (*sati*)**.

*With mettā,*



## 152 Satipaṭṭhāna 69: Cittānupassanā 23: How To Avoid Getting Lost In The Flow Of Thoughts.

U Tejaniya Sayadaw says that through this method of continuous mind observation, one can see the revelation of a very subtle mind called “subconsciousness or unconsciousness” in Western psychology. It is said that **like peeling off the skin of an onion, a fine and subtle state of mind is revealed through intermediate stages from a rough state of mind.**

He says that the subconscious or unconscious mind in the West – *ālaya vijñāna* (eighth consciousness) in Vijñānavāda in Mahayana Buddhism – are names **that came about because the subtle mind in the state of obscurity has not yet been revealed and is not known or seen.** *When strong pollutants such as greed, anger, and foolishness disappear, purity is revealed, just as the clouds clear and you can see a clear sky.*

This explains the detailed process of consciousness in Abhidhamma, the third text of the Tipiṭaka (三藏, 삼장). **If you continue to observe your mind, you will be able to closely understand through your body, speech, and mind that you are engaging in unconscious actions in your daily life. Observation of the potential tendencies of the three karmas through the unconscious and subconscious is possible when the mind is attuned to the subtle mind.**

However, maintaining awareness of this subtle mind consistently is challenging for beginners and is achievable primarily for experienced Vipassanā practitioners.

In particular, **U Tejanaya Sayadaw ([ashintejaniya.org](http://ashintejaniya.org))** emphasizes continuous awareness so as to **not dwell on one thought for more than 10 seconds with strong sati.** The idea is **to just observe and not get lost in the flow of thoughts.** We must realize that **thoughts are also just objects that constantly come into existence and disappear depending on conditions.**

*May you cultivate your sati continuously (Sammā-Viriya)!*



*May you achieve Sammā-Diṭṭhi (Right View) through Satipatthāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 153 Satipaṭṭhāna 70: Cittānupassanā 24: How to Deal With Your Mind When You Are Angry - Mettā Bhāvanā

Loving-kindness meditation through mind observation (mettā bhāvanā: see discussion of loving-kindness meditation in Dhamma Letters No. 119, 122, and 90).

Loving-kindness (mettā) meditation is one of the 40 meditation topics of Samatha meditation (see Dhamma Letters No. 49-55), but loving-kindness meditation as Vipassanā meditation is emphasized in the mind observation practice. Therefore, **loving-kindness meditation is not practiced separately with a special intention but as a wisdom aspect. It is emphasized as “a state of mind that occurs naturally” when the other person or situation it is directed towards is properly understood.**

For example, how to deal with your mind when you are angry can be broadly viewed in two steps.

**Step 1:** If you are angry, recognize it immediately and stop getting caught up in the emotion.

**Step 2:** When you realize that the cause of your anger is a phenomenon caused by incorrect understanding (not knowing the three dhammas: impermanence, suffering, and non-self), you can correctly understand the object as it is. *The object is also a way to understand nature as it is.* As soon as you rightly understand cause and effect, **anger subsides like snow melting, and a feeling of loving-kindness towards the object arises automatically.**

It takes a **strong power of sati (mindfulness)** to not continue fueling anger in step 1, but it may take a very long time to go through step 1 and develop the wisdom of step 2. Depending on the object or situation, understanding may appear quickly, or it may take several years or several lifetimes **depending on the degree or conditions of karma.**

In many cases, loving-kindness meditation stops at stage 1. For beginners, performing step 1 will not be easy. **If you intentionally focus on an object and meditate on**



loving-kindness, the mind of loving-kindness may be maintained temporarily or for a long time (Samatha meditation). However, if you lack a complete understanding of impermanence, suffering, and non-self, someday, when certain conditions arise, you may become angry again. Because this happens, it is difficult to maintain a loving heart in every moment.

Concentrating on an object and intentionally generating loving-kindness is very helpful and is a commonly practiced meditation. However, with **Vipassanā, the contemplation of the mind involves understanding all objects without any “intention,” so clear knowledge with wisdom (*sati sampajañña*) is emphasized.** Therefore, **it is possible at any time and in any moment, even in daily life. All objects arise with the conditions they are in and have such characteristics. When you understand it correctly, you can always have a heart of loving-kindness toward all beings.**

*May you develop your wisdom (*paññā*) continuously!*

*May you achieve Sammā-Diṭṭhi (Right View) through Satipatthāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 154 Satipaṭṭhāna 71: Q&A 34

**Q:** As I observe my thoughts, it seems like more defilements are hitting me. How do we escape from troubles?

**A:** As the practice progresses, you will see inner anguish rising to the surface that you were previously unaware of. **Your deep-rooted Sankhara (by volitional formations/mental activities) rises up. The revelation of karma accumulated from the past signals the beginning of practice.**

**If you recognize what is revealed as "me" and try to deny it, your practice cannot progress.** In fact, it is something to be celebrated in your practice. There are many cases where people who have been practicing for a long time remain stagnant due to a lack of progress in their practice *because they take the inner anguish personally and reject it.* **If you begin to look within for the first time and then close off to knowing and seeing again, your practice in this life will see a regression.**

**If you observe it correctly, it will disappear.** (Dhamma Letter No. 73: *when seeing it, it disappears!*) It is a phenomenon without substance. It is about seeing *how* things change. There is no "I" or "me" there.

**Knowing how to let go of *these* notions, whether they are good or bad, is practice. There is nothing to insist on. Just keep watching. If you look at it, it disappears (*Anicca!*).**

**If you don't see it correctly and hold on to it, you are causing yourself pain. Don't try to avoid or cover it up, but face it and it will eventually disappear.**

**You need to let go of what you have defined as "me" and start by accepting it as *it is: a conditioned phenomenon.* Practice is to reduce the gap between how you imagine yourself and your actual thoughts, words, and actions. *Simply recognize that there is a gap between your imagination and reality, and then do the practice to cultivate wholesomeness.***





Arahant is a state in which thoughts, speech, and actions are unified and there is no discrepancy (see about enlightened One, Dhamma Letters No. 58, 59). **Regardless of whether someone is watching or not, you must always have the same mindset and the same self.**

*May you develop your wisdom (paññā) continuously!*

*May you achieve Sammā-Diṭṭhi (Right View) through Satipatthāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 155 Satipaṭṭhāna 72: "Are you thinking? Or are you observing your thoughts?"

A proper understanding is needed for an answer to the question, "Are you thinking? Or are you observing your thoughts?" U Tejaniya Sayadaw ([ashintejaniya.org](http://ashintejaniya.org)) once answered a practitioner who stated a similar question, "When I think, sometimes *I don't know whether I am observing the thought or thinking.*"

It's because you don't know awareness. If you understand awareness or knowing your mind about the object, it becomes clear. Then you can watch your thoughts. If you don't know that, you will have doubts about whether you are "thinking" or "watching." This is because in that state, it is not a state of awakening. It becomes evident that you are not awake at that moment.

You can only know it when you are awake. *What is the difference between "thinking" and "awareness"? What is the difference between thoughts and being awake?*

- The moment the thought arises, ask yourself:
- "Are you awake?" You have to ask.
- "Is your mind aware?"

You should be able to ask the thought the moment it arises. For beginners, rough or coarse defilements appear as coarse thoughts and appear in words and actions. At this time, **if you look at and notice those thoughts, you will not get lost in them, and the coarse defilements will automatically disappear.** If you notice and see the object of thought, it will disappear. But **if you do not notice it clearly, you will get lost in your thoughts.** So, *staying awake is always an important factor.*

At first, just engage (place) sati (mindfulness or awareness) and be aware; *placing sati*. When you have the skill to maintain sati to the extent that you do not fall into the flow of thoughts, you can continue your practice to the next level; *being sati*. **You can investigate the causes, which are the roots of the three afflictions when sati is stable with samādhī (the tranquil mind)** (see Dhamma Letters No. 76-79).



*May you develop your wisdom (paññā) continuously!*

*May you achieve Sammā-Diṭṭhi (Right View) through Satipatthāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 156 Satipaṭṭhāna 73: How Does One Sustain Awareness?

In general, the instruction is to simply ask, “**What is the mind doing?**” However, **if you try to look at your thoughts intentionally, the state of awareness does not arise there.**

The reason is simply that **"knowing one's mind" and "being awake" are different.** *Sometimes you notice that your mind is thinking, but you still find that the thinking is going on. There is neither awareness nor wisdom there. Only when there is awareness in the moment can there be wisdom at the same time.* Therefore, **you must be clearly aware of it.** This is because in the state of knowing but continuing to think, there is an "unconscious intention" to continue thinking.

Especially in the case of people who have been practicing for a long time, it refers to a case where you are aware of what you think is happening, but you are still in a state of thinking. **The knowing mind continues to work together with thoughts. This is not a state of clear knowledge. Once you are clearly in a state of awareness, those thoughts no longer work.** At that time, *the mind that investigates the knowing mind must be able to ask again.*

- “Are you aware or not? (Are you clearly awake or not?)”
- “Is your awareness clear or not clear?”

**If it is not a state of clear awareness, there is neither awareness nor wisdom. In a state of clear awareness, there is no doubt, and there is wisdom.**

**The investigative mind** (vīmaṃsā in The Four Bases of Mental Power/Dhammavicaya in the 37 Enlightenment Factors) **must continue by inquiring into the state in which the investigative mind arose**, then repeating when the next state arises. You should be able to understand that it is not important that your thoughts disappear immediately – **it is more important that you are clearly present by being awake at that moment.**



Momentum in this state must continue. When wisdom operates along with mindfulness, upekkhā (calmness) without an agitated mind is maintained, but **when there is no mindfulness or wisdom, defilements come into play.**

*May you develop your wisdom (paññā) continuously!*

*May you achieve Sammā-Diṭṭhi (Right View) through Satipatthāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 157 Satipaṭṭhāna 74: "Momentum" – "The Power of Wisdom to Know How to Practice" Leads

**Mind observation emphasizes "naturalness"** and places importance on "invisible mental states." This can be misleading, as people may mistake the state of breaking down boundaries without the control of the six sense doors to mean good performance. If one is able to observe the process of these mental states, one must not confuse it with a "self."

This phenomenon occurs due to a lack of understanding of precepts, tranquility/concentration, and wisdom (戒定慧, silā · samādhi · paññā). This is a problem that we as practitioners need to reprimand ourselves for. It can also be something to pay attention to when actually performing mind observation.

**"Momentum"** that appears during the progress of practice: This refers to a state in which **"the power of wisdom to know how to practice"** arises. This occurs as practice continues and has been translated as **"inertial force"** or **"acceleration force."** **Momentum is important because it becomes a state where wisdom automatically leads the practice.**

If you practice mind observation directly, it is done without Samatha (concentrated meditation), so beginners or distracted people may have difficulty practicing it. In cases like this, expert guidance is needed.

*May you develop your wisdom (paññā) continuously!*

*May you achieve Sammā-Diṭṭhi (Right View) through Satipaṭṭhāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*With mettā,*



## 158 Satipaṭṭhāna 75: Knowing Mind & Knower

The purpose of insight (Vipassanā) mind observation practice is to know **"what the mind knows."** Although **the relationship between the mind and object** was mentioned earlier (Dhamma Letters No. 74, 75), the object of mind observation practice is the **"knowing mind."** This could also be called a **"detached observer."** Sometimes it is simply expressed as **"know."**

In mind observation, the **"knowing mind"** is understood as a state of **"knowing again."** Why do we practice? Simply put, it is **"to know" both body and mind.** **Without this knowing, the mind remains in a state of "ignorance."** This highlights the importance of **maintaining sati, or mindfulness, continuously.** Only through **"clear knowledge"** that **recognizes each moment** can we develop the wisdom known as *sati sampajañña*.

It is through this wisdom that **one can attain ultimate happiness by overcoming the suffering caused by the three poisons: greed/attachment, anger/aversion, and delusion/ignorance.** The concept of **"no-self"** refers to the phenomenon of the **"knowing mind."**

The Thai teacher, Luangpor Pramote (see [Dhamma.com](http://Dhamma.com): Lineage of Ajahn Mun), refers to this state as the **"knower."** Achieving a state in which only the "knower" of an object remains is one of the goals of practice. Here, **the suffix "-er" refers not to a being (者) but to the "phenomenon of the five aggregates (khanda)."**

*While different expressions may be used, they convey a similar essence in practice.*

The "knowing mind" can also know when the mind moves and attaches itself to physical sensations. **The "knowing mind" knows objects that are continuously changing (anicca) and should not try to stop or control them.**

**Wherever your mind goes, the object is always there, so you should not try to avoid it or hold on to it.** You will see that the mind is not under its own command. **We have no power to control our minds. Don't think too much, just know.**



*May you cultivate your **sati continuously (Sammā-Viriya)**!*

*May you achieve Sammā-Diṭṭhi (Right View) through Satipatthāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 159 Satipaṭṭhāna 76: Cittānupassanā (Observation of Mind) 25

### The importance of mindset/right attitude:

**In practicing Vipassanā to develop insight, the right attitude is considered more important than anything else.** U Tejaniya Sayadaw's collection of teachings, *Practice when your mindset is right*, (not yet published in English) is the first book to read for those who are beginning to practice for the first time. This emphasizes that an uprightness and goodness of heart must come first. It is also part of the Buddhist teachings of **Sammā-Diṭṭhi (Right View)** in the Eightfold Path; Dhamma Letters No. 60-62).

This is also the part corresponding to the precepts in the three teachings of **morality, tranquility/concentration, and wisdom (sīla·samādhi·paññā, 戒·定·慧)**, which are the fundamental principles of Buddhist practice. **These three cannot be separated and each achieves the purpose of practice through its own function.** This is practicing the Dhamma.

The Eightfold Path, which is the practice of Dhamma, is also connected to the three teachings. **This is because a righteous and wholesome mind leads to the serenity of jhāna, and with wisdom, one can be free from suffering by eliminating all suffering.** What is the upright mind full of goodness? **The mind of ultimate goodness arises when one rightly understands "impermanence, suffering, and non-self."**

All religions teach us to be good, moral, and kind to others. If we are maintaining moral standards and practicing many meritorious deeds, that is good and important. This does not distinguish Buddhism from other religious teachings. Buddhism also teaches the right conduct of the body, speech, and mind, but **it goes further than that by suggesting ways to liberate our minds from dissatisfaction/suffering.**

The Buddha observed the body and mind, realized how to be liberated from physical and mental suffering, and unfolded the law. **The right attitude and morality, which are**



**the basic attitudes that a human being must have in order to eliminate fundamental problems, are the basis of practice.** If the basic foundation is weak, it is difficult to make great progress. **The stronger the foundation, the deeper the practice can progress.**

*May you cultivate your sati continuously (Sammā-Viriya)!*

*May you achieve Sammā-Diṭṭhi (Right View) through Satipatthāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 160 Satipaṭṭhāna 77: The Relationship Between Sati and the Meditation Object

**There is a relationship between the meditation object and sati.** In Abhidhamma (the third basket in the Tipiṭaka), it is said that **when a momentary mind arises, it has only one object.** This is something that can be experienced only by advanced practitioners, but it is something that can be understood if one focuses on observing the mind.

**The object is just something that is brought into awareness and is neither good nor bad. *If it is a pleasant object, there is lobha (greed) in it, and if it is an unpleasant object, there is only dosa (anger).* Vipassanā is not a practice that eliminates the object; it prevents defilements from occurring when the object arises. Wisdom (*paññā*) in practice arises when you have the right view of the object.**

In Vipassanā practice, the practice of mindfulness toward an object is both the beginning and the end. The Buddha stresses the importance of this in his final words, in the Nirvāṇa Sutra: ***“ātāpī sampajāno satimā!” “Be diligent, continuously practice mindfulness, and have clear knowledge!”***

We aim to help you understand this by explaining neuroscientific research on how mindfulness works during split-second moments (also see Dhamma Letter No. 74). In *Mindfulness and Psychotherapy*, the authors write:

“Neuroscientist Benjamin Libet discovered that we become aware of our will to move 0.25 seconds after a brain region is activated. And again, movement begins only after 0.25 seconds. This provides interesting information about what we call ‘free will.’ Before you consciously decide to move, your brain is already ready to move. There is also an opportunity for choice in the time between will and action. Tara Bennett-Goleman called this time interval ‘the magic 0.25 seconds,’ and mindfulness meditation allows you to take advantage of that time [Germer, Siegel, and Fulton].” (Read more on [Benjamin Libet](#)).



There are two types of knowledge: **knowledge of the object** (*saññā*: function of perception) and **knowledge of wisdom that watches behind** (*viññāna*: function of consciousness). **The state of continuing to be aware is an awakening!**

*May you cultivate your sati continuously (Sammā-Viriya)!*

*May you achieve Sammā-Diṭṭhi (Right View) through Satipatthāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 161 Satipaṭṭhāna 78: How Does Sati Progress in Relation to Objects?

We examine from various angles **how sati progresses in relation to objects** during the practice of Vipassanā.

In modern times, Sati is translated as mindfulness or awareness. However, Sayadaw U Tejaniya ([ashintejaniya.org](http://ashintejaniya.org)), **prefers to describe it as "remind" rather than "mindfulness."** This is because mindfulness, which literally means "mind+full," can result in side effects of practice that require effort to fill the mind. So, when teaching in English, he changed mindfulness to "remind." **"Re+mind" is used in Vipassanā practice to mean that when being aware of an object, the mind is renewed every moment.** Similarly, Venerable Pramote ([www.dhamma.com](http://www.dhamma.com)) expresses mindfulness as **"recollection."** Recollection means **"to recall,"** and is used to mean recalling again and again what one has noticed about an object in every moment.

**This describes the continuity of being aware of the object as each subsequent moment begins and ends.** In practice, when you need to make **continuous efforts (virīya)** without losing sight of sati, or when you wander **without knowing how to place sati,** remembering the words **"remind" or "recollection"** brings very **beneficial results to sati practice.**

In *The Path of Purification (Visuddhimagga)*, it is said (translated from the Korean translation):

The nature of the self that is insightful from right view and right thought cannot penetrate into an object as impermanent, suffering, or non-self. **This is possible when "the arising thinking (*vitakka*)" continues to bring the object to mind.**

Alternatively, the insight of knowledge and the insight of investigation are only for this purpose. Regardless of any dhammas, **the disappeared dhammas (objects) must be known and investigated, so you should know that the insights play the role of wisdom (*paññā*) of the path in this way.**

*May you cultivate your sati continuously (Sammā-Viriya)!*



*May you achieve Sammā-Diṭṭhi (Right View) through Satipatthāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 162 Satipaṭṭhāna 79: Observing the Body and Mind

**Any thought or mental perception appears as a corresponding physical sensation.** Conversely, **physical sensations give rise to thoughts. Thoughts appear as feelings or emotions, which are called the mind.** If you place the object of meditation on your body and mind, you will be able to **see how the body and mind interact with each other**, and you will feel comfortable as you actually experience the body and mind.

**Watching the body is the primary step or ultimately a shortcut to seeing phenomena related to the mind.** The mind sees the body walking or moving and **realizes that the mind is the one who sees or observes the body.** It is all about seeing that everything that happens in the mind is a temporary phenomenon. When you understand this fact, you become a truly wise person.

**You have to watch what you are doing to become your true self.** Here's what you need to do to experience true peace, lasting happiness, or a state of emptiness: First, you need to find a comfortable and quiet object of meditation. Anyone can easily practice breathing meditation or body movement. By watching the breath, the mind becomes calm and alert, and the results of the practice are achieved very quickly.

**When mindfulness/awareness works correctly (Sammā-Sati), you pay attention to your body one moment and your emotions or physical sensations the next.**

Mindfulness/awareness is not about the self. The Buddha taught the law of "no-self," and this is **"the practice of penetrating insight."** When mindfulness works in the right way, you realize that there is no self. **We only experience the phenomenon of matter and spirit, that is, body and mind, which arise and disappear depending on conditions.**

To achieve this, **you must be a clear-minded observer.** This shows that mind observation plays an important role in Vipassanā practice. Therefore, **you must learn**



**an appropriate mental attitude for meditation that does not attach to a specific meditation object** (Dhamma Letter No. 159).

*May you cultivate your sati continuously (Sammā-Viriya)!*

*May you achieve Sammā-Diṭṭhi (Right View) through Satipatthāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*





## 163 Satipaṭṭhāna 80: Balancing the Body and Mind to Observe

**You must observe everything that happens within your body and mind.** When the mind becomes the observer and mindfulness (sati) is practiced correctly, you not only notice what is occurring in the mind, but you also perceive the true nature of these occurrences.

Until enlightenment occurs, at least one true characteristic can be seen in the body and mind, or in mental and physical phenomena. **We can see the characteristic of "impermanence," which means that all phenomena are not fixed and are constantly changing.** We can learn about the characteristics of "suffering" by knowing that the body and mind, which are material and spiritual, are the elements that cause pain. In this way, we can understand the characteristic of "selflessness," knowing that the body and mind are just phenomena that change according to conditions and are not a "self" that can achieve what it wants.

In order to realize these three special characteristics of Buddhism, when observing the mind in Vipassanā, **we observe not only the mind but also the body.** It allows the practitioner **to observe the feelings (sensations) of the body if he or she is too absorbed in contemplating the mind.** Even for beginners, **if it is difficult to see the mind directly, it is encouraged to observe bodily sensations.** Although the mind is observed, practitioners are frequently reminded that it must be in proper balance with the body.

*May you cultivate your sati continuously (Sammā-Viriya)!*

*May you achieve Sammā-Diṭṭhi (Right View) through Satipaṭṭhāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 164 Satipaṭṭhāna 81: Observation of the Body and Mind Should Be Equal and Harmonious

**The weight of observation on the body and mind should be equal and harmonious.** Even practitioners who are generally able to directly observe the mind are sometimes encouraged to look at the feeling of the state of the body. **The mind can be a witness to everything that the body is doing, or the mind is doing.** So, after repeatedly practicing looking at the body and looking at the mind for a long time, you can easily become **aware of the body and mind at the same time.**

Later, when you can only see the mind, you will say, "This is an excellent practice that truly brightens the mind." Furthermore, you can see that the mind you are observing is separate from the body, and you can again see that the emotional states that occur are separate from the mind that is aware of them. You can see that the mind is awake even when the body is still asleep.

Venerable Ajahn Pramote (a living saint of Thailand's Ajahn Mun tradition, [www.dhamma.com](http://www.dhamma.com)) explains even the higher levels of the mind, but in his general teachings, he teaches that **both the body and mind should be viewed together as objects of observation.**

*May you be well and happy! May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 165 Satipaṭṭhāna 82: How to Continue to Dhammanupassanā

By emphasizing the naturalness of doing things without strong will or hard work, the understanding of conventional practice that requires effort may appear **contradictory** (for more understanding see **previous letters No. 123 -125** about **Paññatti & Paramatṭha: The Essence of Vipassanā**).

In other words, because practice is **about daily life as it is, without any special or burdensome appearance**, it is difficult to go beyond the idea of practice. We must understand that **"doing without doingness" is the process of moving to the place of meditation where we see the object "as it is" (dhammanupassanā: the last stage of observation)**.

For beginners, coarse defilements appear as coarse thoughts, words, and actions. At this time, **if you can become aware of these thoughts, you will not get lost in them. Then the coarse defilements will automatically disappear.** If you see the object of thought, it will disappear. However, **if you are not aware of it clearly, you will get lost in your thoughts. So, staying awake is always an important factor.**

Therefore, **at first, just focus on sati (mindfulness) and awareness. When you become proficient at maintaining sati to the extent that you do not fall into the flow of thoughts, you can continue your practice to the next level where you can investigate the causes of the three roots of defilements (greed/attachment, aversion/anger, and delusion/ignorance).**

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 166 Satipaṭṭhāna 83: Observer in Vipassanā (Insight) Meditation: Vipassanā Samādhī

If we observe uprightly, we can see thoughts arising and disappearing by themselves. **There is no need to push away or control this observer in any way or try to create something new. You can see that the thinking mind moves on its own. We should not force the mind to stop thinking. You have to watch your mind in a natural way, objectively, so that it can think again and again, not in the cycle of karmic defilements.**

Vipassanā meditation frees the mind and when you become aware of what is moving from here to there, you become an observer and can have a type of samādhī that is conducive to wisdom. **When we understand the two extremes, we can follow the middle path of upekkhā (tranquility).** This means that when one has the wisdom of knowing, that is, the Right View, one can understand the Middle Path (Majjhimā Patipadā).

U Kosalla Sayadaw (1913-2002) in Shwe Oo Min Vipassanā Center, Yangon, Myanmar, who was called an Arahant in the modern times, said,

“Right understanding is the Middle way.”

If we engage in thinking, we will never become the state of pure consciousness/“Knower.”

**Vipassanā begins when we free ourselves from intentional thoughts.** But ironically, in order for this observer to wake up correctly, it must rely on the thoughts (it should be **Sammā-Saṅkappa: Right Thought**). Vipassanā requires an observer. **Thought is necessary to become an observer, but Vipassanā begins when one can see independently of thought.** This is the role and importance of **Vipassanā samādhī** (tranquility).

*May you reach Sammā-Saṅkappa, Right Thought, and Right Understanding!*



## 167 Satipaṭṭhāna 84: Q&A 35 How Does One Practice for Nibbāna?

**Q:** I am curious about your practice in Nibbāna. I don't even know what questions to ask. I suppose I will start with asking what you do each day (on the cushion and off) that constitutes your practice in Nibbāna?

**A:** As for Nirvāṇa, it will be easier to understand if you read my previous Dhamma Letters from the beginning. First of all, we **need to know how the Buddha defined Nirvāṇa. *Nirvāṇa refers to the state in which all defilements are removed.*** A saint in a pure state who has removed all defilements is called an Arahant. Please read the **Dhamma Letters No. 56-59** especially on this point.

**The defilements appear expanded and come from three roots: attachment, anger, and delusion (see Dhamma Letters No. 64-69).**

Therefore, **you must have the wisdom to see and remove the three pollutants while investigating yourself** every moment 24/7. Regarding wisdom, please read **Dhamma Letter No. 1** as well.

It requires **the wisdom to understand** the three characteristics of Buddhism: **impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and selflessness (*anattā*).**

Buddhism **emphasizes living in the present moment.** If you are caught up in the past and the present is dominated by the past and future, you cannot be happy.

**You must keep sati (mindfulness/awareness) in every moment – remember without forgetting and be alert so that wisdom is with you in every moment.**

**First, there must be purity to keep the precepts (*sīla*), and based on purity, the tranquility of *samādhi* arises. Wisdom (*paññā*) arises based on the unintentional stillness of nature.**



As emphasized in **Dhamma Letter No. 165**, when mindfulness becomes a mastered, natural mindfulness (*dhammanupassana*) rather than an **unforced, unintentional, and laborious one, a continuous mindfulness that is not lost is established.**

When we meditate and **maintain awareness in our daily lives, we take care of our minds so that no defilements/unwholesome minds arise.** I hope that these weekly letters (*sati-patthana*: establishing sati) will provide guidance and help you do this.

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 168 Satipaṭṭhāna 8: Samādhi (The State of Tranquility) 4

SN 22:5, Samādhi Sutta:

“Samādhiṃ bhikkhave, bhāvētha, Samādhito bhikkhave, bhikkhu yathābhutaṃ pajānāti.”

“Bhikkhus, cultivate samādhi. A bhikkhu in samādhi understands everything as it is.”

In the sutta, “understanding everything as it is,” or “knowing through and through,” refers to insight, so samādhi is necessary for not only Samatha but also Vipassanā practice. Insight appears as a result of the practice.

In the theoretical background of Vipassanā revealed earlier, we briefly discussed “Samatha” (**Dhamma Letters No. 49-55**). Like the “samādhi” of Samatha meditation (**through concentration on an object**), the “samādhi” of Vipassanā meditation (**through insight of the objects**) means the same as “calm” and “tranquility.”

Most people translate samādhi as “tranquility” and think of Samatha-like “fixed calmness,” but in *cittanupassana* of the Vipassanā method, **samādhi is said to be the result of right understanding through wisdom.**

**Right Understanding through insight changes the mind from bad dhamma to good dhamma and maintains tranquility (samādhi) in the states of mind. Without this stillness, subtle observation of the mind is difficult.** As the level of practice gradually deepens, the role of samādhi becomes very important in the practice of meditation. As discussed in *the five faculties* (faith, effort, mindfulness, samādhi, and wisdom in Dhamma Letters No. 133-147), the role of samādhi is very important.

**The type of samādhi we ultimately need manifests as the mind’s awareness and observation of physical and mental phenomena. Stable and correct practice occurs when the mind does not become absorbed in these phenomena, allowing the observer to continuously watch what is happening in both body and mind.**



If we do not study and practice this type of samādhi, we end up becoming immersed and focused on a specific object. If it's just to maintain a temporary state of calm, it's okay to do so. But **to walk the path of wisdom, you need the right observer.**

**Pure Vipassanā (suddha-Vipassanā) is believed to be possible only when it is based on the state of mind of equanimity (upekkhā). Proper understanding through the right mindset refers to the understanding of "impermanence, suffering, and non-self."** We can understand "impermanence, suffering, and selflessness" through mental observation of greed, aversion, and delusion.

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*





## 169 Satipaṭṭhāna 86: Samādhi (The State of Tranquility) 5

In the Buddha's teachings, **samādhi is said to be the closest source of wisdom**. But it must be the right type of samādhi. **Without samādhi, one cannot become an observer who can see things truly and accurately.**

We learn the principle that the type of concentration that maintains a particular mental state is not the type of samādhi (by Samatha) that leads to wisdom and liberation. The mind becomes too biased or entangled. Therefore, a practitioner **must practice the right type of samādhi**.

Basically, there are two ways to achieve the right type of samādhi: this detached observer or knower.

The first method is for those who are very skilled in jhāna (禪定 in Zen), a meditative state of profound stillness and concentration in which the mind becomes fully immersed and absorbed in the chosen object of attention. If, after attaining at least the second level of jhāna, **one can come out and perceive that state, this observer can achieve samādhi by continuously knowing their chosen object**. However, this is difficult for most people to induce.

The second method we can practice is the Vipassanā Way of observing objects as they are, such as watching the breath or watching the body move. **Instead of holding onto this meditation object, what the meditator does is watch the mind move.**

Where does the mind move?

The mind moves toward the thought or the mind remains centered and observes all objects as they are (Right View/Understanding). These are the two sati: sati 1 is “placing sati” and sati 2 is “being sati” (see Dhamma Letter No. 134). When we can see the mind moving with thought objects, we can briefly achieve the correct type of samādhi, a quality of mind. “Being sati” allows the mind to stay grounded, observing. **If**



**you can know your thoughts as your mind moves, you will have deep wisdom and become a correct observer. Maintain sati all the time.**

The wisdom here is *Vipassanā wisdom (insight), which includes knowing and seeing the cause and its conditions and refers to a wide perspective that can be seen from various angles. It is seen as it is.*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 170 Satipaṭṭhāna 87: Nimitta (Representation/Imagination/Symbol in Meditation, 表象 표상)

**The mind only thinks when it needs to; it cannot be controlled.** Nevertheless, the trial and error that practitioners go through means that when *a pleasant symbol (nimitta)* appears to them, they become **obsessed with this “object of consciousness.” This can act as an obstacle to progress until the final stage.**

This is why the state of Nibbāna, the ultimate goal and state of ultimate happiness, is called ***animitta* (without representation)** in Pāli. **The deeper you practice, the more you become trapped in a state of tranquility or the concept of “emptiness.”**

However, **there is no progress or wisdom in a stopped state. This becomes an opportunity to misunderstand *paññatti* as a conceptual emptiness. We *must properly understand the meaning of “emptiness” as “paramatṭha” in early Buddhism*** (see Dhamma Letters No. 123-125 about *paramatṭha*).

**The object of Vipassanā is “impermanence, suffering, and no-self,” so you should not hold on to any object.** In this regard, it is emphasized that everything changes and passes, and the mind should not remain in one place. The theory of ***the Visudhi-Magga (the Path of Purification)*** explains that the observation of “no representation” is the observation of the three characteristics (anicca, dukkha, & anattā).

The Buddha used these expressions to describe Nibbāna: the absence of representation (*animittā*), wantlessness (*appaṇihita*), emptiness (*suññatā*), and intentionlessness (*asaṅkhāra*).

- The observation of the absence of representation (*animittā*) is observation of impermanence (*anicca*). With this, we abandon the idea of eternity.
- The observation of wantlessness (*appaṇihita*) is the observation of suffering (*dukkha*). With this, we let go of wanting and longing for objects of our desire.
- The observation of emptiness (*suññatā*) is the observation of no-self (*anattā*). With this, there is no self. Let go of your stubbornness.



**This also means that we should not try to escape our thoughts by intentionally stopping them or pushing them away. It just happens naturally; it's not something we have to force.**

Let the mind think, and simply observe what the mind thinks from the perspective of an observer. Become an observer of the mind rather than fixing it or controlling it in any way.

In this way, any conceptual representation of paññatti is not considered an important experience because **it is "just a passing phenomenon."** This is because the purpose of Vipassanā practice is **to free oneself from attachment and eliminate all suffering which is called Nibbāna.**

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 171 Satipaṭṭhāna 88: Objects of Meditation (Paññatti & Paramatṭha) 4: Concept (관념, 觀念) & Ultimate Reality (궁극적 실재, 實在)

This letter expands upon previous Dhamma Letters about *paramatṭha* and *dhammanupassana* (No. 123-125 and No. 165).

If you understand the representation (*nimitta*, 表象, 표상) in the previous letter, you can see how important **the recognition of paññatti and paramatṭha in Vipassanā Insight Meditation is for the path to Nirvāṇa (Nibbāna)**. Therefore, a definition and understanding of it is necessary. This is an important position in **observing dhamma as it is** (*dhammanupassana*).

Paññatti refers to the state of "concept," and paramatṭha refers to "ultimate reality." **Vipassanā meditation is to see ultimate reality.** This refers to a state in which we can say that we see things "as they are." This can also be said to be seeing "Dhamma."

**Since the ultimate goal of Vipassanā is Nirvāṇa, where all suffering/dissatisfaction disappears by developing wisdom, we must have a right understanding of "paññatti."** We see and understand paññatti in the process of practice. **Through this, wisdom is developed, and one comes to know and see "paramatṭha," ultimate reality.**

The actual object of Vipassanā practice can be said to be "impermanence, suffering, and non-self." This is because **all objects cannot be fixed and show a state of impermanence (anicca) that is always changing. If an object is seen in a fixed state, it is a state of a concept, not reality. This is called paññatti.**

Dhamma practice should actually **accelerate the continuous** and natural development of **sati (mindfulness/awareness)** and **sampajañña (clear understanding)**. When you continue to move forward in the right way, you will **experience the ultimate state of paramatṭha**.



Buddhism speaks of "concepts" such as "emptiness, 空," the teaching that everything is empty, or that everything is oneness. However, such a profound experience of realistic **emptiness appears as a result of our right practice, not in concept.**

**"Emptiness, 空" is not something we become aware of by trying or imitating it.** We should not try to empty our minds, brighten our minds, or anything like that. This is not something we should practice. **If you engage in practice with an intentional attempt to achieve it, it will soon remain in paññatti.**

Many practitioners remain in this state of paññāti and often mistakenly think they have seen the truth. "Brightness, equanimity, and emptiness" – all of **these are revealed as pleasant results of our right practice.** To achieve such results, it must be done in the right way. **We should not try to create an ideal state by imagining it.**

What practitioners must do is to see our own body and mind (materiality and spirituality) as they are. We need to look at **what we are actually experiencing. When we see facts as they are, we can experience the state of paramatṭha.**

When checking your practice, **be sure to check the status of paññatti and paramatṭha yourself** during the interview so that you can see the Dhamma as it is.

*May all practice well and be to Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 172 Satipaṭṭhāna 89: Wisdom (Paññā) and Nirvāṇa (Nibbāna) 1

The Buddha taught the Four Noble Truths (四聖諦, 사성제). **If we do not see these four noble truths uprightly, we have no chance of seeing Nirvāṇa.**

**Wisdom must first be developed as a tool for Nibbāna.** In the Digha Nikāya Potthapada Sutta (DN9), the Buddha explains **the relationship between recognition and wisdom:**

“Does recognition arise first and then wisdom, or do recognition and wisdom arise at the same time without any prior or subsequent development?”

“Potthapada, recognition arises first and then wisdom arises. However, when recognition arises, wisdom also inevitably arises. He knows this through and through.” “Indeed, ***my wisdom arises from these conditions.***” Potthapada, **through this method of being conditioned, "recognition arises first, and then wisdom arises.** However, you must know that when recognition arises, wisdom also necessarily arises.”

When **mental action occurs in the five aggregates**, wisdom appears as saṅkhāra (action), which is explained through its relationship with viññāna (consciousness). **Sankhāra of wisdom acts as a means of liberation. Arising is saṅkhāra, and the state of no arising is Nibbāna (āsaṅkhāra).**

**The happiness of Nibbāna arises from the cessation of mind and matter.**

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 173 Satipaṭṭhāna 90: Wisdom (Paññā) and Nirvāṇa (Nibbāna) 2

**First recognition arises and then wisdom arises.** When recognition arises, wisdom also inevitably arises. From the Digha Nikāya Kevadda Sutta (DN11):

The special state called Nirvāṇa is invisible and infinite.

It had steps to the sanctuary reaching from all directions.

**Here...spirit and matter completely disappear.**

**When consciousness disappears, everything disappears.**

As an explanation for this:

The word used in the original text is **viññāna (consciousness, 識, 의식)** because it means **“what must be known.”**

This is a synonym of wisdom used also to describe Nirvāṇa.

**What needs to be known is what needs to be specially known.** This means that it must be known right before your eyes as the wisdom of the noble path (**ariyamaggañāna**), which is **the highest wisdom**. So, the Tika (2nd commentary) states more clearly, "This is another name for Nirvāṇa."

Vipassanā wisdom was explained through the Discourse to Susīma (on Arhathood, SaṃyuttaNikāya 12.70) as **“wisdom about the conditions of dhammas arises first, and then wisdom about Nirvāṇa arises.”**

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*





## 174 Satipaṭṭhāna 91: Wisdom (Paññā) and Nirvāṇa (Nibbāna) 3

**When we understand the truth of suffering (苦聖諦), which is the "noble truth," this transforms into another level of happiness.**

**Wisdom brings lasting, tangible happiness.** The Buddha taught that whenever there is attachment or desire, there is suffering/stress. When we withdraw our attachment to the body and mind, the suffering/stress disappears, and we no longer suffer/stress.

Relying on the Buddha, relying on God, or relying on people who want to make us happy is the same as if we were still relying on this body and this mind. **If you have such attachments, you will not be able to find true happiness in any way. You must be able to become an observer who notices when your body and mind feel suffering or happiness. When we can achieve this, we begin to see things the way they really are.**

**Enlightenment occurs when one can understand that the body and mind are themselves suffering/dissatisfied.** Therefore, there is no eternal happiness for us. There is no happiness that can come from this body and mind.

True peace and true happiness arise when we see the truth that this body and mind are simply unsatisfactory and cannot make us happy in any lasting way. They cannot permanently give us what we are looking for, what we desire.

**The practice is only to see with wisdom that the body and mind are dissatisfactory/stressful/suffering, and this wisdom leads to less and less attachment to them.**

There are two types of meditation. One is temporarily calming the mind. The other one allows us **to become observers**. This meditation prepares you to gain the wisdom to see the truth of things as they really are. This wisdom will reduce our suffering/stress.



All a practitioner has to do is simply practice the Dhamma and understand what practicing the Dhamma is and what it's for.

From the doctrine of the *Visudhimagga* (The Path of Purification):

**“Observation through deep reflection is the wisdom of deeply considering the means to liberation.”**

This is because **only through wisdom can one reach Nibbāna, a state in which all defilements are destroyed.**

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 175 Satipaṭṭhāna 92: Wisdom (Paññā) and Nirvāṇa (Nibbāna) 4

In Vipassanā meditation practice, Sayadaw U Pandita emphasizes the meaning of "Satipaṭṭhāna" as **"non-manipulating the object."**

You should **try to observe the object of observation without trying to manipulate or control the object that appears.** A practitioner should only observe the object **that is there right now and should not expect anything or wish for something to be there.**

In Vipassanā practice, **observing what is as it is without reacting is the key, so the practice of observing the "knowing mind" of the object is very important.**

In order to achieve Nirvāṇa, a state in which all defilements through greed, anger, and delusion (탐·진·치·貪·瞋·痴) are eliminated, **defilements will not disappear without observing the mind.**

*May you be well and happy!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 176 Satipaṭṭhāna 93: The Practical Use of Modern Vipassanā

### Meditation

Vipassanā practice is called “insight meditation” or “mindfulness meditation” in the West and has been used as a treatment method in behavioral medicine and psychotherapy since the mid-1970s.

In this way, Vipassanā meditation practice is used in modern times in various ways that are **universally beneficial to human life**, even outside of the Buddhist context.

**Western psychotherapy has already developed a variety of programs based on behavioral medicine that emphasizes the mind-body relationship, based on Buddhism's "Mindfulness Meditation: Sati Practice."**

Based on mindfulness meditation, Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) was born, and cognitive behavioral therapies such as Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT), Dialectical behavior Therapy (DBT), and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) were used to treat a wide range of psychological symptoms. Treatment was involved and it was born into a standardized form suitable for modern times.

In fact, these programs and systems are becoming common in the lives of the public as a therapeutic aspect not only in the West but around the world. Through these treatment methods that **continue to develop, many ideas in psychotherapy based on mindfulness (sati) are still provisional**, so it is expected that further improved research will be conducted to suit modern times. Vipassanā **meditation is expected to have a significantly positive impact on many problems humanity will face in the future.**

I am confident that we will be able to find solutions to many problems facing modern people through the excellence of Vipassanā meditation by the Buddha.

*May you cultivate your sati continuously (Sammā-Viriya)!*



*May you achieve Sammā-Diṭṭhi (Right View) through Satipatthāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 177 Satipaṭṭhāna 94: Position of Observing the Mind in Meditation

For the wisdom for enlightenment, the Buddha describes the meditation practice of noticing the four objects of Vipassanā meditation (The Four Foundations of Mindfulness: body, feeling, mind, and dhamma) throughout the Great Mindfulness Discourse (Mahā-Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta, 대념처경, 大念處經) and other suttas in the Sutta Nikāya (Buddha's discourses). He frequently emphasized its importance.

Proper meditation practice must combine these four elements. Also, **depending on the practitioner's strength or personal inclination, the practice can be divided into mindfulness of body, feeling, mind, and dhamma respectively. However, these four cannot be separated and can be seen as simultaneous phenomena.**

First-time practitioners begin by observing one object with their mind focused on it, so each object feels separate. But **as your practice deepens, you realize that these four things are happening simultaneously and reciprocally.**

**The observation of mind, which is the focus here, plays a very important role in advancing the practice of *dharmānupassanā*:** mindfulness of dhammas. "Dhamma" can also be translated as truth, phenomenon, natural law, fact, thing as it is (object), etc.

**The mind (citta) is** already the most important element that helps us reach the path to happiness we want to pursue and is also **the key to leading the entire meditation practice.**

We had learned about the practice of Shwe Oo Min Meditation Center: Sayadaw U Tejaniya ([ashintejaniya.org](http://ashintejaniya.org)), which is currently the only one in Myanmar to teach the practice of observing the mind, and Luangpor Pramote of the Ajahn Mun tradition in Thailand: Simple and Easy Mindfulness Meditation ([dhamma.com](http://dhamma.com)), which teaches to rigorously observe the mind. Through this, we were able to gain a deeper understanding of Vipassanā practice in meditation centers.



*May you cultivate your sati continuously (Sammā-Viriya)!*

*May you achieve Sammā-Diṭṭhi (Right View) through Satipatthāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 178 Satipaṭṭhāna 95: Concluding The Overall Mind Observation

This Satipaṭṭhāna practice, which is sent out every week, is based on the author's thesis on the subject of *cittanupassana* meditation and is introduced in a slightly easier-to-understand manner. Now, I would like to conclude the discussion of mind observation.

Previous studies on the Vipassanā practice method as pure Vipassanā meditation are already known through books and collections of sermons, and they are practiced by many practitioners all over the world. In comparison, there are not many meditation centers that focus on contemplating the mind, and there are not many books or papers on it at the time of this writing.

As stated in the introduction, research on mind observation practice is necessary because, although observing the mind is a key element of Vipassanā meditation, no specific research on methods for this practice has been conducted.

Even as modern Vipassanā meditation practices become generalized under the name "mindfulness meditation," mind observation retains an important position. This study was prepared to highlight the importance of "mind observation" – **the practice of observing the mind in Vipassanā meditation – and to emphasize the need for a thorough understanding of this process.**

As shown through the practice methods presented earlier, **the mental practice in Vipassanā meditation can be seen as representing the psychological aspect of Buddhism.** Just as various mindfulness-based programs have been developed as forms of psychotherapy in the West, we suggest that more in-depth programs, which also recognize human potential and tendencies, be researched.

Currently, Vipassanā (mindfulness meditation), which was started for employees at Google in the United States, has already permeated the lives of modern people and is having a positive impact on society.





I hope that through such research and meditation practice in one's own life, **everyone can achieve the path to happiness by escaping from suffering and pursuing a better human life.**

May all practitioners who are passionate about the practice of Vipassanā meditation for complete enlightenment, the ultimate happiness (Nibbāna) achieved by the Buddha, will eventually reach the state of Magga and Phala, breaking away from the ten shackles. From next week, we will continue with the content on observation of dhammas (*dhammanupassana*).

*May all practice well and be to Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 179 Satipaṭṭhāna 96: Dhammanupassana 1: The Great Insight That Understands Dhamma Correctly

In the early Nikāya scriptures, **the objects of observation in Vipassanā are generally referred to as spirit and matter**. However, in the four mindful meditations of the Great Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta, they are called mind, not spirit, and body, not matter. This is because **when practicing, everything that appears in the body and mind is targeted as the objects**.

If some of these objects are observed and some are not, this cannot be a practice of **recognizing reality (paramatṭha)**. **Only when everything becomes an object of practice can it be said to be based on facts**. Vipassanā meditation practice involves not specifying the object to be noticed.

The practice of awareness of the mind is the recognition of consciousness. Therefore, the object of Vipassanā practice can be **anything that is good, bad, or neither-good-nor-bad**. **Any object can be Dhamma**.

**Vipassanā (Insight) meditation** is a practice that allows you **to see objects as they really are**. Samatha meditation, which is generally encountered by everyone, does not allow you to see the object as it is. This is because it is performed through a specific object and with a certain purpose.

Vipassanā that **does not discriminate between objects must be started with the right view (Sammā-Diṭṭhi)**. Therefore, you can know "things as they are" "as they are," and **by knowing what nature the object has, you can deal with it in a fundamental way**.

It is difficult for practitioners to practice with this perspective from the beginning. Through the teachings of the Buddha, **one must follow the path of practice that allows one to gain insight into one's mind and gain the Right View** (see Dhamma Letters No. 60 and 61). In order to have the superior insight to properly understand the Dhamma, the Visuddhimagga states as follows.



The Vipassanā of the Dhamma of superior insight was explained as follows:

Consider the object deeply and observe its collapse.

Superior insight appears as emptiness.

See that the object, such as material, and the mind that holds it as the object, [both] collapse.

Insight arises by understanding the empty nature through collapse, saying, "Only sankharas collapse, sankharas die, and there is no object again" [This is an observation of the Dhamma of advanced insight].

This is superior insight knowledge and also Vipassanā for dhammas, so it is called "Vipassanā for dhammas" of superior insight knowledge.

Through this, I have seen clearly that there is no constant reality and that there is no reality called ego, so I give up my stubbornness that there is reality.

*May you be well and happy!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*

## 180 Satipaṭṭhāna 97: Dhammanupassana 2

We would like to help you understand this by looking at the method of observing dhammas shown in the Maha Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta (DN22):

Bhikkhus, **how does a bhikkhu live while observing dhammas as dhammas?**

In this way, one lives internally observing dhammas as dhammas. Or one lives externally observing dhammas as dhammas. Or one lives by observing dhammas, **both internally and externally.**

Or one lives **by observing the phenomena that occur.** Or one lives **by observing phenomena disappearing.** Or one lives **by observing the phenomena that arise and disappear.**

For him, the mindfulness that **"there is only dhammas" is established.** That **mindfulness only improves wisdom step by step and creates a higher level of mindfulness.** **One does not depend (on craving or private views) and is not attached to anything in the world (as me or mine).** In this way, Bhikkhus, one lives observing dhammas as dhammas.

Regarding the practice of Vipassanā on dhammas, the observation of Dhamma in the Great Satipaṭṭhāna sutta **begins with noticing five obstacles.** In general, when we say "Dhamma," it is bound to be associated with the truth, and the first object of Dhamma observation is the "five obstacles."

### The five hindrances (nīvaraṇa)

1. Sensual desire (kāmacchanda)
2. Ill will (vyāpāda)
3. Sloth and torpor (thīna-middha)
4. Restlessness and worry (uddhacca-kukkucca)
5. Skeptical doubt (vicikicchā)



**The five obstacles are phenomena that occur due to unwholesome thoughts and unwholesome results. The fact that these five obstacles are the first objects of Dhamma is very significant.**

The topics to be aware of in Dhamma observation presented in the Maha-Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta are divided into five categories. Although it is divided into five categories, in actual practice, it is "Dhamma" **targeting "body and mind," and an integrated action takes place in terms of acting. This operates simultaneously with the performance of all four observations and appears as a result.**

Dhamma observation involves cultivating body observation, feeling observation, and mind observation, and **right view, which allows one to naturally see objects "as they are," arises, wisdom about cause and effect arises, and the wisdom of Vipassanā practice matures.** Then, you will eventually be able to reach the final stage, the sacred path and fruit.

*May you be well and happy!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 181 Satipaṭṭhāna 98: Dhammanupassana 3: Five Categories of

### Observation of Dhamma in the Great Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta

These are the five categories of observation of dhammas that the Buddha presents in the Great Thought Sutta as a direct method for achieving Nirvāṇa:

- ① **Awareness of the Five Obstacles**
- ② **Awareness of the Five Aggregates of Attachments**
- ③ **Awareness of the Six Internal and Six External Sensory Places [十二處]**
- ④ **Awareness of the Seven Factors of Enlightenment**
- ⑤ **Awareness of the Four Noble Truths**

Dhamma observation includes all these elements of practice, and the four observation practices, Satipaṭṭhāna, are manifestations of the Buddha's enlightenment. The teachings he preached for 45 years after his enlightenment are integrated here.

In these letters, the basic structure is introduced, and in the future, little by little, direct meditation methods will be discussed.

*May you be well and happy!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 182 Satipaṭṭhāna 99: Dhammanupassana 4: 37 Enlightenment Factors (Bodhipakkhiya Dhamma)

The literal meaning of "Bodhipakkhiya Dhamma" in Pāli is "Dhamma belongs to enlightenment (bodhi)" or "Dhamma is related to enlightenment." The entire Dhamma is divided into seven categories, and each characteristic method is presented. It is no exaggeration to say that this is what Buddhism is all about.

It refers to the [37 factors explained by Gautama Buddha](#) and is actually a general term for the practice methods of early Buddhism.

### 4 Foundations of Mindfulness (Satipaṭṭhāna):

Observation of ① body ② feeling ③ mind ④ dhammas

### 4 Self-Control Efforts (sammappadhāna):

These are the four virtues to practice by diligently devoting oneself to cutting off all evil and producing good. **Meditation in daily life involves mindfulness in every moment without forgetting. This becomes the basis for the creation of wisdom by protecting the precepts, quieting the mind, and practicing the basic path of purity.**

① Try diligently to prevent evil that has not yet occurred. ② Try diligently to eliminate evil that has already occurred. ③ Try diligently to create goodness that has not yet existed. ④ Try diligently to increase the goodness that has already been created.

### 4 Means of Achievement (iddhi-pāda)

① Achieve free power by performing actions with **enthusiasm** and motivation. ② Achieve free power with persistence through **proper effort**. ③ Achieve the power of a free mind by cultivating jhāna that can control the **mind**. ④ Achieving free power through Right Samādhi through Right Thinking and **verification**.

### 5 Faculties (indriya):

① Faith ② Effort ③ Mindfulness ④ Samādhi ⑤ Wisdom



### 5 Forces (bala):

When the 5 faculties above increase, five corresponding powerful powers emerge, and these five powers become the capacity for liberation.

### 7 Factors of Awakening (bojjhaṅga):

① Mindfulness ② Verification ③ Effort ④ Joy ⑤ Stability ⑥ Samādhi ⑦ Equanimity

### 8-Fold Noble Path (ariya-magga):

① Right View, ② Right Thought, ③ Right Speech, ④ Right Action, ⑤ Right Livelihood, ⑥ Right Effort, ⑦ Right Mindfulness, ⑧ Right Samādhi.

**37 Bodhipakkhiya Dhamma** leads sentient beings deeply engaged in meditation to the path of liberation and **includes the beginning, process, and results of practice**. It shows the entirety of Buddhism, including reaching the final goal of liberation and Nirvāṇa.

The Buddha said that this method of practice is **good at the beginning, good in the middle, and good at the end**. I hope that only good things will always happen **through understanding the right way to practice**.

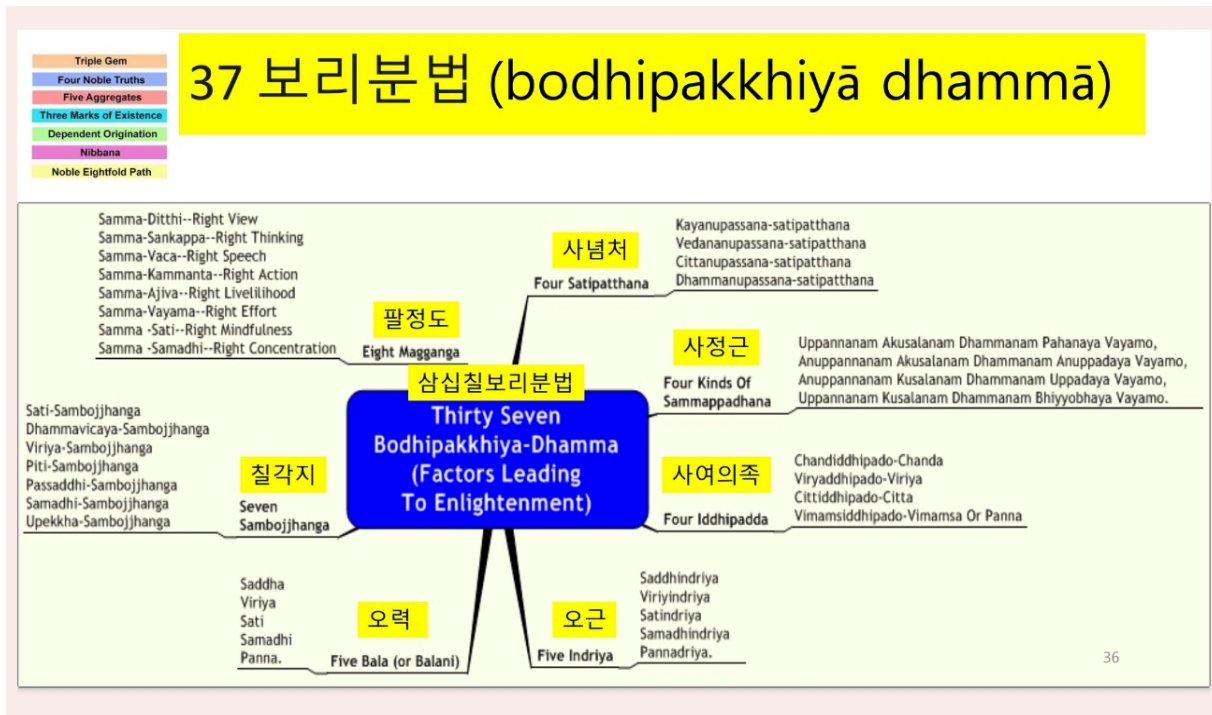
*May you cultivate your sati continuously (Sammā-Viriya)!*

*May you achieve Sammā-Diṭṭhi (Right View) through Satipatthāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*





by Kim Jae-Sung

## 183 Satipaṭṭhāna 100: Dhammanupassana 5: Right View and Nirvāṇa

**When we can see the Dhamma with the right view through the four practices of mindfulness, we can reach the ultimate goal of liberation and Nirvāṇa.** In the SaṃyuttaNikāya: Nirvāṇa Sutta (SN38:1), the path to Nirvāṇa is explained in a conversation between the Venerable Sāriputta and the ascetic Jambukhādaka:

At one time, Venerable Sāriputta was in the village of Nālaka in Magadha. At that time, the wandering ascetic Jambukhādaka asked Venerable Sāriputta: “Friend, Sāriputta, when you say ‘Nirvāṇa, Nirvāṇa,’ **what is Nirvāṇa?**”  
**“Nirvāṇa is the state where greed is eliminated, aversion is eliminated, and delusion is eliminated.”**

“Then **is there a way to Nirvāṇa?**”

“Friend, there is a path to Nirvāṇa.”

“Then what is the way? **What is the path to Nirvāṇa?**”

“Friend, **the ‘Noble Eightfold Path’ is the path to Nirvāṇa. That is, right views, right thoughts, right words, right actions, right means of living, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration/tranquility.**”

“Friend, the Eightfold Path is excellent. The Eightfold Path is a wonderful path to Nirvāṇa. It is worthy to devote oneself to the Eightfold Path.”

“Friend, Sāriputta, when you say ‘Arahantship, Arahantship,’ what is Arahantship?”

“Arahantship is the state of quenching greed, quenching aversion, and annihilating delusion.”

“Is there a way to attain Arahantship?” “Then what is the way? This is the path to attaining Arahantship.

“That is, right views, right thoughts, right words, and right means of living, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration/tranquility.”



“Friend, the Eightfold Path is excellent. The Eightfold Path is an excellent path to attaining Arahantship. The Eightfold Path is worthy of devotion.”

I hope that **through awareness in daily life, your defilements will be gradually eliminated, and you will eventually experience Nirvāṇa in this very life.**

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 184 Q&A No. 36 Nibbāna (Nirvāṇa) is Not Something That Can Be Acquired or Reached?

**Q: Some say that Nirvāṇa is not something that can be acquired or reached. So, how is Nirvāṇa experienced?**

**A:** Yes. That's right. Nibbāna (Nirvāṇa) is not simply achieved through hard work or reached at a certain point naturally. Many Buddhist practitioners aim for and speak of Nirvāṇa. The word Nirvāṇa was already used in Indian philosophy and practice tradition before Gautama Buddha. So, the majority of practitioners still talk about and believe in such an ideological Nirvāṇa.

We first **need to understand the definition of Nibbāna explained by the Buddha.** We must be able to see the Buddha's birth, his reflection on his life, his journey of practice, and his liberation up to enlightenment.

Samatha, which was already achieved in traditional Indian methods, was an idea of absolute tranquility through concentrated meditation, and it was recognized that pain would one day follow again. Afterwards, he sat under the Bodhi tree and, while observing the natural flow of breathing, he gained insight into the realities as they are. He gained insight into how human life can be liberated and completely free from the pain of birth, old age, illness, and death.

*The Buddha's enlightenment is the Four Noble Truths. He realized that the root of the mind that caused suffering was the concept of craving and aversion, and that at the root of that was ignorance/delusion that did not know that fact.*

Rather than a limited quiet state through concentrated meditation as in existing Indian practices, **this is the work of completely revealing the roots of ignorance; that is, a pure mind that leaves behind all notions is continuously aware of the eternal ultimate state. Nibbāna, as defined by the Buddha, refers to an eternal and immortal state in which no uncleanness occurs beyond the three sufferings.**



**That state is not something that is simply achieved through hard work or reached at a certain point but is something that can be recognized through awareness.**

However, since we are on the path of purity, there will be a destination where we will reach that point someday. The destination is Arahantship, a stage where one can never be reborn as anything else. There are stages in enlightenment, such as Sotāpanna (Stream-Enterer), Sakadāgāmi (Once-Returner), Anāgāmi (Non-Returner), and Arahant, so I don't think there will be any problem in expressing that sometimes one reaches the destination.

You can understand that **the reason for taking issue with the use of words is to guard against the concept of Nirvāṇa, which leads to expectations or delusions of obtaining or achieving a certain result and from making a futile conceptual approach.**

**The important thing is to understand whether you are trapped in an idea or follow in the pure flow of Dhamma. Identifying paññatti (concept) and paramatṭha (ultimate reality) is the key to insight into Nibbāna** (see Dhamma Letters: Understanding about Paññatti & Paramatṭha No. 123-125).

*Thinking that Nibbāna is good and trying to reach for it – that is delusion, too.  
- U Tejaniya Sayadaw*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment) in this very life!*

*With mettā,*



## 185 Q&A 37 If You Observe the Mind, Isn't There a Risk That You Will Be Born in the Arūpa (Non-Material) World?

**Q:** If you observe the mind, isn't there a risk that you will be born in the *arūpa* (non-material/formless) world without a body and will not be able to practice due to the absence of a body (*rūpa*: matter) and will remain in the state of *moha* (ignorance/delusion)?

**A:** Vipassanā meditation **observes four objects (body, feelings, mind, and dhammas) at the same time, so you cannot look at the mind only without the body.** Even **when it is concentrated on the mind as an object, the body is the base** where the thoughts are generated by vitakka (initial application, one of the five factors of the first jhāna).

Arūpa (non-material/formless) is a state in which only the fifth factor, *ekaggatā* (one-pointedness), and *upekkhā* (tranquility), remain, without any thought or other jhāna factors. **It is distinct from the first jhāna in the material realm.**

Therefore, **always observing the awareness of the body, that is, sensation or feeling, without losing sati (awareness/mindfulness) of it,** is an important part of the Satipātāna practice. This is why we especially **emphasize maintaining a balance between body and mind and maintaining observation** (see Dhamma Letters No. 163 and 164).

Our purpose is to achieve Nibbāna (Nirvāṇa), the elimination of all defilements, and to cut off Saṃsāra – **not to be reborn in a higher world and repeat reincarnation (rebirth in any beings).**

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment) in this very life!*

*With mettā,*



## 186 Q&A 38 Isn't Being Born in the Realm of Arūpa

**(Non-Material/Formless), That Is, As A Being In The Higher World, A Good Result? Is There Any Reason To Avoid It?**

**Q: Isn't being born in the realm of arūpa (non-material/formless), that is, as a being in the higher world, a good result? Is there any reason to avoid it?**

**A:** There are people (Mahayana Buddhism, including Tibetan Buddhism) who wish to be reborn as beings in order to perfect their personal *pāramītas* (*pāramī*: merits) and aim to become Bodhisattvas after passing through eons of life. Therefore, each individual has different goals. There are also cases where one wishes to be reborn as a human being and exist again as a Bodhisattva who cultivates more *pāramītas*.

In particular, the practice methods of Hinduism and Indian traditions seek to cultivate higher jhāna states and be born in the realm of a highest being, that is, arūpa.

However, the teachings of **early Buddhism focus on completely escaping Saṃsāra – that is, the three realms – since no matter what kind of being you are born as, once your long life is over, you fall back into a realm below and suffer again.**

**Beings in the arūpa realm (non-material/formless) are devoid of matter**, so they stay in silence for a long time. Since **they cannot cultivate pāramī**, **all that remains is to be born as a lower being**. So, from a Buddhist perspective, it is viewed as a dangerous state.

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment) in this very life!*

*With mettā,*



## 187 Q&A 39 I Have Heard That Sense Restraint In Many Ways Can Be A Kind of Mindfulness Meditation – Can You Explain In Detail the Ins and Outs of This?

**Q:** I have heard that sense restraint in many ways can be a kind of mindfulness meditation – can you explain in detail the ins and outs of this?

**A:** In order to attain peace of mind and wisdom through mindfulness or right awareness, **maintaining a right attitude with a calm mind is a condition.** However, **if the defilements are so entrenched that it is difficult to control the mind or thoughts, it is difficult to be mindful and aware.**

That's why the practice of Buddhism is to study the three learnings (sīla, samādhi, & pañña: 三學- 戒· 定· 慧, 계정혜), and the precepts are important. Because **there are many benefits to keeping the precepts (sīla) in order to lead a simple life and keep the mind in a more tranquil state.**

You could even describe it as suppressing the senses. Because **human desires run endlessly and tend to lead to selfishness, it is easier to investigate our minds and create a peaceful mind if we reduce our desires and become altruistic.**

Being able to pursue your goals and consistently achieve satisfying results on your own poses no problem. **However, when things don't go as planned, you may end up feeling tormented by anger and dissatisfaction.**

By embracing the wisdom of impermanence and selflessness, **you can temper your expectations, maintain a more peaceful mind, and create the conditions that support achieving your goals.**

*May you cultivate your sati continuously (Sammā-Viriya)!*

*May you achieve Sammā-Diṭṭhi (Right View) through Satipatthāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*





*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 188 Q&A 40 I Have Heard Of Sense Restraint As A Kind Of Non-Grasping At Signs. Can You Elaborate On What Is Meant By That?

This is a follow-up question from the last letter.

**Q: I have heard of sense restraint as a kind of non-grasping at signs. Can you elaborate on what is meant by that?**

**A:** Aiming for enlightenment as a human being or seeking a better state of mental peace involves utilizing as mature an intellect as possible. Therefore, keeping the precepts and living a moral life is the foundation. Many religions and philosophical teachings also aim at this basic point.

Dhamma practice is **to understand the laws of nature based on such a moral life, and insight wisdom arises by following the flow of nature. If you cannot see objects or phenomena as they are and you suppress or hold on to them, insight wisdom cannot arise.**

Moreover, **wanting to hold onto something can also become an obsession while practicing. If you grasp onto a sign in meditation that you have become attached to, you may become obsessed with maintaining it when it becomes what you want it to be. This can become an obstacle to your practice. *The sign is also just a passing phenomenon, and the phenomenon changes according to the conditions; if you grasp onto it, you will already be moving away from the law of nature.***

To understand that everything produced by mentality and matter is **only phenomena is to realize** the three characteristics of impermanence, suffering, and selflessness in Buddhism.

*May you cultivate your sati continuously (Sammā-Viriya)!*



*May you achieve Sammā-Diṭṭhi (Right View) through Satipatthāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 189 Q&A 41 How Can One Master One's Emotions: Aggression, Anger, Sorrow, Etc.?

**Q: How can one master one's emotions: aggression, anger, sorrow, etc.?** Any types of meditation techniques? Any other types of activities? I'm doing 6 months without video games, reading more, and trying to avoid free dopamine hits through technology. Basically, working for my feel-good brain chemicals...if that makes sense, so any suggestions would be great.

**A:** Since these are the emotions humans experience while living, it would be helpful to understand them in terms of practice.

The Buddha organized **causes of emotional feelings into three major categories. Desire (lobha), anger (dosa), and delusion/ignorance (moha).** But **these cannot be separated.** Because desire arises based on delusional ignorance, if the desire is not satisfied, aggression, sadness, anger (dosa), etc. arise correspondingly. **Generally, emotions are shown by being classified into likes (lobha) or dislikes (dosa), or they can be wants (lobha) or rejects (dosa).**

**The solution is to understand yourself.** One's needs appear either satisfied or dissatisfied. **As much as you see and understand yourself, you will have the ability to control yourself without being swept away by your emotions. It can also be said that wisdom arises then.**

Sitting meditation also develops the ability to look at oneself, so it is important to sit in meditation consistently, even for a short amount of time, and **reflect on one's feelings and thoughts.** This can also be called Vipassanā meditation. **Right insight into yourself can be the beginning of understanding others and creating harmony.**

If the habitual pattern that comes from being immersed in objects such as games or videos becomes an obsession, the aftereffects that follow become difficult to control. **It is also called the formation of karma for a habit to develop by leaving yourself to an object for a long time. So, changing the targeting of objects will help.** It would



be nice if it was wholesome and improved your health. It would be nice if you could make yourself happy and develop by being able to interact with others or do more active sports.

You are already doing a good job in practice and may have figured out the answer yourself, but I hope this helps. I wish you always health and happiness.

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment) in this very life!*

*With mettā,*



## 190 Q&A 42 It Is Easy To Fall Into Nihilism When Thinking About Impermanence Or Selflessness In Buddhism. How Can We Overcome It?

**Q:** It is easy to fall into nihilism when thinking about impermanence or selflessness in Buddhism. How can we overcome it?

**A:** First of all, ***you must have the right view***, not the wrong view. You must **understand that only this present moment is real**. You must be able to stay in this moment, **free from the deep karma of thoughts clinging to the past and worries about the future. These problems are from a state of ideological delusion.** This is a phenomenon that occurs when you view impermanence through a wrong perspective.

If you have the right view, you can live every moment correctly. Buddhist teachings are the Four Noble Truths, and the final Noble Truth is the Eightfold Path (ariya aṭṭhaṅgika magga). **Living a practical life of the Eightfold Path is the practice.**

- Think rightly (Sammā-Saṅkappa) with the right view (Sammā-Diṭṭhi),
- Speak rightly (Sammā-Vaca), act properly (Sammā-Kammanta), live a righteous life (Sammā-Ajīva),
- Maintaining right mindfulness (Sammā-Sati) and making right efforts (Sammā-Vāyama),
- If you practice the path of right concentration and stillness (Sammā-Samādhi),

**Then, you will not fall into delusions such as nihilism.**

The feeling of emptiness or meaninglessness appears to be **a side effect of obsession with oneself or an excessive desire to achieve something**. If you rightly understand the reality and reality of this moment, you can escape from such delusions.

You must be able to free yourself from negativity toward yourself, others, or society and return to reality **by focusing on each moment. Every moment, we must allow a new mind to arise (Sammā-Sati).**

We must reconsider the path of the Eightfold Path and change our thinking to the right



reason that **allows us to make the right effort without being lazy**. It is better to break away from self-centered thinking and first develop altruism for others or society.

**Enlightenment can occur not by running away from nihilism but by facing reality and properly understanding the order of the universe.** In order to have the right thoughts, you need the right mindfulness. Quoted in ***the way and the efforts of the Buddha's word:***

The Ten Powers:

"I will not relax my energy so long as I have not attained what can be attained by manly strength, by manly energy, by manly exertion."

"Bhikkhus, the lazy person dwells in suffering, soiled by evil unwholesome states, and great is the personal good that he neglects. But the energetic person dwells happily, secluded from evil unwholesome states, and great is the personal good that he achieves. - SN12:22, translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment) in this very life!*

*With mettā,*



## 191 Papañca – Concept and Reality: Free From The Defilements

The previous letter discussed the side effects that occur as delusions progress and expand. This topic continues with a more detailed explanation of the question.

While practicing Vipassanā, it is not easy to observe the outward movement of action and recognize the intention of the mind, or thought, behind the movement. As practice progresses and you are able **to reflect on yourself** more and more, you will **enter the realm of wisdom, which takes practice**.

You must be aware of your thoughts and ideas and be able to continue observing them without losing your focus. Even after practicing for decades, there are many cases where we are still limited to observing the body.

**You must see and know all the saṅkhāras that you create with your body, speech, and mind.** Before a body moves, there is an intention; when a person speaks, there is an intention; and when a person thinks, **there is a thought beforehand that causes it.** Even people who do not necessarily notice this think, speak, and act without being aware of it. This is called **latent tendency (consciousness)**.

If you are a Buddhist meditator, you will be aware of every thought, word, and action you do. This is because **awareness must be more advanced and expanded into the realm of wisdom in order to remove all defilements and remain happy.**

**In order to be able to recognize the invisible part of your inner self, that is, even your intentions, you need to practice self-objectification even more.** If you fall into your own ideas or distort facts based on your own stereotypes, you will feel unpleasant about yourself, and it will lead to uncomfortable relationships with people around you.

**There are three causes for the expansion of thoughts: craving, view, and conceit.** You need to recognize and practice "letting go" of your strong obsession with what you want to achieve or your self-centered views and concepts. **You need an open mind**





that can accept anything.

**To prevent your thoughts from expanding, you must first strengthen your mindfulness** so that you are aware of the thoughts that arise at every moment, but **do not get caught up in them or expand them into your own thoughts.**

The ability to objectify oneself is generally called "**meta-cognition.**" You should just recognize and be aware of your thoughts and feelings and **not fall into deeper thoughts about yourself.** If your thoughts continue with your own concepts, it is easy to criticize yourself or others or fall into stories that distort the facts. This is what we must guard against.

First of all, **you should just notice and not apply your own concepts or judgments.** If you find it difficult to observe your thoughts or intentions, **start by simplifying your life.** This is because when life and relationships are busy and confusing, it is difficult to notice all the thoughts that occur to you throughout daily activities.

**To prevent your thoughts from expanding and leading to defilements, simply be aware of the thoughts that arise, and do not react to them. You need to build your own mind muscles.**

In order to have the right thoughts, you need the right mindfulness. There is a book written by Bhikkhu Ñānananda, *Concept and Reality*, that explains that **you must be aware of your ideological thoughts and be careful not to let them expand into habits.**

**Free Download: [Concept-and-Reality-in-early-buddhist-thought](#)**

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 192 Eight Kinds of Dukkha (Suffering: Stress in Modern Times)

### By Buddha's Discourse

Buddha's teachings only provide a path to happiness and freedom from suffering (dukkha: stress in modern time). It is shortened to the teachings of dependent origination and the Four Noble Truths.

First, *we must understand the meaning of **dukkha**.*

Second, *we must understand **the cause**.*

Third, *we know that **dukkha is extinct by eliminating its cause**.*

Fourth, *it is to know and **pave the way to extinction**.*

**Dukkha can be expressed as stress, uneasiness, discomfort, unpleasantness, difficulty, suffering, pain, dissatisfaction, etc.**

Eight kinds of dukkha that can occur in the human world:

1. Dukkha of Birth
2. Dukkha of Aging
3. Dukkha of Sickness
4. Dukkha of Death
5. Dukkha of being apart from the loved ones
6. Dukkha together with the despised ones
7. Dukkha of not getting what one wants
8. Dukkha from the flourishing of the five skandhas.

One must free oneself from the ego that generates dukkha and have insight wisdom.

**Insight wisdom begins with a right view of the three core elements of Buddhism: impermanence, suffering, and non-self (anicca, dukkha and anattā).** That is the fourth noble truth called the Eightfold Path.

***This path of practice will bring good results at the beginning, the middle, and the end as well.***

– The Buddha



I hope that everyone can **practice the Eightfold Path in real life through a right understanding** of the Four Noble Truths.

*May you cultivate your sati continuously (Sammā-Viriya)!*

*May you achieve Sammā-Diṭṭhi (Right View) through Satipatthāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 193 3 Types of Craving by Buddha's Discourse

In the cycle of 12 links of dependent origination (*paṭicca-samuppāda*), the point in time **when dukkha is created is when craving arises**. So, what kind of craving do beings potentially have?

### 3 Types of Craving

1. **Craving for sensual pleasure** (kāma-taṇhā): Pleasure principle: The desire to obtain pleasure from the objects of the five sense organs (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body).
2. **Craving for existence** (bhāva-taṇhā): Oceanic feeling: The desire to exist forever in the happy state experienced in meditation, mainly due to the longing for the world of subtle material (the heavenly world) or the world of pure spirit (the heavenly world without color). Desire for eternal life. A desire related to eternalism, which claims that humans have something like a soul that exists forever, even after death.
3. **Craving for non-existence** (vibhāva-taṇhā): Death instinct: It is a desire that arises from the wrong view called *nihilism*, which holds that nothing exists after death. It is a desire to destroy oneself by thinking that the world ends with death, based on materialism that identifies the self and the body.

The Buddha broadly divided the existence of this galaxy and the entire universe into three worlds and presented 31 worlds in detail. He classified craving connected with each world into three types.

Numbers 2 and 3 above are largely **a warning to the realms where strong craving may be formed due to obsession** with Samatha meditation. This is something that can appear as a side effect of the achievement of jhāna. Therefore, **the wisdom to gain insight into oneself during Samatha meditation is essential. Samatha and Vipassanā are inseparable.**

As such, it is very important to fully acquire and understand the teachings of the



Buddha. If you practice alone, you may end up going down the wrong path by practicing only what you like and obsessing over it without realizing it. The Buddha called this the 8-wrong path, not the 8-right path (Reference: SN 45:21-24).

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment) in this very life!*

*With mettā,*



## 194 4 Types of Clinging by the Buddha's Discourse

This is continued from the previous letter. In the teaching of the **12 links of dependent origination (paṭicca-samuppāda)**, the part we need to focus on is the part where we pass from feeling/sensation to craving. You must be aware of which feelings you crave more.

### 4 Types of Clinging

1. Kāmupādāna: Sensuous pleasure
2. Diṭṭhupādāna: View & opinion
3. Sīlabbatupādāna: Rule, ritual, habit
4. Attavādūpādāna: Self, Ego

We no longer fall into cycles of suffering because we have an overriding goal. If you have a clear understanding of the things that you become attached to based on craving, it will help you reflect on yourself and put into proper practice. The Buddha explained everything down to the smallest detail like this.

Free E-book Download for 12 links of dependent originations (paṭicca-samuppāda):  
[Mogok Sayadaw's paṭicca-samuppāda](#)

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment) in this very life!*

*With mettā,*



## 195 3 Types of Defilement (Kilesa) by Buddha's Discourse

This is linked from the previous letters 193 and 194.

**The goal of Buddhism is to reach Nirvāṇa, ultimate happiness.** The Buddha defined Nirvāṇa as a state in which defilements (lobha, dosa, & moha: craving, aversion, & delusion) have completely disappeared. It is about leading a peaceful and harmonious life free from anguish, and it takes time in the practice to live in a state in which one does not fear or experience anguish even when the time of death approaches.

Then, we need to know the fundamental tendencies of the defilements caused by the mind that lead to craving and attachment.

### 3 Types of Defilement (Kilesa)

1. Defilement of **sensual desire** (kā mā sāva)
2. Defilement of **existence** (bhā vā sāva)
3. Defilement of **ignorance** (avijjā sāva): **vicious cycle of ignorance**

This refers to the three worlds discussed previously: the realm of desire, the existence of the form and non-form worlds that are the result of achieving jhāna, and the agony caused by ignorance, which is the root of existence. Even during the day and at this moment, thoughts arise, and we take action.

**It is the practice to become aware of one's life and conduct internal exploration.** If you live a life of continuous mindfulness with the habit of being aware of every moment, you will not be able to give a chance to anguish. Therefore, developing mindfulness rightly (Sammā-Sati) is what takes us on the path to Nirvāṇa.

**If you have the right mindfulness, the path to wisdom opens up, but if you do not have the right mindfulness, you become immersed in your own karma (Saṃsāra).** Starting from the first affliction, which is easily visible and recognizable externally, we



must gradually notice and recognize it in our daily lives. And if you become aware of your potential attachment to your own existence, you will be able to approach greater practical performance. As your practice gradually deepens, ignorance, the root of all suffering, will be revealed. If you can recognize ignorance through understanding and insight into the principles of the world and the creation and extinction of existence, you will discover the starting point of defilement. This means knowing the teachings of the 12 dependent origins, which are the essence of the Buddha's enlightenment, with absolute clarity.

**Majjhima Nikāya 9: Sammā-Diṭṭhi Sutta** contains information about removing these three defilements through the right view, so please read it.

What will be introduced starting next week will be a detailed discussion of the mind that can reflect and think for itself on the path of practice toward Nirvāṇa.

*May you cultivate your sati continuously (Sammā-Viriya)!*

*May you achieve Sammā-Diṭṭhi (Right View) through Satipatthāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*





## 196 Mind and Mind Factors (Citta and Cetasika) 1

We must be aware of mind factors that are harmful pollutants and mind factors that are beneficial qualities. When these occur **in our daily lives, we need to notice them and examine their characteristics**. Otherwise, you won't know what's right and what's wrong. We do not know where the pollution occurs, and we do not know how deep its roots are.

If the Buddha had not taught in detail about the pollutants of the mind, we would still only have vague thoughts about them. How can you see the dangers of mind pollutants if you do not know them? **How can we develop beneficial behavior if we do not know the characteristics of beneficial mind factors and other beneficial behaviors? The mind factors that accompany each mind are very diverse.**

**This is to explore under what conditions a series of phenomena created by the body, speech, and mind – led by the mind**, which the Buddha always emphasizes – arises, allows us to live in, and, under what conditions, disappears.

I hope that each person will continue to **be aware in their daily lives and increase their wisdom by examining their fleeting thoughts**.

By embarking on a Vassa (traditional rains-season retreat in Buddhism), we begin a concrete exploration of the mind.

I would like to discuss *citta* (mind) and *cetasika* (mind factors), which **will be directly helpful in developing insight wisdom**. We will proceed using **Nina van Gorkom's** book as a textbook (free online pdf):

[DOWNLOAD NINA VAN GORDOM'S CETASIKAS](#)

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment) in this very life!*

*With mettā,*



## 197 Mind and Mind Factors 2: The Relationship Between the Mind, Mind Factors, and Its Object

The mind arises and disappears very quickly. **When one thought arises, another thought follows and becomes the new object of the mind.** So, what is "mind"? **The mind can be defined as "knowing an object."** It can be said that naming "this is —" is the role of the mind.

While **there is only one mind (*citta*) in a moment**, there are 52 accompanying mind factors (*cetasika*). Just as when a king goes, his secretary always follows him, **when the mind arises, the mind factors follow.** Therefore, **mind (*citta*) is always accompanied by mind factors (*cetasika*).**

**Mind factors (*cetasika*)** has the following four characteristic properties:

1. *It arises together with citta (consciousness).*
2. *It perishes together with citta.*
3. *It takes the same object which citta takes.*
4. *It shares a common physical base with citta. Citta and cetasika function together.*

These specific explanations are in the **Abhidhamma of [Tipiṭaka](#) ("Three Baskets" of the Pāli Cannon)**. During the Buddha's time, Arhat disciples actually discussed the workings of the mind. This is revealed throughout the scriptures. **Many sections of the Nikāyas (scriptures) mention the Abhidhamma:** Aṅguttara Nikāya 6:60 shows the scene of Thero's discussion about the Abhidhamma, and in Majjhima Nikāya 111, Sariputta taught the Abhidhamma to monks (how to analyze the mind).

**Abhidhamma contains the core practices of Buddhism.** As the law was passed down, it became theoretically biased, resulting in the inability **to apply it to actual practice.** However, **when anyone applies Buddhism to their lives, all that remains is to examine their own body and mind.**



**Abhidhamma is the theoretical foundation of Vipassanā meditation.** I hope that you can continue your momentary awareness and experience the essence of Dhamma.

Download: [Abhidhamma in Daily Life](#) - Nina Van Gorkom 1975

Reference: [Bhikkhu\\_Bodhi-Comprehensive\\_Manual\\_of\\_Abhidhamma](#)

Starting next week, we will discuss the types of mind and mind factors and their own respective properties and functions.

## DOWNLOAD ABHIDHAMMA IN DAILY LIFE

*May you cultivate your sati continuously (Sammā-Viriya)!*

*May you achieve Sammā-Diṭṭhi (Right View) through Satipatthāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## 198 Mind and Mind Factors 3: The Four Kinds of Mind

The four kinds of mind:

1. Unwholesome mind (*akusala*)
2. Wholesome mind (*kusala*)
3. Resultant mind (*vipāka*)
4. Merely functional mind (*kiriya*)

**The *cetasikas* (mind factors) that accompany the mind are of the same kind as the mind.** Some mental factors accompany all four kinds of mind. Others do not.

**Unwholesome or wholesome minds cause the resultant mind. This is also called karma.** It is said that one creates karma; if one creates an evil mind, an evil result will be created, and if one creates a good mind, a good result will follow.

Therefore, **the Yogi (practitioner) should continue to practice sati (mindfulness) and try not to create unwholesome karma. This is the practice of the Noble Eightfold Path.**

**If one continues to practice mindfulness and no longer creates defilements, the mind is completely purified and is called an Arahant.** An arahant has only a mind that does not create results – that is, karma – even in the same daily life. During the rest of one's life, **one will only have a mind that acts – not an intentional mind.**

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment) in this very life!*

*With mettā,*



## 199 Mind and Mind Factors (Citta and Cetasika) 4

**Cetasika (mind factors) refers to mental phenomena, psychological phenomena, and mental functions:**

- *Lobha (craving) - The quality of attracting objects*
- *Dosa (aversion) - The quality of repelling objects*
- *Moha (ignorance/delusion) - The quality of being dull, vague, not knowing at all*

**No *moha* refers to the state of *paññā* (wisdom), and it is an expression of Nirvāṇa in the state where craving, aversion, and ignorance are eliminated.**

**When any emotion arises in life, if you can notice the mind that attracts and attaches to what you like or the mind that rejects and wants to avoid what you dislike, it will be a great start.**

**The practice is to simply accept it as a phenomenon that arises and disappears. If you fall into the idea that it is me or mine, you will cause more obsession and blockage, which will cause imbalance in your life, remaining as your own suffering.**

**The attitude of seeing, knowing, and accepting is important.** It is difficult at first, but if you overcome it, a brilliant, new life will begin. If you can catch and explore just one state of mind a day through awareness in your daily life, it will be a great fruit of practice.

May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment) in this very life!

*With mettā,*



## 200 Mind and Mind Factors (Citta and Cetasika) 5:

### Q&A 43 The Ego That Wants to Avoid

**Q:** Isn't it right to think only of good things and avoid things you dislike? Thinking about the Four Noble Truths causes more painful emotions.

**A:** Yes, that's a good question. We need to see it. **The mind that wants to avoid causes suffering. We need to be able to ask ourselves, "Why do I dislike it? Why do I like it?" That is the starting point for eliminating the cause of the problem.**

We cannot avoid being born as a human being and living in this body. Just as **we accept birth and that it is impossible for life to always have only good things, we need to develop a mind that can be free from concepts of good and bad.**

**We need to explore ourselves, who conceptually distinguish between good and bad and then react. We need to see that reacting like that is the cause of suffering. The mind that pursues good things produces disappointment and anger when they are not achieved. The mind that rejects things that we dislike makes us tense and produces worry and concern. A calm mind that is not swayed by any emotion creates a comfortable life.**

*The Four Noble Truths are the sacred truths that explain how to begin with accepting suffering as suffering, finding its cause, eliminating it, and completely extinguishing suffering. The Eightfold Path is the method that suggests this.*

Especially in modern Buddhism, we see some teachers embellishing or avoiding the Four Noble Truths. We see Buddhists who do not even accept the Abhidhamma. **We need the courage to overcome the craving that wants to hear only sweet words – the mind that rejects with dislike and is angry. We have to accept the facts as they are.**

*May you cultivate your sati continuously (Sammā-Viriya)!*



*May you achieve Sammā-Diṭṭhi (Right View) through Satipatthāna (Vipassanā meditation)!*

*May all practice well and reach Magga (道, the path of enlightenment) and Phala (果, the fruit of enlightenment)!*

*With mettā,*



## ABOUT THE EDITOR



Grace Schuurmans is a dedicated Dhamma practitioner on the path toward Nibbāna. She became an email subscriber to Ayya Kosallā's *Dhamma Letters* and grew to know Ayya through her Sunday online Dhamma offerings. Over the last several years, the Buddha's teachings have become central to her life as she has stayed at Theravāda and Mahāyāna monasteries and attended meditation retreats in the Thai Forest, Pa-Auk, and S.N. Goenka Theravāda traditions. She continues to explore both monastic and lay opportunities to deepen her meditation practice and develop her pāramī.

Grace enjoys editing Dhamma writings and is open to various opportunities. You can reach her at [gschuurm@gmail.com](mailto:gschuurm@gmail.com).





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