

# Traverse the Current

By

**Venerable Ajarn Thoon Khippapanyo**

Translation from Thai by

**Asvin Nimmanheminda**

Copyright © K.P.Y. Organization 2000

For free distribution only. Reprinting for sale is prohibited.

All rights reserved.

## Table of Content

---

Introduction .....	4
Concentration .....	4
Preparation for Walking Meditation .....	4
Application of Mantra-Words.....	5
The First Method of Walking Meditation .....	6
The Second Method of Walking Meditation .....	6
The Third Method of Walking Meditation .....	6
The Fourth Method of Walking Meditation .....	7
Preparation for Sitting Meditation .....	9
The First Method of Sitting Meditation .....	10
The Second Method of Sitting Meditation .....	11
The Third Method of Sitting Meditation .....	15
The Fourth Method of Sitting Meditation .....	16
Contemplation with Wisdom.....	17
Contemplation of the Body .....	18
Ignorance of Reality.....	18
The Non-Self.....	19
Traversing the Current.....	20
The World of Suffering.....	21
The Elements of Body.....	22
The Window of Self.....	24
The Strength of Mind.....	25
The Right Time is Any Time.....	26
Prepare to Write Your Own Scriptures.....	27
Contemplation of Feelings .....	28
Ignorance of Reality.....	29
The Same Old World.....	30
The Development of Wisdom .....	30
The Practitioner.....	32
The Name of the Truth .....	33
Body and Mind .....	35
Right View .....	36
Wisdom.....	37
Cause and Effect .....	40
A Stone On Top of Grass.....	41
The Knower .....	41
The Body .....	43
The Mind.....	44
All Happiness are Unhappiness .....	44
The Known Mind .....	45
Vipasana-Yana .....	46
There are No Mysteries in the World .....	47
Tranquility and Cessation.....	48

Cycle of Rebirth Ceases.....	48
Fire of Defilement Runs out of Fuel.....	49
The World Revealed.....	49
Intrepidity.....	50
The Rising of Asavakkhayanana .....	50
Detachment.....	50
Conclusion.....	53

## Introduction

Nowadays, the number of people who become interested and practice mental development is on the rise because they find Buddhism interesting. They are interested in mental development because it leads directly into a practicing field and because they can experience some results right away.

Anybody, regardless of nationality, class, or caste, can practice. They can practice anywhere in the world. And, when they practice, they will be rewarded with happiness, physically and mentally.

It does not matter whether you are very educated or not. As long as you are very determined, you will definitely see the fruits of your practice. The important thing, though, is that you must understand the *concept* of the practice correctly, meaning that you will have to understand the various *means that will teach the mind* to see *things the way they really are*. Here, are some of the means that you will need to know: walking meditation, sitting meditation, selection of the right mantra-word for 'tranquillity meditation' or 'concentration', or selection of a right subject to be contemplated in an 'insight meditation' or 'contemplation'.

In a correct practice, you need to use *both*, the 'tranquillity meditation' or 'concentration' and the 'insight meditation' or 'contemplation'. If you use one but not the other, your mental development scheme will lack something very important. And if that happens, the results that come out will reflect that lacking.

*From now on, 'tranquillity meditation' will be referred to as 'concentration' and 'insight meditation' will be referred to as 'contemplation'. Though, at times, they may be used interchangeably.*

There are many means to teach the mind in '*concentration*' and there are many means to teach the mind in '*contemplation*'. With so many means to choose from, you can choose anything that suits your temperament and habit best so that difficulties will be eased to a manageable level. For mental development to yield good results, the most important factor is *determination*. Without it, the practice is bound to fail or will keep starting over and over again without progressing anywhere. This is because determination is synonymous to mindfulness. Without the mindfulness, there can be no determination. Without determination, anything that you do will have a little chance of success; if succeeded, it will be mediocre or short-lived.

## Concentration

### Preparation for Walking Meditation

First, you must prepare a path for the walking. It should be approximately one meter in width and about fifteen meters in length. The surface of the path should be leveled so that you can walk with ease and be spared from anything that will cause anxiety. Before you start walking, proceed to one end of the path and stand facing the opposite end. Join the palms of both hands together and raise them to chest level or between the eyebrows, silently recite the following:

**I am going to do a walking meditation as a token of reverence for the Buddha, his teachings and his holy disciples. I extend this reverence to my father, mother, teachers, mentors, and those who give supports. Let me be blessed with mindfulness, calmness, and insight into the truth the way it really is.** May all the merits that arise from this walking meditation befall upon all living creatures, be they humans or non-humans. May all creatures live peacefully and blessed with the fruits of these merits of their own volition.

When you finish with the praying, lower the hands down but still holding the left hand with the right hand. Stand erect with your head slightly bowed in a thoughtful stance. Concentrate your mind on something that is neutral, meaning that you must try hard not to let your mind be swayed toward anything that you like or dislike. One mean to teach the mind to stay neutral is to make it focus its concentration on the task of walking meditation. Discard any thoughts of anything outside of yourself that will distract the mind from staying neutral. Then proceed to concentrate on uttering of mantra-words in your mind.

*[Mantra-words are uttered silently or loudly while you are breathing in and out. It is a mean to occupy the mind with a certain object so it will not think of anything else.]*

## **Application of Mantra-Words**

With determination, focus your concentration on breathing the air in deeply while thinking ... BUD.

With determination, focus your concentration on breathing the air out deeply while thinking ... DHO.

With determination, focus your concentration on breathing the air in deeply while thinking ... DHAM.

With determination, focus your concentration on breathing the air out deeply while thinking ... MO.

With determination, focus your concentration on breathing the air in deeply while thinking ... SANG.

With determination, focus your concentration on breathing the air out deeply while thinking ... KHO.

*[Bud-dho, Dham-mo, Sang-kho are popular mantra-words that are used by practitioners in Thailand. They mean the Buddha, his teachings and his holy disciples. You can choose any other words to suit your liking.]*

Repeat the whole thing three to seven times or as many times as you like. This is a mean to bring in the Buddha, his teachings and the holy disciples into your mind. After that, use only the mantra-words 'Bud' and 'Dho' alone, and proceed with the walking.

## **The First Method of Walking Meditation**

With determination, focus your concentration on stepping slowly forward with your left leg while thinking 'Bud', then step slowly forward with your right leg, thinking 'Dho'.

While the mindfulness is focusing on the mantra-words, it must also be focusing on the motion of each leg while it is stepping forward. Any time that you are not aware of the motions of the legs, it means that your mindfulness becomes unknowingly distracted and that your determination is insufficient. You must restore your determination and proceed with what you are doing again and again until you can manage to be mindful of everything all the time. Do not walk too slowly or too rapidly; the paces should be the same as when you are walking normally.

This is walking meditation in 'concentration', meaning that you treat the motions of the walking as 'mental target' or 'nimitta' of your concentration in order to exercise your mindfulness and determination. When you reach the end of the path, *it is a tradition to always turn back in a clockwise direction.*

## **The Second Method of Walking Meditation**

In this exercise, do not focus your concentration on the motions of the legs while you are walking. With determination, concentrate on breathing the air in deeply while thinking 'BUD'. With determination, concentrate on breathing the air out deeply while thinking 'DHO'.

Try to keep your the mindfulness, the mantra-words, the 'knowing-facility' of the mind, and determination in the same picture so that you will be able to concentrate whenever you want to.

When you are tired of walking, you can stop walking but remain standing. Keep concentrating on the mantra-words and the breathings so that there is no interruption during the transition.

## **The Third Method of Walking Meditation**

With determination, nominate a part of the body as 'mental target' or 'nimitta' of your concentration.

You can choose any part of the body as long as it is a part that you are comfortable with and easy to see. Make the part a 'mental target' for mindfulness to concentrate upon. Let the mindfulness together with the 'knowing-facility' of the mind concentrate on the part without being distracted away from it unknowingly. At first, the mental image that you will see will be rather blurry but what you must do is to limit the area where the part of the body is situated to be small enough so that the mind will have no trouble focusing on it.

**In the beginning, when you are still not very good at concentrating on a part of the body, you must use imagination. Try to make it look like what you can see with your eyes, be they, colors, hues, shapes, texture of the skin, location on the body, etc.** After you have done it often enough, familiarity will set the image in your mind, you will see the image regardless of whether the eyes are opened or closed. When you can do it to one part you can do it to other parts as well and the results will be the same. And when the mind can see parts of the body clearly, it will be very useful when you use it in contemplation.

In this method of walking meditation, do not concentrate on the movement of the legs, but concentrate on the image of the part of the body and mantra-words which is the name of the body part in Pali [*Pali is the Old Indic Prakrit, or dialect, of the southern Buddhist scriptures, which has become the religious language of Buddhism – Webster's New World Dictionary*].

Suppose you concentrate on a skin, the mantra-words for skin are TA-JO. You will say 'TA' silently when breathing in and 'JO' silently when breathing out while the mind is concentrating on the mental image of a skin. If you concentrate on a piece of bone, the mantra-words will be UT-TI which means bone in Pali while concentrating on the mental image of a bone. In stead of a bone, you can even imagine the whole skeleton doing a walking meditation. Hence, the ability to see body parts clearly in your mind will be a big help when coming to wisdom; but I will explain ontemplation of the body later so you will not be confused now.

## **The Fourth Method of Walking Meditation**

With determination, concentrate a feeling that comes into your mind. Whatever that feeling may be, if it can be felt inside your mind, make it 'mental image' for the mind to concentrate upon. If you see a mental image of a coarse feeling, concentrate on the coarse feeling. If you see a mental image of a refined feeling, concentrate on the refined feeling. *Coarse or refined feelings refer to feelings that originate from either physical or mental origins.* Whether they are worldly or spiritual, whether they are pleasant or unpleasant, if you can not put them out of your mind, you must use them as foci for the concentration. **However, do not use outside objects that create these feelings as foci.** If you do, the feelings will become very intense. As a matter of fact, it is quite apparent that all feelings are caused by sources from outside.

Therefore, there is a need to establish a new understanding about the real causes of feelings here. Under concentration, you must try to visualize the feelings in your mind so that you can see the real causes clearly and know for sure how things happen and where they happen. Under concentration, let the mindfulness watches how the real causes are affected by things outside and how the intensity of the feelings is building up when the real causes are spreading outside.

**The real causes above refer to causes that are inside the mind because it is within the mind that insatiable desires lurk around all over, ready to go out and devour all things, tangible or intangible.** They can be images, sounds, smells, tastes, or touches--the old staples for the mind for eons and eons. Whenever you were born, in whatever life-forms, you always possessed these desires. Even in this life, these desires are still spreading out through eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and flesh and bring infernos into the mind and keep it burning perpetually.

Feelings inside the mind are called 'Dhammaramana'. They are products of the desire; whereas, sights, sounds, smells, tastes, or touches are just outside factors that arouse the desire to act up. With the desire, the mind will devour anything in the world that it likes; and once it finds the things it likes, it will be fascinated by them and cling onto them so tightly. When feelings are cherished or otherwise, they become emotions.

**Wherever there are emotions, you will find the mind there. If you concentrate on emotions, it will be the same as if you concentrate on the mind.** If the mind is full of greediness, take note of it. If the mind is full of anger, take note of it. If the mind is full of lust, take note of it. If the mind is full of delusions, take note of it. These emotions are such good indicators of the state of the mind. Once you find the indications, you can focus your mindfulness on them and also the mind. If feelings can erupt, concentrating on them will make them weak and disappear all together.

**But it is very important that you must not focus your concentration on the outside causes** such as Sights sounds, smells, tastes, touches, or anyone that causes envious or revengeful feelings to be in your mind. If you do, poisonous feelings will overwhelm your mind and cause a lot of pains. So when there are emotions in your mind, focus your mindfulness on them so that they can be seen clearly. Soon, the intensity will be decreasing.

The above tactic is a mean to teach the mind when confrontation is inevitable. You must confront the situation by yourself using your mindfulness. Whether you will win or lose, you will know soon enough. **This is how you fight an inner battle! Confront head on with the feeling, never back down!**

**Before ending a walking meditation,** walk all the way to one end of the path, stand facing the opposite end. Press the palms of your hands together at breast level and think, "I have already done a walking meditation in order to pay homage to the Buddha, his teachings, and his holy disciples. May the result of this deed



bring happiness upon me. May this merit be extended to my parents, teachers, mentors, and those who support me; also to the gods and angels, all animals large and small, and those whom I have wronged. May all of them be blessed, of their own volitions, with the fruits of this good deed". After that, walk off the path with the mind still full of mindfulness. Proceed to the place where you will do a sitting meditation so that the transition is smooth and without interruption.

## **Preparation for Sitting Meditation**

Before you proceed to practice sitting meditation, you must see to it that the place where you will sit is clean and tidy. This ensures that there is nothing that will make your mind burdened with anxiety or distract you from the meditation. After that, you can say a prayer, whether it is short or long depends on your preference. Wish loving-kindness upon yourself and all other creatures. Then, make a vow to yourself that you shall not (1) kill, (2) steal, (3) make false speech, (4) commit sexual misconduct, and (5) consume intoxicating liquor and drugs.

To commit yourself to the Five precepts is a mean to tell your mind that you are prepared to keep yourself pure for the occasion. It is a mean to tell the mind not to worry about some bad deeds in past that you have committed either physically or verbally. That will make you feel quite pure for the moment. What was done has been done so you can put them aside for the time being. Having done that, think of all the good deeds that you have done eg. giving donations to charity, living within the bounds of the five moral precepts, practicing meditations, or any other good deeds. Thinking about them so your mind will be blessed with ecstasy and joy and feel good when you are practicing sitting meditation.

This self-commitment to uphold the five moral precepts can be very handy when there is no monk around and when you do not have much time. Your intention to refrain from committing unwholesome acts, either physically or verbally, will put your mind in the right frame of mind.

You can make a vow in Pali, the language used in Buddha's time or in your own language, as follows :

1. I will refrain from killing living creatures
2. I will refrain from stealing -- taking what is not given
3. I will refrain from sexual misconduct
4. I will refrain from harsh and false speech
5. I will refrain from consuming intoxicating liquor and drugs

You must be honest and sincere to protect the precepts from being violated. Whatever vows you make, you must do your best to make them true.

It does not make any difference whether you will do walking meditation first and do sitting meditation later, or do sitting meditation first and do walking meditation later. It is up to your preference. If it is not convenient to do walking meditation, you can omit walking meditation and do only sitting meditation. To prepare for sitting meditation, do as follows :

A man sits cross-legged on the floor with the right leg placed over the left leg. A woman can sit cross-legged or have both legs folded to one side. The important thing is that you should sit in a position that you feel comfortable so that your mind can be relaxed. Raise your hands and bring them together and place them at breast level, or between the eyebrows, and think of the following:

**“I am going to do a sitting meditation in order to pay homage to the Buddha, his teachings, his holy disciples, etc. ”** This is the same prayer that you make before practicing walking meditation. After that, lower both hands down onto your lap with both palms turning upward, right palm placed over left palm. Sit upright. Keep the mindfulness vigilant. Don't allow the mind to be distracted by feelings from outside that will overwhelm the mind with lust, revenge, or violence, which will subject the mind to fantasy, hatred, or rage unknowingly. Tell yourself that your body is here and your mind is also here, that you are now doing a sitting meditation, that you must stop thinking of things outside your body so that your mind can concentrate on the present. Be determined for the task ahead.

## **The First Method of Sitting Meditation**

With determination, focus your concentration on breathing the air in deeply while thinking ... BUD.

With determination, focus your concentration on breathing the air out deeply while thinking ... DHO.

With determination, focus your concentration on breathing the air in deeply while thinking ... DHAM.

With determination, focus your concentration on breathing the air out deeply while thinking ... MO.

With determination, focus your concentration on breathing the air in deeply while thinking ... SANG.

With determination, focus your concentration on breathing the air out deeply while thinking ... KHO.

Concentrate on saying the mantra-words for three to seven times or more. This is something that you must do in order to bring the Buddha, his teachings, and his holy disciples together in your mind. Afterward, use the mantra-words 'BUD' 'DHO' alone. You should inhale and exhale as if you are breathing normally. Let mindfulness stays pinned to the mantra-words and at the same time be conscious of

every breath. The mindfulness must be vigilant and never let a breath pass through the nostrils unknowingly.

With determination, focus your concentration on breathing the air in deeply while thinking ... BUD.

With determination, focus your concentration on breathing the air out deeply while thinking ... DHO.

If at any time you have not breathed the air in by yourself and simultaneously thinking BUD but the air has already passed inside, then you must be aware that, in that instant, your determination has lapsed and the mindfulness lacking. Likewise, if at any given moment you have not breathed the air out by yourself and simultaneously thinking of the mantra-words, at that moment your mindfulness is also lacking and the determination lost. Therefore, you must really make the effort to breathe the air in by yourself and breathe the air out by yourself. Whenever determination is lost, the concentration on the breathing will also be lost. So you must concentrate on your determination together with the mindfulness breathing the air in and simultaneously saying the mantra-words. And you must concentrate on your determination together with the mindfulness breathing the air out and simultaneously saying the mantra-words. Do it until your control over determination and mindfulness are mastered enough to cope with the tasks at hand. When you become more experienced, the mindfulness together with the knower (*the mind*) will be vigilant enough to keep the breathings and the mantra-words flowing together!

This exercise is quite fail-safe because when something is lagging you will notice it right away. At first, it will be difficult to keep everything going together but you must keep doing it, as often as possible. When you are more experienced, everything will seem very routine and your sitting meditation will proceed smoothly. In sitting meditation, 'mindfulness' and 'knower' will be trained to be vigilant by using each breath as its 'mental-marker'. When you are more advanced, you can omit the mantra-words and let the determination which is made up of mindfulness and the 'knower' (the mind) performing the task of breathing air in and out. Without mantra-words, the mind can sink deeper into calmness and becomes more refined; and, in turn, makes determination stronger.

## **The Second Method of Sitting Meditation**

For this concentration, you omit the mantra-words 'BUD' 'DHO', so that your determination, represented by the mindfulness, concentrate on the task of breathing the air in and out. When you breathe, if each breath is audible, then it can be said that the breath is coarse, so concentrate the coarse breaths. Afterward, when your breaths become more refined, that is less and less audible, be aware that it is getting to be refined and then concentrate on the refined breath. Continue to focus your concentration on the refined breaths until the refine-ness of the breaths reaches the maximum. At this stage, the mind is said to have reached 'Ekaggata-

romana', or 'confined feeling'. *The feeling is confined to the present, not in the past or in the future.*

When you are concentrating on the refined breaths, it means that your mind must have been in a refined state as well. The breaths are refined because the mind is refined. With a refined mind, each breath will also be refined. When the refine-ness of the mind and the refine-ness of the breaths becomes one, aura of the mind will appear from the body in various forms. For example, you will feel that the body become much larger than normal; the limbs, torso, and head, grow larger and larger and feels as if they will remain that size. While you are experiencing this, continue to focus the mindfulness on the refined breaths. Do not let your mind be distracted away unknowingly from the breathings. After about five minutes, the feeling of having a large body will go away by itself.

Sometimes you feel that the body is getting taller and taller.

Sometimes you feel that the body is getting shorter and shorter.

Sometimes you feel that the body is being turned around or being tilted from one side to the other.

All of these experiences occur even though you are still full of mindfulness. But whatever changes the body is experiencing, it is merely a phenomenon of the mind exhibiting itself through the body. This phenomenon of the mind will start and stop by itself.

Sometimes the breathings become fainter and fainter and each breath becomes less and less noticeable.

At this stage, those who are afraid of death will hurriedly withdraw from concentration. If this happens, you do not need to worry because it only means that the mind is reaching the deepest level of calmness or state of total calmness.

Keep your mindfulness vigilant and focus your concentration on the refinement of each breath without being distracted. When the breaths are refined, be aware that they are refined. When the breaths become very short, be aware that they are very short. Keep the concentration going until all breathings stop. You will probably wonder how you can still be alive because you can feel nothing physical at all. All you can feel is that you are still full of consciousness.

Sometimes there is a bright light going off in all directions from your body.

Sometimes the light illuminates a short distance from your body.

Sometimes it spreads out very far from your body.

'Your body' in this case is just the 'knower' *part of the mind*. There is nothing at all that is physical, just knowing and glowing brightly all around. The lightness of

the mind combining with the brightness of the mind will make you feel that everything is so bright and glittering all over in such a fantastic fashion.

There is nothing in this world that can be compared to this experience at all. The mind will stay in this calmness for about ten minutes and then it will withdraw from the total Calmness State and go back to a stage where you start breathing again. When the mind is completely calm, the happiness that exists in the mind is rather extraordinary. The body and the mind feel really light, and when combined with physical and mental happiness it feels as if one is about to be floating up into the air.

In this condition, people who have never contemplated with wisdom before will want to remain in this blissful experience. But for people who have practiced contemplation with wisdom before, total calmness will serve as a very sound foundation toward the path of wisdom. This blissful state will not be able to hold them back. For people with wisdom, calmness-concentration can be a great thing because it will help wisdom to contemplate the truth much faster.

**At this point, I would like to make one thing clear about the practice.** Like most practitioners practicing concentration, you will be full of hope and expectation that when a concentration reaches a state of calmness, wisdom will materialize. That is why most of the people try very hard to get into a state of calmness, and then, they can sit and wait for wisdom to materialize. But *if you take a careful note here you will see that* even for non-religious people, if they practice concentration they will be able to attain a state of total calmness.

But for the path of people who do not have wisdom, even though their calmness can reach the state of total calmness or 'Samapatti', the most they will get out of it will be just physical and mental happiness. They may, perhaps, experience some 'extraordinary phenomena' or 'abhinna' so that they can see events that occurred in the past or foresee events that will occur in the future. Or, they will be able to see things that ordinary eyes can not see, hear things that ordinary ears can not hear, accomplish extraordinary feats, or possess ability to read minds of people or animals. Those people will easily become addicted to such knowledge without even realizing it. And such knowledge can easily lure people into thinking that they have attained enlightenment.

During Buddha's time, a group of thirty monks went into the jungle to practice concentration. When their minds attained a state of total calmness they became very happy, physically and mentally. And when they were able to prolong the calmness for many days, they all felt that they were completely free from lust and desires. Finally, they all thought that they were totally devoid of defilement (kilesa), desire (tanha), and Ignorance of Reality (avijja), hence, attain enlightenment. With such belief, they all agreed to go and pay homage to the Buddha so that the Buddha would confirm their achievements.

At the end of the journey when they almost reached the entrance of the temple where the Buddha resided at the time, the Buddha told his aid, Venerable Ananda,

to go and tell the thirty monks to take refuge in a nearby cemetery first and the Buddha would summon them later. Venerable Ananda went to see them and after delivered the message the thirty monks went into the cemetery. There they saw a corpse of a young lady who had died recently, lying there as if she was sleeping, without a single item of clothing to cover her exposed body. The thirty monks rushed in and circled around the corpse, taking a look at it with great curiosity.

The more they looked, the more they became overwhelmed by carnal desires. The fire of lust broke out inside their minds once again. As a result, the self-proclaimed enlightened persons all came to realization that they were still ordinary people who were full of carnal desires, cravings, and ignorance of reality. With the help of the decaying corpse, they contemplated what they saw with ordinary wisdom until they could see that things were subjected to the 'three common characteristics', meaning that *things were full of sufferings, subjected to changes, and subjected to transform into earth, water, wind, or fire.*

Looking at the corpse, the thirty monks pondered with ordinary wisdom until they could see things the way they really were, thus, attaining 'Vipassana-yana' or 'Knowledge of the truth' in their minds. Eventually, they all achieved enlightenment while waiting to be summoned by the Buddha in that cemetery.

**Now do you see that calmness-concentration is very misleading?** Even in the Buddha's time, a lot of people still misunderstood the results of calmness-concentration. Once people are misled into such beliefs, they will be stuck with the wrong views permanently unless someone who has been through the right path is there to correct the mistake. If the episode of the thirty monks happens today, there will be nobody at all to correct the mistake. The self-proclaimed enlightened persons will remain in such predicament until death.

Since there are no recently dead and exposed corpses laying around in cemeteries nowadays, when people want to practice, they usually practice calmness-concentration and then wait for wisdom to materialize into the mind. They will wonder, from the very beginning up to the end, why wisdom never materializes. Despite a lot of grumbling and waiting or going into concentration times after times, wisdom is still as elusive as ever. You can go all the way into deep concentration but you will never find wisdom. And you will be so discouraged.

**Therefore, I would like you to do a research into the scriptures and try to find out the following: Who, during the Buddha's time, practiced nothing but concentration and achieved enlightenment?**

Besides the people like the thirty monks in the story above, if you care to study the backgrounds of the enlightened ones you will find that all of them were people who possessed wisdom even before they had met the Buddha.

Even today, there are teachers who have achieved purity. You will find that all of them use wisdom contemplation first and then go for calmness concentration. And when they exit calmness, **they would start contemplating the truth the way**

**things really are in all things, be they, tangible or intangible until things are seen as sufferings, subjected to changes, and subjected to transform into something else. They will never sit or lay idling and just wait for wisdom to come into their minds. That is why there is such a big gap between them and the rest of us.**

It is like when you have dug so many holes in the ground intending to plant coconut trees and then do nothing but just sit and wait for coconut trees to grow out of those holes by themselves. Will that be possible? Or if you want to grow some fruit trees but you do not go out and buy some saplings so you can grow them. Will they grow by themselves? These are just a few facts for you to ponder.

### **The Third Method of Sitting Meditation**

With determination, concentrate on a part of the body by using it as a 'mental marker' or 'nimitta' of the concentration. You can choose any part of the body to be the 'mental marker' or 'focus' of the concentration but it must be the part that you are familiar with and easy to concentrate on. Let the mindfulness and the knower (the mind) concentrate on it without being distracted away unknowingly.

Even though breathings and mantra-words are still parts of this exercise, you may pay less attention to them because if you still pay too much attention to them, the mental image of the body part will become blurry. The mind will be distracted away from the body part and fail to focus on it at all. Hence, it is imperative that the mindfulness together with the 'knower' remains focused on the mental image at all time.

The part you choose can be any part of the body; it can be a birthmark or an old scar. It can come from the front part of the body or the back of it. But it must be your own choice so that you will not feel uncomfortable or feel that you have to look at anything you do not like.

In the beginning, try to imagine an image that very closely resembles the part of the body in your mind with realistic colors, shapes, and textures; imagine its position on the body, skin that surrounds the part and all. If you can not visualize all the details, it is because your determination is still insufficient and the mindfulness is still weak.

As such, make the part small enough so you can take one look and see everything at the same time. It is like threading a needle: as long as you still see the whole needle and a part of the thread, you will never be able to thread the needle. However, if you focus your eyes on the hole of the needle and the tip of the thread, you will be able to push the thread through the hole easily.

**Similarly, when you concentrate on a part of the body that you make it up in your mind. Limit the size so that the part can be focused by the mindfulness all at once.** At first, it is just a picture that you imagine in your mind but later on

when you are more experienced you will see it as if you see with your eyes. When you are familiar with one part, you can try doing it on other parts.

Eventually, you will be able to make the whole body decaying right before you eyes. You can even make the whole body decaying until it becomes just skeletons. Concentration on parts of the body will be very helpful when you go into contemplation with wisdom.

Concentration of a part of the body gives the mind something to latch on. The mind is like a bird that flies in the sky, the bird must find a tree to come down to so it can rest and recuperate, so the mind will need a part of the body to give its mindfulness something to focus on. When the mind latches onto a body part, it will not wander here and there like it used to in the past.

## **The Fourth Method of Sitting Meditation**

With determination, concentrate on an emotion that comes into your mind so it can be seen clearly. The practice here is the same as in the fourth method of walking meditation, but this time you focus your concentration on the emotion while you are sitting still in stead of walking so you can see it vividly because there is no swaying of the body. Without the swaying, it will be a lot easier and you will see the emotion in more details. You will see happy feeling clearly. You will see unhappy feeling clearly. You will also see neutral feeling clearly. Whether it is feeling of lust or desire, you will see them clearly.

Whatever emotions you may have can be causes as well as effects. They can be either causes or effects regardless of whether it was in the past, at the present, or in the future. *The roles are changeable like a spot on a wheel changes position when the wheel turns.* As 'continuity' or 'Santati' of happiness and unhappiness keeps streaming into the mind, it becomes impossible to tell where one ends or where the other begins.

The feelings keep coming until you can not tell whether it is a new feeling or it is an old one. When you can not tell, you just assume that whatever the feeling is, you feel it for the first time. This is 'Avijja' or 'ignorance of reality'. It means you are ignorant of the fact that what goes on now has been going on in your life for countless of times in the past. You are deluded by the world and you are deluded by the cycle of rebirths, all because you are deluded even by your own emotions. Emotions are not defilement but **defilement is what causes loving or hateful feeling to come into your mind.**

**Therefore, when you concentrate on a feeling, you will see the feeling in your mind so that you will use wisdom to investigate the cause of such feeling.** When you know everything about the feeling, you will be able to block off supply routes and destroy the bridge that defilement and desire normally use. If you can not trace the feeling to its cause, you will never know how to prevent it from happening. It is like when you want a knife to be sharp, you must sharpen it; or if you do not want the heat, you must extinguish the fire. **When the mind suffers,**



**you must find a way to stop suffering by not allowing it to happen in the first place.**

**When the mind suffers, suffered feeling clouds the mind with emotions. You will find the mind where you can find emotions. When you can feel emotions, that is where you will find the mind. Thus, if you want to know something about the mind, you must be able to get a hold of the feeling. Just as fire and heat are inseparable, so are the mind and emotions.**

When you concentrate on emotions, you need not focus on them very long. Just focus long enough to find out what the causes of the feelings are, then you can stop and start to contemplate the causes that you have found with wisdom. It is like when you have discovered where the enemies are; you can start shooting at them right away. Or when you spot a deer nearby, you do not need to aim too long. Or when you see a fire starting to burn, you must find a way to extinguish it.

Therefore, concentration of feelings will help you to see feelings in your mind so that you can contemplate them with wisdom in order to eradicate defilement and desire that come into your mind in the guise of insatiable hunger for sensual pleasures. From there, let wisdom destroy all connections to the cycle of rebirths and put a stop to the endless rebirths into this world once and for all.

Eradication of defilement and desire can become possible only because you discover the causes of defilement and desire. It is like you have discovered the main camp of defilement and desire, so all you have to do is to point all the big guns i.e. mindfulness, wisdom, and industriousness toward it and bombard them until every bit of them are vaporized out of existence.

It is like in a war; people will look for strategic locations. Or when a boxer is in the ring, he will look for a weak spot on his opponent to deliver punches so he can win. But in any fight, you may win or lose; but if you lose, you must try again until you can win. Such is the right attitude for a practitioner. But if you do not exercise your mindfulness and wisdom very often and let defilement and desire have its way all the time, you will be thrashed around so badly by defilement and desire such that you will never have a chance to win.

Therefore, you must strive to be a practitioner with pride. You must have the determination to destroy all defilement from your mind. To do so, you must set your compass directly toward the feelings inside the mind and try to cleanse the mind from all defilement and desire that is in there.

## **Contemplation with Wisdom**

From this point on, I will explain the concept of contemplation with wisdom.

**In contemplation, the subjects that you will contemplate involve mainly with body-parts and feelings, the same as what you have learned in the third or fourth method of walking-meditation or sitting-meditation.**

## Contemplation of the Body

You need to contemplate the body because you want your mind to learn the truth about the body. Make it look at the body the way it really is so that the mind will be free from delusion, thinking that the body is 'you' or 'self'. And, at the same time, let the mind realize that the body is the cause for all physical sufferings. With the realization, the mind will cease to see the body as something important because it will see the body as earth, water, wind, or fire. The reason that the world regards the body as 'self' is because the world does not know the truth about the body. Therefore, contemplation of the body will let the mind see the body from a new angle so that the mind will have enough evidence to convince itself and be able to accept the truth of wisdom about the body.

**The scope of contemplation of the body is limitless. One tool you can make use of in contemplation is 'Memory' or 'Sanya'.** In your memory, there will be plenty of things in there but you must know what to recall so that wisdom can do something useful with it and also because if you do it incorrectly you can put yourself in a peril. Memory is like a double-edged sword or a fire; it can be harmful as well as useful. The idea applies to memories of sights, sounds, smells, tastes, or touches. If you recall something and you think of it in the fashion that will promote unwholesome thoughts, the memory can become a poison and cause a lot of pain to the mind. Besides, it will also cause defilements and desires to blossom inside the mind and become instrumental for 'imagination' or 'sankhara' to fabricate sights, sounds, smells, tastes and touches into something more desirable within the mind. Not only that, it makes your mind become so delighted with all the fun, associated with the lustful activities, that come into the mind. But on the other hand, when sights, sounds, smells, tastes or touches are recalled and you let wisdom have the control of those memories, wisdom will make you see things as full of sufferings, subjected to changes, or subjected to transformation into something else instead. When the mind can see things the wisdom's way, that is, see things the way they really are, then, it will be bored with all the pleasures and become wearied with anything that has to do with lust.

## Ignorance of Reality

Therefore, when you recall anything you must let wisdom teach your mind how to see things the wisdom's way. If you allow defilements and desires to have influence on the mind, they will make the mind see things their way only. When you see a body, that body will always look desirable; 'imagination' or 'sankhara' will keep adding all the good points such as it is a good body, it is beautiful, and so on in order to make the mind see the way defilement and desire wants it to see. When the mind is in a complying mood, imagination will keep recalling images from the past that the mind likes and keeps the mind entertained. This can go on for days and nights and it can stretch into years. Actually, the mind has been entertained for eons and eons in the past. The mind still enjoys all those pleasures today and will be enjoying them very far into the future.

The same thing applies to sounds: when defilement and craving makes the mind hear anything, those sounds will always be full of fun and jolly. The mind will get all the pleasures from listening to those sounds. As for the smells, tastes, and touches, 'sankhara' or 'imagination' also keeps itself very busy. Bad smelling things are made to smell sweet. Unhappy affairs are made to look very happy. Things that are subjected to changes are made to look like they are permanent. Things (*eg. body*) that are subjected to 'anattata' i.e. subjected to transform into something else is made to look as if it will never transform into earth, water, wind, or fire and will always remain the 'same objects that they always are' or 'atta'. The mind already blinded by 'ignorance of reality' or 'Avijja' will be content with all these pleasures.

Even though sufferings always follow all the joys, the mind never seem to repent of those sufferings. Even though it has been deceived and cheated by defilement and desire for ages, it is still not aware of the unwholesome and dangerous consequences and keeps asking for more. As such, if you let defilement and desire has controls over sights, sounds, smells, etc. that you recall from memory you will always end up in these predicaments. It does not matter whether people are rich or poor; they all end up in these predicaments. Regardless of 'periods of time in the past' (*Kappa*) or 'life-forms' (*Bhava*) that you were born into, if the mind still has faith in defilement and desire, its rewards will be tears.

**Therefore, when 'sanya' or 'memory' recalls sights, sounds, smells, tastes, or touches into the mind, whether they are from to the past, future or present--- you must let wisdom make the mind see that those things are full of sufferings, subjected to changes, or bound to transform into earth, water, wind, or fire.** It is incumbent on you to see things in its terms i.e. full of sufferings, changes, or eventually transform into earth, water, wind, and fire. In the case you contemplate the body, you must see it as possessing all these three criteria. In the past, the mind always sees things the way defilement and desire set things up for the mind to see. So now it is time to purge the old knowledge and replace it with the truth of the wisdom. The truth will present itself as sufferings, changes, or transformation from present state into earth, water, wind, or fire.

## **The Non-Self**

In contemplation, if you reflect your own body---you can try to see it as subjected to sufferings, changes, or transform into basic elements in order to purge your belief that the body is the 'Self' or 'Atta' that has been going on for a long time. To see things easier, you must take apart your body into parts. Make the mind differentiate between coarse parts viz. the flesh vs. the refined part viz. the mind. The mind will learn that the coarse parts are those that are nourished by coarse food e.g. rice, fish, meat, vegetables, etc.; whereas the refined part or the mind will take its food from the senses which belong to the body as its nourishment.

*[Throughout this book, a human being must be thought of as a collective of five faculties---one physical faculty viz. the body or flesh and four mental faculties viz.*

*feeling, memory, imagination, and consciousness. Body and mind, together, is called 'Khanda' in Pali.]*

**So, you can see that you must change nourishment for the mind because the old nourishment gives the mind the wrong idea about 'Self'. To offer a new food, you can contemplate the body and make the mind see the truth the way it really is.** The body that comes in the forms of sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches have deluded the mind for ages is none other than those of your own. Once your own body deludes you, you will easily be deluded by those of others', seeing them as something lovely and sexy, something that is pretty and nice to touch. When they make sounds, those sounds are entertaining, joyful and pleasant. All the smells of the bodies are sweet and enticing. The tastes are so good; you can never have enough of them. The touches are so enticing you will never want to forego of. When you are used to longing for all these sensations, your quest for the truth about the body will become weak. This kind of view is so biased! Such view is like a knife that cuts one's own throat because you are too stupid to use it in useful manners.

## **Traversing the Current**

However, you must fight fire with fire, using these same sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches and make them teach your mind something useful. It is like *traversing the current* that tries to push you downstream. For example, if the mind is infatuated with the body, use the body as a subject for contemplation. Try to make the mind see it as earth, water, wind, or fire. From parts that are made of earth, take them apart into pieces in your mind. While you are taking them apart, take a careful look at each part in your mind so you can see it the way it really is every time.

**This is the reason why I made you learned concentration on the body in the previous chapter. Now that you can see each part of your body in your mind, you can contemplate it *until you can see each part as suffering, impermanence, or subjected to transform into something else.*** If you contemplate the body without seeing the body in your mind's eyes, it will be difficult to make it feel weary of the body. But if you contemplate the body so that your mind can see every bit of the body conforming to the truth that it is suffering, subjected to changes, or subjected to transform into something else, then the mind will be totally convinced. So now you can understand why the mind never learn the truth when you tried to recite the scriptures to it so many times in the past.

When you contemplate the body and let the mind learn the truth along with wisdom, you can now claim that you are full of knowledge and insight. For example, when you contemplate hair, body hair, fingernails, teeth, skin, etc.---make the mind see hair, body hair, fingernails, teeth, skin, etc. with its inner eyes and know that each of them is full of suffering, impermanence, subjected to transform into something else. If you contemplate flesh, sinew, bone, etc.---make sure that the mind know and see the truth of flesh, sinew, bone, etc. If you slice

each part off your body with a knife in your mind, make your mind see each part of the body clearly. Contemplate each part until the mind see it as suffering, impermanence, and subjected to transform into something else.

You can find suffering, changes, or transformation of things or people anywhere, for example, hospitals, jails, or state penitentiaries. Those are sufferings that you see in others. If you look at yourself, you can always find plenty of sufferings, be they physical or mental.

## The World of Suffering

Anyone who is born into this world will experience sufferings no matter whether they are rich or poor. For example, you must have experienced headache, eyes-ache, muscle-ache, leg-pain, waist-pain, and all sorts of aches and pains. The more parts you have, the more aches and pains you will have. Sometimes those aches and pain can be mild; sometimes they can be chronic. You suffer because you must perform a lot of physical activities. You suffer because you have to work for a living. You must keep doing all these things for days, for months, for years, for the whole life until the day you die. You will go through many illnesses that sometimes you barely escape with your life. But if you manage to escape then, it will not be for long.

Sufferings start from the day you are conceived in your mother's womb. You suffer when you are inside the womb. You suffer when you emerge into the world. You will suffer right until the end, that is, the day you die. But after death, you will be born again so that you will suffer again. What you will have to go through will be the same old suffering. You will pretend that you are not by trying to find things to conceal them up. But you will fail because sufferings take place within the mind, not the body.

When the mind does not want sufferings, it will try to find things to make them go away. This means that the mind desires something and it tries to accomplish its desire. When the body does things that the mind tells it to do, it encounters suffering. That suffering will become suffering when it is felt by the mind. Hence, the mind does order its own suffering, only it does not know that what it does causes suffering.

**Contemplation of the body will enable you to know what 'Self' is or what 'belongs to the Self'. And the mind will know the cause of sufferings and where sufferings take place.** Suffering needs elements for its existence. *Elements here refer to earth, water, wind, and fire.* It is born out of elements. It needs elements to keep going. And at the end, it goes back to the elements. You can say that above is the life story of the body! The body that you are living in now comes into being when it is born, maintains its existence in the middle, and passes away in the end. Right now, you are in the middle because you have already been born. Death is encroaching nearer with each passing day. Life is getting shorter. Every part of the body functions so you can be alive day by day. Soon, the body and the mind will part company.

Except for suffering, nothing is born. Only suffering *in the guise of the body* that is born.

Except for suffering, nothing passes away. Only suffering *in the guise of the body* passes away.

Even in living, nothing except suffering in the guise of the body is living.

Suffering starts at the moment of conception. There is nothing in the process that hails the significance of the body. It just happens when a drop of oily liquid from father and a drop of oily liquid from mother mix together and form a drop of blood. When a drop of blood grows into a lump of flesh, five buds grow out of it: one for the head, two for the arms and two for the legs. When the head grows up, there will be ears, eyes, a mouth, and a tongue. When arms and legs grow up, there will be fingers and toes. In the body, there will be hair, body hair, fingernails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, bone marrow, spleen, heart, liver, lungs, colon, intestine, and bile, phlegm, lymph, blood, sweat, solid fat, tears, liquid fat, saliva, mucous and urine. All these parts come from a small lump in the mother's womb. So, what is it about the body that you can hold on to as being so important?

When it is due, the infant will emerge from its mother to be laid helplessly inside a cradle. It is just a reddish thing that does not understand even the language of its parents. Even then it is full of sufferings, crying all the time. The body is undergoing 'Anatta' or 'changes' from the day it became a drop of blood. Wherever there is 'suffering' or 'dukkha', there will always be 'changes'. 'Anatta' or 'the state before or after a body comes into existence' keeps denying that the body is 'Self' or 'belonging to self' all the time. But due to the lack of wisdom, you can not fathom the meaning so you just presume that the body is the 'Self'. Even the 'elements' or 'dhatu' or each part of the body keep denying that they are the 'Self'; only that you fail to receive the message. As such, when any of the parts fail you will suffer because you only want happiness to last forever. Hence, if you take a long look at the body and see it as 'suffering', how can it be anything otherwise?

After suffering is born into the world, it will be necessary for oneself to find all the nice and pleasant things to relieve all the sufferings so that you can manage to survive each passing day of your life. But when the time comes, there will be no medicines that can cure body from death. Everybody will go back and become elements again. With just the body without the mind, the body will have no value whatsoever. Places for the body without the mind will be just a cemetery or a crematorium. How much can it be worth? If it were given away for free, nobody would take it. Even if large sums of money were offered, nobody would take a body without mind home and sleep with it. Thus, I would like you to take a long look at the body and contemplate all the details carefully. You will see that the saying, "From the soles of the feet upward or from the tips of the hair downward -- beneath all the skins, the body is full of parts that are unclean" is so true.

It must be true that the body is unclean because it originates in an unclean place and made of unclean ingredients. It stays immersed in an unclean place for many months before it can get out. Even after that, it will be fed with unclean things. Mother's milk, for instance, is one of them but the body will need it. Look at all kinds of food it has to eat, they are all unclean. Any food, if not eaten, will become putrid and rotting away. All food ingredients are made from elements and they are still elements in whatever forms they assume. After they are cooked into food, the food is still collective of elements or food-elements. You eat food because you want to replenish the body-elements with food-elements. One lot of elements gives nourishment to another lot of elements so life can go on. You can lavish plenty of nutritious and delicious food and desserts on the body, but the body can only take in so much at each meal. Even if you lavish all the good food to the body, **not only that it will not help to keep the body in its youthful condition but it can not stop the body from aging! The body will never follow anybody's command.** Even if you had a lot of money and properties, your body would still be older each day and it would not listen to any pleas from anyone. Illnesses will help confirm your condition: the older you become, the more illnesses you will get. With aging and illnesses coming together, your miseries will multiply rapidly. Even after all these hints from the body, all of us are still very blind to the truth about the body.

**It is so because you lack wisdom to understand the truth about your own body. That is why you always try to find all kinds of things to cover it up.** You can decorate body with ornaments, dress it up, paint it up, or spend millions on plastic surgery; but nothing is going to stop the body from aging or getting sick because this is the nature of the body. **Eventually, all will die and go back into elements, piling on top of each other on the surface of this world. Even if you have millions you can not find anyone to perform a rite that will prevent you from death.** It is just natural for the body to revert back to elements when its time is due. Therefore, you can not forbid or force the body to become what it is not meant to be because that is the way that things work. For example, you cannot command the eyes not to become blind or the ears not to become deaf. Nor can you force the hair, body hair, fingernails, teeth or skin, to remain in their former conditions forever.

**The body will undergo sufferings, changing until death then transforms into earth, water, wind, or fire. Even if you are reborn again, you will age, sick, and die all over again. As often as there is birth: aging, sickness, and death will follow that many times. It would not be wrong to say that this is a world of births and deaths.** Once you are born, instead of fulfilling the dream of a happy life, life that you live happily with your children and grand children, or life that have all the fun and wild time indulging in the pleasures of the senses; you will most likely end up with a lot disappointments and dashed hopes. And while your mental appetites still hunger for sensual gratification, it is time for you to hurry off to meet with death. It would not be incorrect to say that this is a world of disappointments.

**That is why you must use all kinds of disappointments as subjects for contemplation so that your mind will see things the way they really are in the world.** Let those events put fear into your mind about birth, aging, sickness and death that never end. Let them remind you that you have experienced countless birth, aging, sickness and death a long way back into the past and you are still destined to suffer many more birth, aging, sickness, and death, in the future. Why do you have to endure all these sufferings? Do you not ever get fed up with all these hassles? In whatever reincarnations or whatever life-forms you assume, you would come inside a body that is made from earth, water, wind, and fire; same as before. And you would be subjected to suffering physically and mentally, all the changes, and finally transform back into earth, water, wind, or fire; same as before.

**Even if you have managed to acquire a large or a small amount of wealth, all the wealth still belongs to the world because they come with the world. They are there to be exploited and used. You can make use of them while you are here in this world.** In your previous lives you have used all these possessions of the world. In this life you are using them. And you will be using them again in the future lives. Each time you will be separated from these possessions when you die. Those who remain will get to use them and they will also end up reverting into earth, water, wind and fire, all the same.

**If you use the Buddha or any Self-Enlightened ones as a model, you will see that before any of them attain enlightenment they would have to rely on their own worldly wisdom.** They must teach their minds until their minds can accept the facts that the body arises from elements, depends on elements for its existence, and after death turns back into elements. There is nothing about the body that is so significant. It is just like a water bubble, rising for a while then disappears. Or it is just like rising hot air that when one tries to touch it, it just disappears.

## **The Window of Self**

In contemplation, you must try to compare others' bodies to your own. You must see others as elements. You must see yourself as elements. Even when you see animals, living or dead ones, you must see them as elements and try to compare their parts of the body to that of yours until you can see that all are made from the same basic elements: earth, water, wind, or fire. If you compare your body to the body of dead ones, you will see that all dead ones used to be alive once but only that life has gone out from them now. Even though you are alive now, you will be dead some day and will be in the same predicament that the dead ones are in today, that is, your body will transform into earth, water, wind, or fire, eventually.

**Regardless of whether it is human or animals, all are subjected to rising, maintaining existence, and passing away. There is nothing in the body that you can point to as 'you' or 'yours'.** You can use any materials from the past, future, or present; whether the materials are nearby or from far away; whether they are physical or mental, yours or others', alive or dead. The important thing is that you must see to it that the body is a vehicle that put you through all of the perils of



life. Whatever that you cherish in life are short-lived. There is nothing in the world that you can make sense of. You must search your mind and make it see that all matters in this world are full of sufferings, subjected to changes, or subjected to transform into something insignificant, *that is, earth, water, wind, or fire.*

## **The Strength of Mind**

When contemplation makes you tired, you can stop and do a concentration so that the mind can rest and regain its strength. When the mind has enough rest, you can contemplate again. The subject of contemplation can be the same as before. You can sit down and contemplate or you can contemplate while you are walking. Suppose you select ‘suffering’ as the subject for contemplation, you must let the mind learn of sufferings that come from physical origins and mental origins. If you contemplate ‘impermanence’, while you are digging up changes within the body, changes within the mind or changes that accompany all things in the world make sure that the mind knows what you are trying to do and see all the changes that are taking place. If you contemplate the body to see that it will eventually transform into basic elements, make sure that the mind knows that it is so and see the body transform into earth, water, etc. right in front of it. If you contemplate ‘not-so-pretty’ or ‘asubha’ aspect of the body, you must make sure that the mind know and see how each part of the body are made from dirty element(s), surrounded by dirt, etc. If you contemplate dirty or rotten aspect of the body, make sure that the mind know that it is dirty and rotten and see that it is dirty and rotten. **Whatever you think of anything according to logic and reasons, you must make sure that the mind digests every bit of that information.**

This is similar to a teacher teaching students. If the teacher wants students to learn anything, the teacher will have to keep them alert. If the students fall asleep, they will never understand anything and the teacher will be exhausted without the students learning anything. As such, if the mind falls asleep and fails to digest what wisdom is trying to teach, even if wisdom teaches it nights and days, teaches it while standing up, teaches it while walking, teaches it while sitting down or laying down, the mind will never learn anything. The mind will never know or see that the body is full of sufferings, subjected to changes, or subjected to transform into something else. Even though the body is ugly and full of rotten parts, the mind will never know that they are so, or see that they are so. With the mind neither knows nor sees, how can it be made to feel weary of suffering, weary of impermanence, or weary of transformation into something else? And, how can it be made to be weary of the body, either your own or those of others?

**Let ordinary wisdom teaches the mind to be clever and knowledgeable so that it will realize the peril one has to endure while going through endless cycles of birth, aging, sickness, and death.** You must contemplate birth so the mind knows and sees what suffering birth will bring. You must contemplate aging so the mind knows and sees what suffering aging will bring. You must contemplate sickness so the mind knows and sees what suffering sickness will bring. You must contemplate death so the mind knows and sees what death will bring.

## The Right Time is Any Time

In contemplation, you must not wait for the right time; wherever you are you should be able to contemplate. Do not set a condition that you must do a sitting meditation or walking meditation first before you can contemplate. If you have to wait for the right condition, you will either miss the chance to deal with the problem directly or you will be too late to cope with the situation that has arisen in the mind already. This is because defilement, desire, lust, greed, anger, or delusion can come into the mind and cause suffering any time. So, you must be ready to fend them off with contemplation whenever the situation calls for. If you allow defilement and desire to wreak havoc until they are finished first and then contemplate later. How can you prevent all the damages caused by defilement and desire? That will be like when the cattle have eaten all the young rice shoots already, then you decide to put up a fence around the rice paddy. It will be too late, will it not? As such, if you let defilement and desire to corrupt the mind until it surrenders completely to the worldly ways, then and only then, you start doing a walking meditation, start doing a sitting meditation, or start letting wisdom to clean up the mess. Then, it will be too late, will it not?

**People who are good and pure, who know and see the truth the way they really are, are not like us. They do not wait for the right time. Wherever they are mindfulness and wisdom will always be there to protect their minds.** They will always be full of mindfulness and wisdom no matter what. If anything comes into their eyes, ears, nose, tongue or body, it will be contemplated until it is seen as earth, water, wind, or fire. Simultaneously, it will be contemplated until it is seen as sufferings, full of changes, and subjected to transform into something else. If their ears detect a sound, that sound will be contemplated until it is seen as sufferings, impermanence, or subjected to transform *into silence*. If they smell something sweet or repugnant, they will contemplate those smells. If they eat some food or dessert, they will contemplate those food or dessert. They will perceive the whole business of eating as one element gives nourishment to another element, not as something to make the body beautiful or attractive. If they touch anything soft or hard, whatever feelings that arise out of it will be regarded as something that initiate suffering, changeable, or may transform *from something pleasant into something quite irritable*. If happiness is felt, they will contemplate happiness until it can be seen that happiness is the cause of unhappiness. Actually, happiness and suffering are just two parts of the same item. If they see animals they will contemplate animals. What they see in animals will be the same as what they see in themselves. All they will see will be just earth, water, wind, or fire in stead of animals or themselves; they will see birth, aging, sickness, and death; they will see arising, existing, and passing away; which happen to all lives, be they humans or animals.

**Like the sages, when you go out and see dead animals, you may use dead animals for contemplation.** Dead animals are not any different from you who are still alive. They experienced most of the things you are going through now. They had to struggle to make a living, just like you. They hated suffering and loved happiness, just like you. They arose out of elements, used elements to support their

existences, just like you. And when they passed away, they transformed back into earth, water, wind, and fire, just like you. In the case you see a dead person, you can contemplate the dead person. You can compare everything that a dead person has to everything that you who are still alive have. It has a head as you do. It has eyes, ears, a nose, a tongue, teeth, and hair, as you do. It has arms and legs, as you do. Whatever dead people have, compare them to the parts that belong to you. Please be warned that you must go through all the fine details; do not take a short cut, otherwise, you will never be able to convince the mind. When you compare the dead body to yours, you can follow this line of thinking: **the dead one was born and went on with his life all the way till the end i.e. until he died. You were born already, now you are going through life that will end too when you die. Anybody who is living today will be destined to meet with death one day. Even for people in future generations, they will be born and live their lives; and one day they, too, will die.**

You must prepare yourself so you will be ready to contemplate whatever comes up any time. You must be able to contemplate in any sitting positions. You must be able to contemplate while you are walking. You must be able to contemplate while you are standing. You must be able to contemplate while you are lying down. The main thing is that you must, in the end, see things in the forms of suffering, impermanence, or subjected to transform into something else. Make sure that the mind follows the reasoning of the ordinary wisdom and comprehend the truth the way they really are every time.

Besides living entities, you can contemplate objects in your possessions, be it money, natural or man-made objects. Select an object in your possessions and contemplate it with wisdom. Pick an object and let ordinary wisdom tells the mind why it can not see any object that is really yours. Let ordinary wisdom shows the mind that the object is full of suffering, subjected to changes, or easily transforms into something meaningless. Whenever you see anything as yours and it is legally yours, then in your mind it is really yours. So when the object got lost, destroyed by flood or fire, or stolen, you would suffer a great deal. **The Buddha said, “Whatever that one clings to as belonging to oneself, yet never brings any suffering, does not exist in this world”.** *So when you think carefully, you will see that* there are plenty of sufferings involved in acquiring the possessions; plenty of sufferings trying to keep them safe; plenty of sufferings involved when any of them become lost. Furthermore, there are plenty of sufferings involved when you become fearful of parting with the possessions or when your adversaries are awarded with what you consider as yours in a legal battle.

## **Prepare to Write Your Own Scriptures**

In contemplation with ordinary wisdom, you must not use the knowledge from the scriptures to teach the mind. Scriptures are guidance how things ought to be. You can not discard them either. But in order to exercise the ordinary wisdom, you must depend on materials that you face in your daily life or materials that come to you in different places. This is because in different places, you will be faced with

different materials. For example, in one place you may see a person crying, in another place you may see a person laughing, in the other place you may see a person dropping dead in front of you. Here, you may see a dead animal; there, a sexy lady; here, a poisonous snake; there, a whirlpool; here, a crocodile; there, a tiger; here, water bubbles; there, rising waves of hot air; here, a flood; there, a burning house. You will see different thing at different location. Hence, you must exercise the ordinary wisdom by contemplating whatever material in front of you. Let ordinary wisdom uses the material as a mirror to show you that you are not any different, either physically or mentally, to anything else in the world because all things in the world must possess any or all of these characteristics: sufferings, changes, or eventually, subjected to transform into earth, water, wind, or fire.

**Here, you can see that ordinary wisdom can teach your mind anything that you can focus on. Therefore, when you contemplate anything, you must be full of reasons and try to investigate things so that you know and see everything the way they really are.** Your worldly knowledge that you have attained up to now merely consists of materials that you have learnt from past experiences and now are stored inside as memories. But you can use this ordinary knowledge to help ordinary wisdom to analyze things in accordance with reasons. Let the analysis run until it arrives at the truth, and at the same time, let the mind know and see things the way they really are. Let ordinary wisdom probes into whatever memory that comes to the mind until you can see it as suffering, impermanence, or see it as something else. After such an exercise, the mind can now accept things the way they really are, be it things in this life or any life in the future. You can think of this knowledge as the kind that will make you enlightened --- enlighten about the world, enlighten about all animals of the world, and enlighten about people of this world. This is the kind of wisdom that will root out old delusions in your mind and destroy them! For example, if you remember an image of a person that you are fond of, the wisdom will make you see it as sufferings, impermanence, or subjected to transformation. With such wisdom, you can be under any circumstances and you can still be able to teach your mind to see the truth the way it really is.

## **Contemplation of Feelings**

You need to be able to contemplate feelings. You need to know feelings so you can send in wisdom to deal with the problems at the right place. You must find out how they happen and what the causes are. Feelings are like thermometers that measure the ups and downs of the mind which, indirectly, measure the amount of defilement and desire that exist inside the mind. If the mind is full of carnal cravings, feelings that show up inside the mind will be those of carnal cravings. If the mind is overwhelmed with desire, feeling of desire will show up inside the mind. If the mind is full of lust, lustful feelings will show up inside the mind. If the mind is overwhelmed with anger, angry feelings will be boiling inside the mind. Hence, feelings can indicate whether the mind is full of base or noble thoughts!

You can tell that the mind is base when it is full of lustful thoughts. You can tell that the mind is base when it is full of superiority complex. These feelings are not defilement or desire; they are just the reflections of defilement or desire, just like a fire and its heat. When the mind is filled with a certain kind of defilement and desire, a corresponding feeling will show up inside the mind. Hence, if the mind likes what it feels, it will be happy; if it does not like what it feels it will be unhappy.

**So, contemplation of feeling will let ordinary wisdom investigate your mind to see what is going on in there and how defilement and desire relate to the problems.** In the case that you want to extinguish a fire, you must know first where the fire is and then you must know what helps it to spread out. Or if you want to destroy the bandits, you must know where they hide themselves, how they operate, and who their leaders are.

In the case of the mind, you must know that the mind is never alone; lustful desire keeps its fire burning inside the mind perpetually. Whether the desire will be severe or not so severe depends on external stimulants. The root cause of lustful desire is none other than craving that the mind has. With the mind occupied by the craving, you will have to offer some sights or sounds to gratify it. **If you can not find the real sights or sounds, sights or sounds from your imagination will suffice. Imagination can put anyone you like into the mind, it can be a movie star or a super model. Once the mind gets what it wants, it will be pleased and will be in a pleasant mood along with defilement and desire.** When lust flares up within the mind, the mind will suffer. Therefore, you will need to contemplate so you can find the leader of the bandits who causes all the sufferings. You need to lock up the leader of the bandits who, in this case, is called 'Avijja' or 'ignorance of reality'! The 'ignorance of reality' is what causes the mind to succumb to delusions.

## **Ignorance of Reality**

With delusions, the mind will do anything. It will not know what is right or wrong. It will not know whether some of its actions will be proper or not. Whatever the mind fancies, it will go ahead and do it. Whatever it wants, it will go ahead and acquires them. It will act like a blind man who is also lost; whatever he does, he will never know that he is bringing harms to himself. He could just walk straight into a poisonous snake or into the mouth of a tiger. Or just like a blind man who goes swimming; he will never know which way he is swimming to and he will never know what to aim for. He may last a while, but sooner or later, he will be pulled into a whirlpool and drown, or swim toward a crocodile and get eaten by it. **As such, a person whose mind is blinded by 'Ignorance of Reality' will never know the truth about life.** You may have come and gone in this world for countless of times, but like a blind man you will always be kept in the dark about it. You will always succumb to the belief that your present life is your first. With such thought, you will always end up with disappointment. And it is caused by nothing but your own ignorance.

## The Same Old World

The problem is that this world is the same old world. You just can not find a new one even if you want to! You will be conceived in the same old place. You will emerge into the world from the same old place. All the elements will be the same old elements. Earth, water, wind, and fire that form into your body are the same old earth, water, wind, and fire. Food that you will feed the body will be the same. Men women will be paired up as husbands and wives, the same as before. Sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, will be the same as before. When people are intoxicated, they still beat each other up, the same as before. People still compete for livelihood and for food, the same as before. Stealing and robbing are still going on, the same as before. People still violate the rights of each other, the same as before. Telling lies and making up tales are still rampant, the same as before. Parcels of land to cultivate on are still the same old ones. People still need to build houses to shelter themselves, the same as before. When you were born into the world, in whatever form, you were born in this same old world. If you are to be born again in the future, you will be born again in this same old world. Sufferings and hardships in your next life will be just the same as the ones you are facing in this life. You will grow old in this same old world. You will be sick in this same old world. And you will die in this same old world again.

**Why do you not ever get fed up with the world? Why are you not ever feeling weary of the world? Why are you not ever bothered by the world? The answer is that in your perception you do perceive the world as something new all the time.** Even though defilement and desire has dragged you by the nose like cattle through this world for so many times and will still do so many times more, it still fails to make you weary of the whole affair. Not only that, but you can also brag about your happiness, wealth, virtue, fame, and victory over others even though you can not take anything along with you when you depart from this world. The reasons for all these are because you are so full of ‘Avijja’ or ‘ignorance of reality’.

## The Development of Wisdom

This is why mental development is the answer to you all because it will make your mind knowledgeable, clever, free from ignorance and see the world the way it really is. In order to make the mind knowledgeable, clever and free from ignorance, you will need ordinary wisdom as your leader. You must let ordinary wisdom to teach your mind so it becomes knowledgeable. Knowledge and insight will never come to you out of thin air unless there is a reason for it.

Suppose you are sitting in darkness and you want some light. There will never be any light unless you light up a lantern or a candle. If you do not, darkness will remain darkness forever. **Similarly, if you want wisdom, but you are not willing to investigate the truth of things, for example, the truth about the thirty-two parts of the body. And you are not willing to view each part of the body as earth, water, wind, or fire; or trying to view them as sufferings, subjected to**

**changes or subjected to transform into something else. Then, wisdom will never become a reality in your mind.**

For wisdom to develop in your mind, you must contemplate each part of the whole of your body. *You must contemplate each part so you can see it as an element the way it really is.* You must contemplate each part until you are aware of the not so pretty aspect of the body. You must contemplate each part until you are aware of the decaying and foul-smelling aspect of the body. You must contemplate each part until you are aware that is full of suffering, subjected to changes, or subjected to transform into something else. You must contemplate on the same body part over and over again until you can see it the way it really is, and until you can see the truth in yourself as well as those of others.

**This is the only way that wisdom can be developed, and consequently, the darkness of ignorance can be erased from your mind! You must allow wisdom to take a lead in your mind. When wisdom sees things the way they really are, so will the mind.** If your mind is blind, your views and your thoughts will be blind as well. You will be so egotistical that nobody can tell you anything since you think that you know something that other people do not know. Likewise, the blind mind will love to show off and it will be a great offense if you are placed in a disadvantageous position. It will persist on doing things that it has no idea what the outcomes will be. It will insist on pushing ahead even though it is lost and even when it is lost it will be too proud to ask around for directions. **Even though it has you landed in countless cesspools of carnal desire; you still have the insolence to brag about it! And when sufferings become unbearable and you can neither pull out of it nor live through it, you will become so desperate.**

**Such is the story of a blinded fool who loves to gamble with life.** Whenever that you have a chance, you will gamble. You are like an ant that put its whole life in jeopardy just to get a taste of honey. Overwhelmed with desire, it just can not get very far from the drop of honey. **Sooner or later, its legs will touch the honey and will be drawn into it. It will try to free itself but by then it will be impossible. The only thing that will happen next will be death.** Such is the way of the blind. No matter what they do, they will do it blindly. They will walk toward a king cobra that lies across their path. They will proceed with their journey regardless whether the journey takes them through a very rough and thorny path, or that it leads deep into the jungle, or that it takes you through a path that is full of pot holes.

To sum it up, it is ignorance in a person's mind that is to be blamed. Ignorance is what causes people to be confused about what is right and what is wrong. Ignorance is usually referred to as 'Avijja' in a Buddhist scripture, meaning you are ignorant of what is happening to you at the present or the 'effects' and you are also ignorant of what make them happen in such a way or the 'causes'. This is the cause of all the tears in this world --- tears in the past and tears in an unending future.

Now that you know about ignorance, you will understand that concentration of feelings will make you become mindful of the culprit i.e. ignorance in your mind. This is like tiger hunting; you must see the tiger first before you can start shooting. Or it is like waging a war, you must know where the enemy is before you can attack them and wipe them off. Similarly, **if you want to put an end to ‘birth’ and its corresponding ‘form of life’, you must know what the causes are. To state it differently, if you want to put an end to sufferings, you must know something about sufferings and their causes.** Before you can destroy anything, you must be able to see what you want to destroy. And, before you can cut anything, you must be able to see what you want to cut.

## The Practitioner

It is incumbent on you, the practitioner, to contemplate until your mind is full of wisdom. Wisdom is not just clever words because clever words can be borrowed from somebody else. With wisdom, even without words, you will always be ready to deal with any situations that arise inside the mind. With wisdom, the mind will be able to comprehend what is happening inside the mind and will be able to deal with it without the needs to involve with anybody else. With wisdom, you will be able to help yourself by following the guidelines that you have already learned. With wisdom, together with mindfulness, you will be able to purge defilement and desire from the mind.

**With wisdom, whether you are alone or among your peers, you will find the way to utilize materials at hand to teach your mind. You will be able to find things around you to help in your meditation. You will allow wisdom to show you things the way they really are because you can see that it is good for you.**

**The Buddha said, “People who see things the way they really are can say that they see me”. You will ‘see’ the truth the way it really is because you have wisdom. You will ‘know’ the truth the way it really is because you have wisdom. You will become clever because you have wisdom. You will be able to purge defilement and desire because you have wisdom. You will be able to get rid of blindness and delusions because you have wisdom.** With wisdom, the mind will be able to know and see the peril of endless cycle of rebirths. With wisdom, the mind will be able to free itself from various defilements. With wisdom, the mind will be able to purify itself. If you can do so, you will live up to the Buddha’s words; **“The mind can be made to be pure with wisdom. And with wisdom, you will be made to be free from sufferings, forms of life, and rebirths”.**

**Without wisdom, even if you sit and gaze at the Buddha until you die, you will never see the Buddha.** You can hold on to the robe of the Buddha but you will never see him at all. You can hold on to the cupboard that contains the scriptures but you will never see the truth the way they really are because real defilement, desire and ignorance are not to be found in the books. Greediness, anger, and delusion can not be found in the books. Happiness and unhappiness can not be



found in the books. Paths to enlightenment or purity can not be found in the books. What you find in the books are just names of defilement, desire, ignorance, greediness, anger, delusion, happiness, unhappiness, or enlightenment. Whereas the real defilement, desire, ignorance, greediness, anger, delusion, happiness, or unhappiness can only be found within your body and mind.

Whether you will act decently or badly, that will be up to you. Whether you will speak decently or badly, that will be up to you. Whether you will think decently or badly, that will be up to you.

## **The Name of the Truth**

Therefore, what is written in the scriptures is not ‘Dhamma’ or ‘truth the way things really are’, they are just names that stand for the truth. They are just like names of people. They are not the real people. Books about the truth are but maps of the truth. They can be compared to maps of countries or maps of the world. Maps will tell you all details of the world. They will tell you where a country is, direction you have to take to get there. Whether you will embark on a journey or not, that is an entirely different matter altogether.

Similarly, when you study scriptures, you will learn about defilement, desire, ignorance, greediness, anger, or delusion. You will learn where to find them and you will learn how they can affect you. You will learn about sufferings; about birth, aging, sickness and death; their whereabouts or how they will affect you. The scriptures mention all the details very clearly. **Even the paths to escape from the cycles of rebirth are laid out very clearly right from the very beginning.** They give all the details of the journey through life. They will tell about the path you should take. They will tell about the path you should not take. They will tell what you are expected to find at certain points. And when you come to the end they will tell you that you have come to the end and they will tell you that your mission is accomplished and you have no need to proceed any further.

**In studying the maps of the truth, you can study all there is to study but if you want to make your mind pure, you must turn around and start practicing from the very beginning.** You must practice until wisdom, precepts, and wisdom arises in your mind. You can follow the footsteps of Monk Potila. Monk Potila was a good example because he was very learned about the scriptures and he was a famous preacher during the Buddha’s time. But in order to achieve enlightenment he had to swallow all his pride and beg a seven years old (*enlightened*) novice to teach him how to meditate.

**Even though Monk Potila was very knowledgeable in the scriptures and knew all the meanings of the scriptures inclusive of their commentaries, you may wonder why he could not use the wisdom derived from all those knowledge to bestow himself with the understanding of the ‘Four Noble Truths’?** He was an authority on the four noble truth, meaning that he must be very familiar with Suffering, Causes of suffering, Cessation of Suffering, and Paths to the Cessation of Suffering; so, why could he not make use of what he knew to help himself? He

knew all the verses, theories on practicing and steps to enlightenment, but why could he not make use of the knowledge that he knew so well to help him to attain purity?

**“As a mirror is useless to the blind, acquired knowledge will be useless if the person does not know how to utilize his mindfulness and wisdom”. Wisdom will be useless to the mind that does not know how to think because it will be too dull to think of anything seriously.** It should not be hard for you to understand why Monk Potila had to swallow his pride and became a student of a novice.

The knowledge of the scriptures is like food, to practice them is like eating the food, and enlightenment is like being satiated. Therefore, it is necessary to study the scriptures before you begin to practice, just enough so that you can understand what the Buddha is trying to teach. Too much studying can poison your mind and make your ego to inflate so much. Pride is like a disease that no medicines can cure, once it has proliferated it will be like a balloon full of air, there will be no stone big enough to weight it down and make it get back to its former size. And like Monk Potila, too much knowledge can distort your view and give you a false sense of pride.

**As a serious practitioner, you must guard against complacency.** Complacency can come in many forms. You may think that you are still too young to die. You may think that you are still healthy and strong, wealthy enough, or knowledgeable enough so that nothing serious is going to happen to you. And in the mean time, you are going to enjoy yourself with all the fun that the world has to offer. With such thoughts, your mind will be kept very busy; so busy that you will have no time for meditation. And it is rather natural that the mind will be lured toward pleasures. But as a dedicated practitioner, you must strive to see that there is more merit in the ‘truth’ or ‘Dhamma’. Let ‘the truth’ leads you toward prosperity. As for the wealth that you have acquired, you can enjoy it as far as your physical well beings are concerned. But now it is time to acquire medicine for the mind. If you let a matter of wealth become more important than a matter of healthy mind, you will be so distracted that your practice will suffer and will be plagued with discontinuity. You will be forgetful and lack of concentration. In short, your practice will suffer when it lacks determination.

**Therefore, you need to emphasize on the determination.** You must be very determined in your analysis of all topics so that you can see them all in terms of sufferings, impermanence, or subjected to transformation. For example, if you use ‘asubha’—‘ugly’ or ‘repulsive’ aspect of things as criteria in contemplating your body, you must determine to make the body be seen as sufferings, full of changes, or subjected to transform into earth, water, wind, or fire. If you choose to contemplate the body using birth, aging, sickness, or death as criteria, determine to present all the facts to the mind about each part of the body until you can see that the body is full of sufferings, full of changes, subjected to transform into earth, water, wind, or fire. You need to analyze as many parts as it takes in order to convince the mind. Make the mind see the relationship between each physical part

of the body and the mind. Try to see where the feeling occurs when you experience physical suffering and when you experience mental suffering. It is important that you can differentiate between the apparent and the real origin of suffering using your own mindfulness and wisdom.

## Body and Mind

You will find out that the body alone is incapable of suffering, suffering materializes only in a mind that believe that it is a part of the body. Without the mind, the body will never feel a thing, be it happiness or unhappiness. You can easily see that, as far as a body is concern, a dead body *which can not feel anything* and a body that is alive are still composed of the same materials, that is, earth, water, wind, and fire. So you can see that for feelings of happiness or unhappiness to occur to you, there must be a mind.

For example, if the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, or body feel anything, it is neither happiness nor unhappiness yet, it becomes happy or unhappy feelings only when there is a mind in your body to register the senses. Eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body are just bridges that will allow sight, sound, smell, taste, or touch to pass into the mind. And once the senses enter the mind, you will then be able to feel happy or unhappy. These feelings are called ‘Dhammaromana’ which simply means ‘feelings of the mind’. Feelings in eyes, ears, nose, tongue or body are just raw data waiting to be processed or waiting to be recognized by ‘the knower’, *a nickname for the mind*, and then you can feel happy or unhappy.

If you still have a doubt then try to take a look at a dead body, it still has eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and a body, then it is logical to assume that a dead body can still feel happy, unhappy, hot, cold, or pain, etc. But you know for a fact that eyes, ears, nose, tongue, or body of dead people can not feel anything. Without the ‘knower’ or the mind, the body is incapable of knowing anything. In short, “For things or feelings to exist the way they really are, they have to pass through a mind. The mind, as a knower, must acknowledge them first before you can feel anything.

**Therefore, as long as you live, ‘feelings of the mind’ will materialize *into happiness or unhappiness* provided the mind must be there.** Whenever the mind is filled with love, lust, or craving; you will be dominated by love, lust, or craving. Whenever the mind is filled with greed, hate, delusion, defilement, lust, or desire; ‘Dhammaromana’ or ‘feelings of the mind’ will materialize inside your mind and make you feel greedy, hateful, etc. It is like a fire and its heat. If there is a fire in your mind, the heat in a form of feeling will be emanated from the mind. When your mind experiences something it does not like, it will be filled with suffering and that is how you will feel, internally and externally. When the mind is full of happiness, happy feeling will be emanated from the mind and your physical expressions will appear to be refreshing and merry.

**Feelings are effects that are taken places inside the mind and once they are expressed they can indicate the inner conditions as well.** They can be called thermometers of the mind. As thermometers can tell whether the sickness is severe

or light, feelings can also indicate what your mind is subjected to. They also act like blood pressure machines, a blood test, or a urine test where the test can reveal whether a person is sick or not. Feelings will reflect how you feel inside, whether the mind is in a happy state or unhappy state, full of joy or full of sorrow. When you experience love or hate, it must be caused by what you see, hear, smell, taste, or touch; whether you will love or hate depends on whether the sense is pleasant or not.

**Now you can see that feelings are products that come straight out from the mind.** When your mind is full of delusions, it is because your mind is ignorant of the Four Noble Truths. Firstly, you are ignorant of such practices that can get you out of sufferings. Secondly, you do not even know that you are surrounded by sufferings. Thirdly, *you do not know why*, meaning that you are ignorant of their causes. Fourthly, *you also do not know how to get out of them*, meaning you are ignorant of the paths that will lead you out of sufferings.

In short, **you are ignorant because you fail to see things the way they really are.** To say it plainly, you have no insight in anything whatsoever that comes into your way in this world. But to say so is not quite true either because you do know very well how to dig your own grave or know very well how to set yourself on fire or know very well how to flow with the current of the world. In fact, you are such an expert in these matters and are very dedicated to them---so dedicated that if pulled by the ears, you will allow the ears to be torn away rather than loosening your grips on them. Even with the Buddha's or any Holy Ones' pleas, you will not listen, only listen to the voices of your own desire.

## Right View

When the practice yields fruits, the fruits will be the same whether you practice during the Buddha's time or nowadays because what you have to do are still the same. You still have to follow the eight-fold paths, known simply as Wisdom, Precepts, and Concentration. **The first path i.e. the 'right view' reigns supreme. With the right view, the rest of the paths, that is, thought, speech, action, livelihood, effort, mindfulness, and concentration will also be right.**

**If the 'view' is corrupted, the other paths that follow will also be corrupted. This is likening to a herd of bovines that swim across a river. If the leader leads them in a straight path, the rest of the herd would follow a straight path. If the leader leads them in a zigzag path, the herd would follow the zigzag path. If the leader gets sucked into a whirlpool, the rest of the herd would all be drowned. Therefore, it is very important to adhere to the right view --- view that will help getting you to any one level of enlightenment, resolute and bold and practice all the necessary steps seriously so that your mind will be quenched of ignorance and become filled with wisdom.** Darkness of ignorance must be erased with a light of wisdom. If there is a dark corner in your mind, you must insert wisdom in there so that it can be lighted up and become full of wisdom.

Make the mind sees things the way they really are so that the ‘true knowledge’ or ‘Vijja’ can be said to exist in your mind.

**‘True knowledge’ will make the mind knowledgeable and clever so that it can judge whether things are right or wrong. In the past, the mind could not tell the differences because it was kept in the dark for so long. Once the darkness of ignorance is eliminated, the mind will be able to see things the way they really are, both within oneself and outside of oneself. In this condition, the mind is said to be full of ‘Yana’, meaning that it can now see and know things the way they really are. There is nothing to obscure its view and there are no secrets that are kept hidden from the mind any more. Everything in the world will become very transparent to you.**

**With the mind equipped with cleverness of wisdom, it will be difficult for defilement and desire to fool or delude the mind. With this cleverness, it will enable the mind to see things in term of causes and effects.** With the new visions, the mind will know all the old tricks because it was fooled by those old tricks for so long. The mind will understand those dirty tricks well because it was the one that suffered. Besides, all the nice things that defilement and desire bring never last very long. They give you the gift of birth so that you can go through aging, sickness and death. **Once born, there is nothing that you can cling to as ‘you’ or ‘yours’ at all. Even wealth that you have acquired, be it small or large, will be yours only if you can wake up each morning; soon you and those things will be separated.** When the mind and wisdom arrive at the same conclusion, it will be natural for the mind to want to pull away from the quagmire of life and terminate all sorts of friendly relationship with defilement and desire. Let this spells the end of a dubious relationship between the mind and defilement and desire for good.

**Up to now, the level of wisdom that you use in contemplating body or feeling is just an ordinary wisdom.** Even though it is ordinary it is very real because it can make you see things the way they really are. If you speculate, you will speculate the way things really are. If you contemplate, your conclusion will be the way things really are. If you use this wisdom in an imaginary perception, your imaginary perception will be based on the way things really are, which can be called ‘true perception’. This ‘fundamental wisdom’ will act like a bridge that will take you across into **‘Vipassanayana’ or ‘knowledge that enables you to know and see things the way they really are’.**

*[Below, you will find many uses of the words ‘coarse’ and ‘refined’ wisdom. ‘Coarse’ refers to a quality that belongs to something physical, for example, parts of the body, a piece of rock, etc. ‘Refined’ refers to a quality that belongs to something mental, for example, memory, feeling, etc.]*

## **Wisdom**

Coarse wisdom is a wisdom that is associated with coarse level of concentration. Coarse concentration is a concentration that is associated with coarse wisdom.

Coarse concentration and coarse wisdom are like parts of a living tree; they are not very useful as such.

If you want to make them useful like materials to build a house, you will have to cut the tree down and saw it into small pieces. Before you cut it into pieces, you will have to calculate its volume and decide how many poles, rafters, floor supports, floorboards; sidings, etc. will be needed. Then, you can proceed to cut the tree into pieces. After cutting, you will have to them planed before you can use them in a house.

In building a house, you will have to have plans drawn up and calculations made, then have someone who know how to read the plans to build a house. But in this case, make it you who will draw the plans, do the calculations, read the plans and build the house, all by yourself. When the house is finished, it will be you who will live in this house. Here you can imagine people who do not own houses; they will always have to depend on others for places to live. They will never know how long they will be allowed to stay, will they?

It is the same as when you have to hide in a cloud's shadow to avoid sunlight, you will never know how long that will last. When the cloud moves away, you will suffer from the heat again. **Similarly, if you are a person who has no wisdom, the best you can do is to depend on other's wisdom by listening to them but that will be temporary. When the words of wisdom end, your knowledge will come to an end too because there is not enough wisdom in you to absorb the truth into your mind. You mind will always remain ignorant because there is no wisdom to make you see things the way they really are.**

You can hear all of the truth but it will not register in you because there is no wisdom to retain it. It is like rain that falls down from the sky, it will all go to waste when there is nothing to collect it. Even if it is being collected but nobody makes use of it, the result will be the same.

**Refined wisdom uses coarse wisdom as a basic structure to develop from. It will take all the cues from coarse wisdom and develop along those lines.** You will find that in building up all the fundamentals with coarse wisdom, you will go through plenty of successes and failures. There will be times when you have to advance and there will be times when you have to pull back but you must keep trying without giving up. You must not expect practicing to go smoothly all the time.

It is pretty much like building a road. People can not build a road by just simply laying down asphalt or concrete surfaces right away. They will first have to survey the route, then employ various kinds of small and large machines to cut a rough path through all the forests and all the jungles. After that they will bring in stones of all sizes and bulldoze them into places, run compactors over them and smooth them with graders, until the path is finally ready to be surfaced with asphalt or concrete. As such, you will need coarse wisdom to be the base for which refined wisdom can be built upon.

Just like a policeman, when he is a rookie he will have to work very hard and do all the right things that will instill fear into the criminals' hearts. With good results, he will be promoted to higher ranks. From a private, he will become a major, then lieutenant, then captain, and so on, until one day he will become a police chief. The same idea applies to a coarse wisdom. Even though it is coarse, it is full of reasons. When it is pursuing after the truth, it will be full of reasons and its reasoning will be based on the three common characteristics.

**If you use ordinary wisdom to contemplate things very often, ordinary wisdom will become refined with time.** This is like a writing skill, the more you write the more skilful you will become. The more you exercise your wisdom, the more you will see things the way they really are. You will see things the way they really are because you will perceive them as they really are, that is, as sufferings, subjected to changes, and subjected to transformation. The more you perceive things in this fashion, the more refined your mind will become.

Your mind can be compared to a mango fruit. When a mango first appears, it is just a small green dot, the size of a match head; it will grow bigger as time goes by. It will continue to grow until it becomes fully ripe. It was very sour when it was small, but when it is fully ripe it becomes very sweet naturally. The same goes for an ordinary wisdom, it will start out very little. You will have to wade through plenty of successes and failures. Your power of concentration will not help much since it is still quite weak, liable only to collapse under pressure. But still, you must persevere and fight on with whatever that you have and try to look after yourself the best you can.

This is just like a baby when it is learning to walk. It will have to spend a lot of energy just trying to stand up. Then it will go through a lot of falls, backward and forward. But after a while, it will be able to stand on its two feet. And after some walking practices, it will be able to walk like an expert. Your concentration and contemplation practice will be the same.

The Buddha or any of the enlightened ones also had to face the same difficulties. Before they could become the enlightened ones, they had to endure many dangerous encounters in which they had to gamble with their lives in order to gain knowledge. In the beginning they all had to make do with ordinary wisdom and ordinary 'firmly-determined' concentration. But equipped with the right views and the right thoughts, ability to ward off complacency, unbending determination, they spent most of their time and energy contemplating all living or non-living things with ordinary wisdom so they could see them in terms of sufferings, subjected to changes and subjected to transformation. They would try to exercise their mindfulness and wisdom to the utmost so they could see things in the world the way they really were. Whether they were inside or outside, whether they were near or far, whether they were physical or mental, whether they belong to oneself or others; those things would be viewed in terms of sufferings, subjected to changes, and subjected to transformation. At the same time, their minds would see the truth along with wisdom. Here, you can see that ordinary wisdom can even make the

Buddha and his disciples become pure and give them chances to set good examples for all of us to follow until today.

**Therefore, all you need in your practice will be just this ordinary wisdom.** You use this ordinary wisdom to explore and unearth the truth from things around you. The more the mind learns of the truth, the more it will be conscious of its mistakes and delusions. The more the mind learns of the truth, the more it will accept the truth from wisdom. The more the mind learns of the truth, the more it becomes knowledgeable and clever. As such, it will become ready to purge all the views that have been brewed inside the mind for so long.

As the mind becomes saturated with enough truth from wisdom, the level of insight will proliferate into that of 'intermediate concentration' and 'intermediate wisdom'. At this point, the mind will attain deeper calmness and its determination will become more concrete than ever before. As wisdom becomes more prominent, it enables the mind to see sufferings as sufferings; see all the changes that are taking places in all things, living or lifeless; see that one's body as well as those of others are nothing significant whatsoever.

**The reason that the mind attains such an insight is because the mind and wisdom can both know and see things the way they really are.** Like a person who has a good sight with a torch in his hand, he can go anywhere or do anything. That is because he can see things clearly. Even if there is a poisonous snake or an elephant or a tiger in his path, he will find a way to scare them away.

With wisdom, it is like having a knife or a small gun in your possession; it will make you feel secure when you are on a journey. With wisdom, it is like traveling with a big group of people so you do not need to run when you spot some thugs or robbers. Similarly, when the mind is full of strength and wisdom, it will be ready to confront defilements and desires. Regardless of where you are or under whatever circumstances, the mind will always be alert and full of determination to learn the truth about sufferings, the causes of sufferings, and where sufferings take place.

## **Cause and Effect**

Intermediate wisdom is to be used to teach intermediate mind. When the mind surrenders to reasoning of wisdom long enough, it will see life in terms of causes and effects---especially, harmful and dangerous effects. Whenever that the mind indulges in pleasures of the senses, intermediate wisdom will pick those pleasures as samples to illustrate its point to the mind by pointing out all the wrong thoughts that entered into the mind. Intermediate wisdom will keep going over the occurrences again and again until the mind becomes too scared to be involved with pleasures.

Wisdom is like a herdsman who tends a big herd of cattle. When a cow strays into the jungle he brings it back. When a cow strays into somebody's field for its meal, he beats it up until it changes its bad habit. Similarly, in order to teach the mind,



wisdom will assume the same role. Each time the mind is having thoughts that will lead you astray, wisdom must put in some hard words to the mind right away. If the mind is lured into delusion concerning sensual pleasures, wisdom must give it a reprimand. If the mind is having nice thoughts, for example, it wants to do a sitting meditation; wisdom must offer encouragement.

Whenever there are thoughts going on in the mind, mindfulness and wisdom must be vigilant in order to inform the mind whether the thinking is right or wrong. Such is the duty of wisdom---knowing everything that is going on and also knowing how to deal with anything that comes up inside the mind. **Hence, when the mind becomes enchanted with anything, wisdom uses the pleasures derived from such encounters as testimonies to convince the mind by making the mind see what adverse and dangerous consequences the pleasures can bring.**

## A Stone On Top of Grass

Refined wisdom is to be used to teach a refined mind. A 'refined' mind refers to a mind that contains thoughts that are so refined, mainly concerning unwholesome thoughts associated with pleasures derived from sight, sound, smell, taste, or touch. They are usually hidden deep inside the mind i.e. not showing as physical expressions or speeches, which are coarse. You can investigate refined thoughts only when you get yourself into a state of deep concentration or absorption, or *smapatti* (the highest level of absorption).

The problem is, once you are under absorption or *smapatti*, all you will experience is physical and mental bliss. When the bliss gains strength it will hide defilement and desire completely. It is like placing a stone over a patch of grass. As long as the stone is there, the grass will not grow, but once the stone is removed, the grass will start growing again. Usually, when people get into absorption or *smapatti*, they usually do it for the purpose of attaining calmness of the mind and to overpower the pleasures of defilement and desire. But once they can suppress defilement and desire for days and nights for a long period of time, they will tend to think that defilement, desire, and ignorance has been eradicated. Cloaking in all the bliss, they will not want to think anything at all. Without thinking, wisdom will go into obscurity. It is like when you are not sick, you will have no need for medicine.

## The Knower

When the mind is very calm, its thinking activity, of which wisdom forms a part, stops. In such condition, defilement and desire can lurk around inside the mind undetected. Defilement and desire are like tigers or snakes that live in a deep cave, they only come out to catch preys when they wake up. Similarly, once the mind wakes up from the calmness, defilement and desire will reappear into the world again in order to devour sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches. With a refined mind, you will need to use refined wisdom to investigate and dig out defilement and desire from their hiding places inside the mind. The things to use in your

investigation will always be the same i.e. mindfulness, wisdom, and the knowing part of the mind or 'knower'. **Calmness in absorption or smapatti obscures the presence of defilement and desire;** therefore, you must get off the calmness before wisdom can investigate defilement and desire. It is like you must remove the dressing of a wound before you can dress up the wound.

**When you are ready to investigate the truth concerning defilement, you must leave the state of calmness first and then start to investigate. You can use the technique similar to the one when you want to catch a lizard that lives in an anthill with six entrances. First, you have to seal off five entrances leaving the sixth opened so that there is a way for the lizard to come out when it is hungry, then you just watch that entrance and wait. When the lizard pokes its head out far enough, you grab it tightly by the neck; tie a rope around the neck and then drag it out of the hole. Afterward, seal the hole up so the lizard can not go back in again.**

*[In Buddhism, a mind is counted as a sense so there are six senses altogether viz. sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, and feeling. Hence, the six holes.]*

**Similarly, when the mind is in a refined state, the above technique must be used to catch defilement and desire. Shut out other senses and focus your mindfulness and wisdom on the mind. If you do not know where to locate the mind, you can focus your mindfulness and wisdom on a feeling instead. When you get the feeling focused, it is the same as focusing your concentration on the mind.**

A feeling will lead you to the mind--a name for a 'knowing' entity or an element capable of 'knowing'. Here is the place where practitioners will give anything to know and see. This is where defilement, desire, and ignorance originate. **This is an entity that will take up a 'life-form' and starts a 'birth'. This is an entity that will experience the resulting happiness. And this is an entity that will experience the resulting suffering.** It is this entity that will be born in heaven(s) or Brahman-sphere(s). It is this entity that will go to hell(s). It is this entity that will be born as Peta (hungry ghosts), Asurakaya (frightened ghosts), or animals. It is this entity that will become people who flock into cinema halls, theatres, beer gardens, or lunatic asylums. It is this entity that will become people whose preoccupations are to procreate sons, daughters, nieces and nephews into this world.

Thus, when you practitioners have discovered the place where 'Ignorance of Reality' originates; or to state it differently, you have found the **mind that is full of delusion;** you must then proceed to use your wisdom to re-educate the mind. Make it learn about past mistakes. Make it learn about adverse and dangerous consequences. Make it learn to stop being so difficult and assertive. Make it learn to stop the enthusiasm in carrying out worldly activities. You know that for lions or tigers, if they are trained well, they can be made to do a lot of useful things. Similarly, you can use wisdom to train the resisting and wild mind which tends to

corrupt the world or putting the world on fire and turn it into something useful. If you can do so, you will be doing the world a great service.

**For the above reason, you must let wisdom works on the mind, teaching it and training it, so that it becomes clever and able to comprehend the knowledge of causes and effects. Let wisdom dig up whatever that the mind does not know and make it known to the mind. Let wisdom uncover whatever that is hidden inside the mind and bring it out in the open so the mind can see.**

**With the ability to ‘know’ and ‘see’ things the way they really are, the mind is said to have acquired ‘Nana-Dassana’.** This is 'wisdom' in the real sense. This is the mind that is full of wisdom. What wisdom knows and sees, the mind also knows and sees. When wisdom views the body as Earth, Water, Fire, or Wind; the mind also views it as such. When wisdom views the body as a collection of hair, body hair, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinew, bone, marrow, spleen, heart, liver, lung, colon, intestine, new food, digested food, bile, phlegm, lymph, blood, etc.; the mind also views them as such.

In addition, wisdom and the mind will be in agreement as to the fact that the body is dirty, unclean, and ever decaying. They will know and see all there are to know and see until both are convinced that the body is nothing significant whatsoever. They are in agreement because they can know and see through physical sufferings, mental sufferings, changes that are taking place in all parts of the body, that once the body transforms into something else it will no longer be oneself or anybody, and that the body is bound to go into transformation. As of this stage, the mind now knows and sees things the way they really are and what it knows and sees it is very sure that it knows and sees the 'truth'. **When the mind knows and sees the body the way it really is, the belief that body is the Self will diminish forever because it knows that the body is just a temporary residence of the mind.**

## **The Body**

The body can be viewed in terms of its five aggregates comprising of body, feeling, memory, imagination, and sensory consciousness. Body is nothing but earth, water, wind, and fire combining together. Whereas feeling, memory, imagination, and sensory consciousness are mental factors. Mental factors are reflections of the mind in the same way that a light is a reflection of a fire. ‘Feeling’ or ‘Vedana’ denotes happiness, unhappiness, or neutral feeling. It comes into being when the mind experiences something it likes, dislikes, or neither likes nor dislikes. When you like something, it is because ‘sanya’ or ‘memory’ brings up image, sound, smell, taste or touch that makes you feel good and that makes you happy. With ‘Sankhara’ or ‘imagination’, it will enhance and create new senses in ways that will give you pleasures, and with the pleasures, happiness. You can see things with your own eyes or hear voices with your own ears; if you like them you will be happy. In a lifetime, you will encounter plenty of happiness. So when happiness occurs, try to contemplate it with wisdom: what is it that makes you so happy? For how long will it last? Soon, when happiness begins to fade, note the

change. When happiness disappears, note the presence of unhappiness that arises from the lost of happiness.

## The Mind

As for 'memory' or 'sanna', you will note that you tend to recall things you like. Once something is recalled, 'imagination' or 'sankhara' will make things grow in your mind, adding a little bit of this, adding a little bit of that, so you can feel good. As the mind enjoys all the pleasures, defilement will create more and more make-beliefs in order to keep the mind captive in the delusions. An insignificant episode will be made to look very significant and full of history. Good feelings in the past can be revived and improved upon. Old images can be altered into something different; new characteristics can be added, size can be altered, colors or textures can be added on. You can make something not so beautiful into something beautiful, something not so good looking into something good looking. You can make the images do whatever you please as long as defilement in your mind tells you to do so.

If the scenes in your mind are compared to movies, they will be world-class movies; if they are compared to plays, they will be world-class plays; if they are compared to musical groups or dance halls, they will be world-class musical groups or world-class dance halls. Defilement always understands what the mind wants so it can always provides the right actors, actresses, comedians or villains that will please the mind. As time goes by, the mind will be so deluded that it can not distinguish between delusion and reality. Whatever scenarios defilement put you in, you will always react to them appropriately. **This is why defilement, desire, ignorance of reality, and the mind enjoy such a good relationship for a long time.**

But no matter how desperate the situation may seems, you must give mindfulness and wisdom a chance to let the mind know and see things the way they really are. The mind needs to know the truth about the worldly happiness and unhappiness that people seem to enjoy so much. Once it can see that happiness is the root cause of unhappiness, or say it differently, they are just the two faces of the same coin; then, the mind will not cling to happiness so tightly as before. The more it reflects the truth, the more the mind will become wearied of worldly happiness because there is not enough happiness to outweigh suffering. You can consider what the world praises so highly about viz. wealth, status, fame, and happiness. These are very desirable commodities by any world standards. People will do anything to acquire them and so are you. You will be so happy when you get what you want, and you will suffer a lot when you do not. The agony when you lose whatever wealth, status, or fame you have acquired will be a lot worse.

## All Happiness are Unhappiness

This is because there is no such a thing as permanent happiness. All happiness that we know of is always tainted with poison. Nobody in this world will ever

experience permanent gratification. Look at your own desire; you will always want something that even you know is impossible! For examples, when you are happy, you will want it to last indefinitely. When you possess wealth, status, or fame, you will want it to stay that way forever. Once born, you will never want to grow old, sick or die. You never want physical or mental suffering. You never want punishment. You never want to be revenged. These are your desires, but will they ever be possible? Will you ever get what you want? Will you ever get anything just because they are in your dreams? *You probably know by now that there is no such a thing as total happiness!*

What you perceive as total happiness always ends up as total suffering. You have been searching for total happiness for all your life but you have not succeeded, yet you will try for more in your future lives; but it will be like this present life. These are some worldly facts; **“If one is looking for happiness, all one will find will be sufferings in the end. If one is looking for an easy way out, all one will find will be nightmares in the end”**. The Buddha suggests, **“If one is looking for happiness, one must use suffering as a path to get there. If one is looking for a better station in life, one must know both, suffering and everlasting happiness.”**

With a refined mind and wisdom that goes with it, whatever that you contemplate you will know and see things the way they really are. You will see through anything, be it happiness or sufferings---within oneself and others. What you see now can be applied to the past, present, or future in that everything in this world is subjected to arising and then subjected to passing away; there is nothing in the world that is not subjected to impermanence. Whether it is a living or non-living, tangible or intangible, if an entity is conditional to previous causes, it will be subjected to changes and subjected to transform into something else. To say it differently, 'you' or 'me' exists in term of human, small animal or large animal only temporarily. Once the present form *transforms into something else or eventually into earth, water, wind, or fire*, then, there is absolutely nothing that one can claim to be 'yours' or 'mine' at all.

## The Known Mind

The mind thinks in this fashion because this is the mind that can see everything in terms of the three common characteristics i.e. see things the way they really are. Coupled with understanding, the mind is said to possess 'Nana-Dasana'---'to see and to know at the same time'. When the mind knows and sees things the way they really are, it means the mind knows and sees that all things, living or non-living, are nothing but earth, water, wind, and fire, subjected to causes and effects, subjected to imagination. Whether things are internal or external, coarse or refined, near or far, they are subjected to sufferings, changes, and transformation. When both the mind and the wisdom know and see things the way they really are, this spells dooms for all forms of defilements, desires, and ignorance of reality and places them in a bad predicament. While they are running scared, they also have no places to hide because this time wisdom has a plan set up in order to get rid of

them and the mind is also ready to terminate its relationship and expel them from the mind. From now on, the mind is ready to terminate all factors that are conditional to the continuation of the cycle of rebirths, sufferings, and causes of sufferings. The bridge that ties the mind to the world must be destroyed and the fire must be put out once and for all.

## **Vipasana-Yana**

The knowledge to get rid of all defilement is called 'Vipasana-yana'. With this knowledge, you will be able to see the truth the way it really is. This knowledge will make you realize that happiness or suffering that you are receiving in this world is a direct result of the cycle of rebirth. Vipasana-yana is something very profound. It is not a conjecture, or guessing, or knowledge from the scriptures. It arises naturally from the mind that is enlightened. The more the mind learns of the truth, the more it will become weary. The more the mind learns of the truth, the more fearful it will become. So, it is incumbent on you to stop the cycle of rebirth and you can do so by getting rid of 'ignorance of reality' for good because it is the culprit. The following is the reason why:

With ignorance, it is conditional for imaginative thinking to come into being.

With imaginative thinking, it is conditional for consciousness to come into being.

With consciousness, it is conditional for physical or mental aggregates, i.e. body, feeling, memory, imagination, and sensory consciousness to come into being.

With a physical or mental aggregates, it is conditional for sense organs to come into being.

With sense organs, it is conditional for senses to come into being.

With the senses, it is conditional for emotions, i.e. happiness, unhappiness, or neutral feelings to come into being.

With emotions, it is conditional for desires, for or against or neutral, to come into being.

With desire, it is conditional for clinging to come into being.

With clinging, it is conditional for spheres of rebirth to come into being.

With spheres of rebirth, it is conditional for rebirths to come into being.

With birth, your desire to cling on to things you like provides all the reasons for you to acquire things. Whatever that you desire, you will try to acquire it. If you get what you want, you will be happy. If not, you will be unhappy. Happiness and unhappiness just keep taking turn coming into one's life. Sometimes you will be happy and sometimes unhappy, sometimes you will be laughing and sometimes

crying, sometimes you will be passing away and sometimes being born. These are all you will have to face! There is nothing more than these that you can make sense of! There is nothing that you can call progress!

If you can look back into the past, you will find that they are not much different from the present one. Animals, large or a small, terrestrial or aquatic are stuck to these repetitious cycles. Even people in this world are also stuck within these repetitious cycles. Although many think that they are born into the world in order to amass all the nice things and be happy. Many tried in countless rebirths, spanning million and million of years, but happiness by itself seems to be very elusive. From births until deaths, all they ever acquire is 'sammati' or 'things that people perceive as happiness'.

**Nobody will ever be able to take children, grand children, silver, gold, or properties that they have acquired with them when they pass away. The only thing they will ever get for sure is dirt over their dead bodies or turn into ashes when they are cremated. With happiness still unfound, yet they hurry off to transform into earth, water, wind and fire even though their dreams still not being realized.** All will be met with disappointments. Even though happiness can be found occasionally by taking some time off in ordinary heavens or heavens for Brahmans (those who are very well versed in the art of tranquillity meditation), but that is only temporary. Eventually, all will be back to this world and have their bodies covered with dirt again. Think about the repetitions and you will find the whole process of rebirths very pathetic and very tedious. Even though people will still try to search for happiness in this world, they will never find it, ever.

## **There are No Mysteries in the World**

When you can comprehend the truth concerning the cycle of rebirth with your own wisdom and everything clearly, the mind will stop its clinging to the world. It will cease its clinging to the present world or the ones in the future, whether it is a 'world full of people who seek sensual pleasures', 'world full of people who practice image-induced absorption', or 'world full of people who practice non-image-induced absorption' (*Kama-bhava, Rupa-bhava, and Arupa-bhava*).

**In the process, the mind will enter into a stream of tranquillity. Even though the mind is in a tranquil state, the wisdom is still active contemplating materials that are streaming into the mind. You will notice it by yourself. Wisdom at this level is unlike ordinary wisdom that you are accustomed to. Even when the mind knows and sees things, the way it knows and sees things is out of ordinary. Wherever the light of wisdom shines to, even when it goes on indefinitely, the mind can still keep up with it in its search for knowledge. Nothing in the three worlds, be it 'world full of people who seek sensual pleasures', 'world full of people who practice image-induced absorption', or 'world full of people who practice non-image-induced absorption' can be hidden from the mind.**

All of the mysteries of the world will reveal themselves and appear as truth to the mind when things are revealed by the wisdom. Since the mind knows and sees everything, then one can say that there are no more mysteries left in the world, be it 'world full of people who seek sensual pleasures', 'world full of people who practice image-induced absorption', or 'world full of people who practice non-image-induced absorption'.

First, the light of wisdom covers everywhere so the mind knows and sees all there are to know and see, then, the light reduces its magnitude so that its scope becomes compatible with the need of a person. Now, the knowledge and insight of that person becomes adequate for his level. Within that scope, his apprehension about 'anatta' or transformations of human/animal to something else very basic such as earth, water, wind, or fire become fully understood. Equipped with such knowledge, the mind now releases its clinging to the world and becomes emptied from anything worldly. People may say that the mind ceases to exist in the world, but besides 'Anatta' to transform the mind into something else, there is nothing worldly that can do so at all.

## **Tranquillity and Cessation**

From this point on, the mind drifts further and further toward total tranquillity. Once it becomes fully tranquil, then the process of cessation starts. Here, when the mind reaches total tranquillity, it is unlike anything it has experienced before because this tranquillity is a foundation of cessation. It is unlike tranquillity that is found in any levels of concentrations, absorptions, or Samapatti [*collective of all eight absorptions combined*] that you have experienced before. To describe 'cessation' into easily understandable words is virtually impossible because it is unlike anything that you will ever be subjected to. You can take it that when cessation occurs, the mind becomes utmost tranquil and anything worldly ceases to exist in it completely. The world has been completely uprooted from the mind because 'clinging' has already ceased to exist in any one of the sensing organs that still attach to the body.

## **Cycle of Rebirth Ceases**

With the cessation of cycle of rebirth, you will not be reborn again. The cessation occurs when 'Ignorance of Reality' is completely wiped out from the mind.

With cessation of 'ignorance of reality', it is conditional for 'sankhara' or 'imaginative thinking' to go into cessation.

With cessation of 'imaginative thinking', it is conditional for 'consciousness' to go into cessation.

With cessation of 'consciousness', it is conditional for 'physical/mental aggregates' to go into cessation.



With cessation of 'physical/mental aggregates', it is conditional for 'sense organs' to go into cessation.

With cessation of 'sense organs', it is conditional for 'senses' to go into cessation.

With cessation of 'senses', it is conditional for 'emotions' to go into cessation.

With cessation of 'emotions', it is conditional for 'desires' to go into cessation.

With cessation of 'desires', it is conditional for 'clinging' to go into cessation.

With cessation of 'clinging', it is conditional for 'spheres of rebirths' to go into cessation.

With cessation of 'spheres of rebirths', it is conditional for 'births' to go into cessation.

Without 'births', there will be no more of the sorrows, lamentations, pains, and the rest of sufferings.

## **Fire of Defilement Runs out of Fuel**

'Nirodha' or 'cessation of suffering' occurs at this point. Births, Spheres of Rebirth, Clinging, Desires, Emotions, Senses, Sense Organs, Physical/Mental Aggregates, Consciousness, Imaginative Thinking, and Ignorance of reality cease to function completely. Nothing will ever bounce back and function again. Cessation occurs without being forced and you can not force any of the functions back to life either. Besides, there is nothing that you can use to revive any of them. For examples, eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, or mind which are instruments that reach out into the world, but without 'consciousness' the eyes will not see, the ears will not hear, the tongue will not taste, the body will not feel the touch. **The instruments to reach out into the world are completely inoperational because 'consciousness' that is a conveyer of the senses to the mind ceases to function already. Even though organs can still sense the outside world, the mind knows nothing about them; therefore, you will not feel anything.** Even though you still have eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind; they are quite useless because even though they can still function as an individual unit but to the mind they are quite dead. **In this situation, even the mind can not think at all.** If you look at the five aggregates of the body viz. body, feeling, memory, imagination, and sensory-consciousness; you will find them not working at all. Each aggregate just exists by itself, and each aggregate cease to function completely. **Without the 'sensory-consciousness', the usefulness of body, feeling, memory, and imagination has come to an end.** All that are mentioned here are just the things that one is associated with in a daily life. To know how it really feels, you have got to experience it yourself.

## **The World Revealed**

Will the mind know anything if ‘sensory-consciousness’ has undergone cessation? The answer is yes, but now the knowledge bypasses the work of ‘sensory-consciousness’, bypasses the work of ‘physical/mental aggregates’, and bypasses the work of ‘senses-organs’. It is a new kind of knowledge entirely; very unique and does not follow any conventions of the world at all. This is a new paradigm! It does follow any conventions or governed by any rules that are the norms of the three worlds and does not go by the standard of the present world or the worlds in the future. It just exists as a ‘knowing-element’ whose nature is merely to know. There is no ‘nimitta’ or ‘mental-messages’ to guide its thinking. It can be as small as it needs to be, it can be as large as it needs to be, or it can spread out all over. **When it spreads out, the three worlds are not big enough. Nothing can escape this knowing-element.**

## **Intrepidity**

The total calmness or cessation lasts for some time and then the calmness lightens up just a fraction. **Suddenly the mind is filled with intrepidity that pops up without any prior expectation. It is something that contains within the mind. Intrepidity will reinforce both your mindfulness and wisdom and, in turn, makes your mind full of intrepidity.** If this intrepidity is channeled toward destruction, you will feel as if you can destroy a whole mountain range in just a blink of an eye. There is no boldness in this world that can match this intrepidity. When this intrepidity is in your mind, you will feel that you can meditate continuously for a whole month or even a whole year.

## **The Rising of Asavakkhayanana**

‘Asavakkhayanana’ or ‘knowledge to eradicate mental intoxication’ arises within the mind amid this intrepidity. When it does, you will know in your intuition that mental intoxication is about to be purged from the mind for good. Once the ‘knowledge to eradicate mental intoxication’ has arisen in the mind, whether you are lying down, sitting up, standing, walking, contemplating, or keeping the mind blanked will present no problems for the fruits of the practice to materialize at all.

## **Detachment**

In just a blink of an eye, pure knowledge emerges from the mind that is pure. With a “pop”, and your intuition will tell you that your goal has been reached. At that instant, the whole world is shaking and rumbling all over. The knowledge that emerges is so pure and very unique. It is pure because it has no tie to the world and it will not incline toward anything worldly. In short, the bridge that connects you to the cycle of rebirths is completely destroyed and the infinite cycle has been broken, once and for all.

The wisdom, gained from contemplating something mundane in order to get to the truth from the very beginning up to now, is just a mean to get you to this purity.

The messages, **“Enlightenment has been achieved because the mind has been freed from desires. Enlightened mind knows intuitively that it has been freed. Through disciplined and celibate life, the mind is now pure. Hence, its duty to eradicate sufferings has been completed”** will be declared from the mind that is pure. Any doubts about oneself will be wiped out automatically by the mind that is pure. It is natural for a pure mind to know by itself, not from ‘mental messages’ or nimitta’.

From now on, the duty to contemplate in order to learn what is bad so you can refrain from doing will be the thing of the past. Even for the merits that one has accumulated, they are being useful only when they can get you to where you are now.

**Since the fire of sufferings has been put out completely, whatever you do or wherever you go, your duty to search for water to extinguish the fire is now over.** People will invent names for what you have just achieved--- mind with immunity, lust-free mind, defilement-free mind, mind with pure view, mind with pure knowledge and insight, mind that knows and sees the enlightenment; or words, “Complete cessation of defilement brings happiness and the happiness it brings is an everlasting happiness”. They are just something that people ‘made up’ so they will be good enough to describe purity.

**During this same period, a lingering thought seems to pass through the mind. It is a yearning to go and see Lord Buddha.** Even though you know that the Buddha passed away already, but the yearning is so strong that you can hardly contain it. If the Buddha were still alive, no matter how far away, you would be on your way to pay homage to him. You did not intend to tell him about your purity and you did not hope to hear the Buddha’s words about your achievement. You did not want to learn from the Buddha whether what you knew was right or wrong. You did not intend to ask the Buddha what level your achievement was. You did not intend to compare what you have achieved with the purity of the Buddha. You did not intend to compare the Buddha’s purity with that of your own. You did not intend to compare your purity with descriptions from the scriptures and you did not want to compare the purity described in the scriptures to that of your own. But if the Buddha asked questions, you would be glad to tell him privately. In the case that the Buddha asked questions in an assembly of monks, you would be ready to tell him anything boldly, no anxiety nor fear. But if the Buddha did not ask, you had no intention to reveal anything at all.

**When you can be very certain about your own purity, why must you ask anyone?** Whether it is the Buddha’s purity or purity of other enlightened ones, they are all the same. Whether it was in the old days, at the present, or in any other times, purity remains purity. Cessation of sufferings will be cessation of sufferings regardless of then or now. Nirvana then and Nirvana now will always be the same place. Hence, it is the reason why enlightened ones do not need to ask each other about purity. It is like when people are sharing the same food and dessert; there is no need to ask each other about the tastes of the food or dessert. The food and

dessert are all the same. When they are full, there is no need to ask each other whether one is full or not, each one of them should be the first to know.

**In the Buddha's time, when a monk achieved enlightenment, even though he was far apart from the Buddha, he would make a journey merely to pay homage to Lord Buddha.** Anybody who are enlightened must have entertained such thought in his or her minds but soon after it has entered the mind it would fade away. Then one would think of one's mentor. If you go and see your mentor, it will be because you want to pay respect, not because you want to hear your mentor talking about your achievement. If your colleagues asked how things were, you would find something interesting to talk about because as a person who is full of mindfulness you would know when it was proper to reveal the truth and when it was not.

You would know how to behave in the company of others and you would know how to behave when you were by yourself. You would know how to behave as what Venerable Pra Maha Khajjajana (*in Buddha's time*) was saying, "Even though you have eyes, behave like people who are blind. Even though you have ears, behave like people who are deaf". You would try not to arouse any suspicion. In fact, you do not need to do anything at all because you are like water without ripples already and the things that will create ripples in you are not there any more.

**Later on but soon after the last thought, another thought comes to the mind. This thought concerns reluctance to teach this knowledge to others.** You think the knowledge that you have discovered is so refined and so profound that ordinary people will find it too difficult to comprehend. As soon as this thought comes into the mind, you will try to kill it right away by reasoning to yourself that you are not any different from everybody else. You come out of your mother's womb just like anybody else. You have to eat, sleep, or do other things just like anybody else. Your body is made out from earth, water, wind, and fire; just like anybody else. When you make merits, it is the same as others when they make merits; what we all want is to enter the stream of enlightenment; what we all want is to be happy, pure, and immune from sufferings.

Others have the rights to their shares of enlightenment. If you think you are so unique, then there will be no other enlightened ones, so, do you want the world to be without enlightened ones when you are gone? If you can achieve the enlightenment, surely, others can do it too. So, why must you feel so discouraged about teaching others? Are you trying to imitate the Buddha with such thought? But after you relinquish the thought, such thought will fade away as if it has never happened before. Anyone who has trodden down this path before will attest to this.

**Later on, your mind will enter into a period that it feels so powerful.** This mental energy is unlike anything that you have ever experienced before in this world. It is a manifestation of purity that transforms into energy. If this mental energy were channeled into muscles, you would have enough strength to lift the whole mountain and toss it into the air as if it was a rattan ball. Or if you want to, you could crush the whole mountain into dust in just a split second. When this

purity-induced energy reaches its peak, it will stay inside the mind for days and then it will drain away gradually until the mind becomes normal again. Even though the mind becomes normal, **the purity attained remains so pure as if there is no change in time. Your knowledge and insight will remain very pure as long as you live.** This purity will never burn out or decay; it will never become more pure or less pure; it will never come one moment and gone the next moment; and it will never be drawn into the wind of changes of the world. The purity will remain purity no matter what. It will be out of reach from any emotions in the world.

**This is the mind with its fire completely extinguished. It is the mind that is immune to the three worlds.** It ceases to be subjected to intangible forces that result from your own past actions. It is cut off completely from anything that will reconnect the mind to the cycle of rebirths. **Therefore, when you have arrived at this final goal, whatever you do or wherever you are, you will always retain the purity within yourself.** At times, some people may look at you with pessimistic views; they can think what they like but your pure mind will always remain pure. With the purity, you adapt even better among your peers. You will continue to act the way you used to act before because characters are not something that anyone can change at will, except the Buddha. A reserved person will remain reserved and a funny one will remain funny. But it is just physical appearances only.

## Conclusion

Here, I will go over some important points of mental development again so you may improve your understanding of the whole concept.

First, I want to make sure that you know the difference between 'firm-determination concentration' and 'calmness concentration'. Both are concentration but one is in deeper level than the other is; the former is quite shallow, whereas the latter is much deeper.

**Firm-determination concentration.** With this concentration, the mind will be full of mindfulness and wisdom. You may be standing or walking anywhere and still have mindfulness to protect the mind. Or, you may be sitting anywhere, sitting in any positions and you still have mindfulness to protect the mind. If you are talking to a person of the opposite sex, you still have mindfulness in your mind. If the person of the opposite sex leaves, you still have mindfulness in your mind. This type of concentration was clearly illustrated when the Buddha had the last conversation with his secretary, Monk Ananda, "When the occasion that you must speak to a woman arises, speak, but be mindful when you speak" This is what 'firm-determination concentration' is all about.

While you are practicing firm-determination concentration, you can start contemplating with wisdom right away. If you use suffering i.e. birth, aging, sickness, or death as a mean to teach the mind; you can proceed to contemplate each subject, within yourself and others, until you can see that all things are

subjected to sufferings. You can contemplate the body, analyzing it in term of earth, water, wind, or fire. You can contemplate body's five aggregates i.e. body, feeling, memory, imagination, or sensory-consciousness. Or you can contemplate repulsive or dirty aspect of the body. But whatever means you choose, contemplate them until they can be seen as suffering, subjected to changes, or subjected to transform into something else. Or if there are objects in your possession that you like a lot, you can use them as subjects for contemplation.

Contemplate each object until it is seen as suffering, subjected to changes, or subjected to transform into something else. When you contemplate, you can do it anywhere, in any situation, whether you are sitting down or walking anywhere. You must remind yourself often that you are still full of defilement and desire so that you will not be complacent or procrastinating. You must keep reminding the mind that it is still weak (against defilement in the form of pleasures of the world) so it must always be on guard. So if the enemy viz. defilements and desires decide to take an offensive, you will be ready to subdue them. As a practitioner, you must not be complacent and you must always be prepared.

**Calmness-concentration.** In calmness-concentration, the level of calmness goes much deeper, *when compared to 'firm-determination-concentration'*. For the mind to go that deep, you need to use mantra-words to induce the mind into that stage---as explained in the beginning of the book. In the case that the mind reaches the state of total calmness or 'Appanasamadhi', you will have to get out of total calmness before you can contemplate with wisdom. What you will contemplate can be anything, as explained earlier.

**If you try to reach the level of total calmness** but no matter how hard you try you can not reach that level, the mind just stays at 'surface-level' concentration (Khanikasamadhi) or 'intermediate-level' concentration (Upacarasamadhi); you must change plan and start to contemplate instead. [*For your information, the level of firm-determination concentration starts from level zero all the way to intermediate-level concentration.*] In this range of calmness, wisdom is very active; you can make it teach anything to the mind. The choice of subject of contemplation will be up to you, as explained earlier.

**If you are practicing a calmness-concentration** but your mind will not reach any level of calmness at all, you must change your strategy and contemplate instead. In this case, try to focus on your mind and then the feeling within it, searching for the cause of disturbance. Try to find out what disturbs your mind, or what causes the mind to be full of unwanted thoughts, or what it is that the mind clings to so tightly. You may find out that your mind is possessed by carnal pleasures, or clings to a particular object that you like. When you find out what the cause is, you can use it turning it into a subject of contemplation. Let wisdom teaches the mind by showing unwholesome and dangerous consequences that the thing that the mind likes will bring. You can contemplate as explained earlier.

**When you become tired from contemplation**, you can rest your mind by switching back to concentration. And when you are through with concentration,

whether it attains calmness or not, you can go into contemplation again. Keep switching back and forth as many times as you want. It is wrong to think that you must get into the calmness first and then wait for wisdom to materialize. Calmness, no matter how deep, will not produce wisdom! On the contrary, the calmer the mind becomes, the more comfortable you will feel; the more comfortable you feel, the more you will want to stay in the calmness. The deeper the calmness, the less active the wisdom will become; the mind just does not want to think of anything; all it wants is to stay calm and happy. In this situation, it can be said that the mind is so addicted to happiness, it forgets about wisdom.

**The misconception, as described above, arises from misinterpretation of the following:**

1. **Suta Maya Panya:** wisdom will arise through book learning or being taught verbally.
2. **Jinta Maya Panya:** wisdom will arise through contemplating what you have learned or heard.
3. **Pavana Maya Panya:** wisdom will arise through mental development.

The third statement misleads everyone. Most people firmly believe that mental development means making the mind calm; and when the mind is calm, wisdom will materialize. So they will go through a great length in order to make the mind calm and then wait for wisdom to materialize. A few can attain total calmness but wisdom is still as elusive as ever. Therefore, I recommend that you all go back and take a look at the third statement again.

Pavana Maya Panya: wisdom will arise through mental development. **Make it you who do the job of developing the mind so the mind will become full of wisdom.** For wisdom to be in your mind, you must develop your mind so that it can contemplate things such as 'the five aggregates of the body' or 'rotting or repulsive aspect of the body' and see the truth in them the way they really are. *It can not be that difficult* since you can teach babies to talk or make animals do things. The mind is just a part of you, can you not teach it to see things the way they really are?

There are plenty of things around you that you can see with your eyes or hear with your ears. Why can you not contemplate them and make the mind opened to the truth? On the contrary, why are you so good at inventing ways to set fire to yourself? Since you know how to set fire to yourself, you should know how to extinguish the fire as well. If you know how to add, you should know how to subtract. If you know how to tie a knot, you should know how to untie it. This way you can call yourself clever.

**You must teach yourself to be your own cook** so you can prepare the food that you will eat by yourself. Then you will be full by yourself and become happy by yourself. Similarly, a practitioner must be prepared to rely on oneself. You must

learn not to rely on somebody else because if you do, you will run into trouble when you can find nobody to help you.

**Practitioners must learn how to be their own doctors.** You must be able to diagnose the sickness yourself, x-ray yourself, operate yourself, heal yourself, and concoct medicines yourself. If you can do so, then you can cure yourself from sickness called birth, aging, sickness, and death. One must learn how to rely on oneself. One must learn never to rely on anybody else. As a practitioner, you must learn how to develop mindfulness and wisdom in your mind.

**Here is something else that you should know.** The practice of mental development will bear fruits one day. The 'fruits' or 'phala' come in four forms:

1. **Sotapatti-Phala** or 'Stream-Enterer',
2. **Sakadagami-Phala** or 'Once Returner',
3. **Anagami-Phala** or 'Non-Returner',
4. **Arahatta-Phala** or 'the Enlightened One'.

Before the practice can bear any of the fruits, it will have to pass through some steps. First, 'Vipasana-Nana' or 'Knowledge to purge Ignorance' will arrive into the mind. Then, 'Magga-smunggi' or 'Consolidation of moral bindings' will make its way into the mind.

In the cases of the first three fruits, 'Asavakkhaya-nana' or 'knowledge to purge mental intoxication' will not be present.

After Vipassana-nana has passed through the mind, Magga-smunggi will enter the mind; then, after Magga-smunggi passes through, the mind will be rewarded with one of the fruits. For the mind to be rewarded with whatever fruit will be depend upon the magnitude of Vipassana-nana and Magga-smunggi. Once the mind attains one of the fruits, the practitioner will know intuitively what type of fruit he/she is awarded with and he/she will keep the knowledge to him/herself.

**Once, the practice has reached the level of Vipassana-nana, there will be no regression or stopping in the middle of the process.** When Vipassana-nana has entered and passed through the mind, Magga-smunggi will come into the mind, then it will result into one of the fruits---any of the first three fruits. For the last fruit or Enlightenment, when Magga-smunggi has passed through the mind, **Asavakkhaya-nana** or 'knowledge to purge mental intoxication' will come inside the mind. At that moment, one will know that the goal that one has waited for so long is finally realized; then, the last fruit or enlightenment becomes a reality.

If Vipassana-nana is not followed by Magga-smunggi---it is not Vipassana-nana! Likewise, if Magga-smunggi is not followed by one of the fruits---it is not Magga-smunggi either!



Some 'Stream-Enterers', 'Once-Returners', or 'Non-Returners' remain what they are until death. Some 'Stream-Enterers' remains in this level for some time, then become 'Enlightened' without having to pass through the previous two stages. Some 'Once-Returners' or 'Non-Returners' remain in these levels for some time, then become 'Enlightened'. It is not necessary to progress through successive levels before you can reach the highest level. Many have never achieved any fruit before, but when their times have come they become 'Enlightened' right away.

Some attain their fruits in standing position. Some attain their fruits while walking. Some attain their fruits in sitting position. Some attain their fruits while lying down. Regardless of the fruits attained, all of them will be blessed with the title of 'Ariyapuggala' or 'Holy Person'. Even if the person who attains one of the fruits is still a layman, he will be called the 'Holy Person' as well. Anybody, regardless of nationalities, classes or castes, if they can reach these levels, they will all become 'Ariyapuggala'.