

Le chemin de l'Eveil

Un guide de techniques de méditations
pratiquées en Thaïlande

Institute of Spiritual Practice

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Chapitre 1

L'environnement de base

Why should we practice meditation?

In fact, meditation is important for our life.

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

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

¹ Marc Kaufman. *Meditation Gives Brain a Charge, Study Finds*. (Available Online) www.buddhistchannel.tv/index.php?id=7,544,0,0,1.0 (Access) 5/3/2005

² *Buddhist Meditation and health*. (Available Online)

<http://www.buddhanet.net/sanghametta/medhealth.html> (Access) 5/3/2005

³ Ibid.

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

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

yoga technique process of deeply inhaling and exhaling in many postures improves health in general.

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

Mental Development in Buddhism. When we are talking about spirituality here, we refer to mental development. Mental development, *cittibhāvanā* in Pali, appears in many places in the Buddhist texts. It appears in the third of the *kusala kammaṇḍa* (Threefold Classification of Wholesomeness)⁵, in *trāṣikkha*⁶ and in *ovādapātimokkha* (The Three Admonitions or Exhortations of the Buddha)⁷. The word ‘mental development’ is also included in the study of the Buddha’s teaching, and when it is explained to others, because there are different degrees of mental development. The Buddha’s teaching, as summarized is found in the *saddhamma* (the essential doctrine), the *pariyatti* (the true doctrine of study), the *patipatti* (the true doctrine of practice) and the *pativeda* (the attainable aspect of the true doctrine). Basic to all the Buddha’s teaching is the theory that we learn in order to understand, we understand in order to practice, and we practice for results. The highest result is the end suffering (*nibbāna*).

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

5 Kusala kammaṇḍa is *dana* (generosity), *sila* (good moral conduct), *bhāvanā* (mental development)

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

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

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

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

A way of practicing *vipassanā* by those who attained *samatha* before is

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

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

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

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

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

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

The 10 *anussatis* (10 recollections) are: recollection of the Buddha's virtues, recollection of the Dhamma, recollection of the Sangha's virtues, contemplation of one's own morals, contemplation of one's own liberality, contemplation of the virtues which enable people to become gods, mindfulness of death, contemplation of the 32 impure parts of the body, mindfulness on breathing, and recollection of peace. To contemplate on the 32 impure parts of the body is to make practitioners realize that people generally cling to their body as an object of beauty. This causes the "self" to rise in the mind. In fact, within our body is found a skeleton. It is full of flesh which is covered with skin. Beauty is nothing but skin deep. When one reflects thus on the impure parts of the body, passionate attachment to one's body gradually disappears. Many Bhikkhus in the time of the Buddha attained Arahatsip by meditating on these

impurities. However, this meditation may not appeal to those who are not sensual. The 32 parts of the body are: hair, hair of the body, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinew, bones, marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, diaphragm, spleen, lungs, bowels, mesentery, stomach, faeces, brain, articular fluid, and urine.

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

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

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

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

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As is known, *samatha* has calmness as its function. Calmness (*samāthi*) has different levels according to its strength: *khanika samāthi*, *upacāra samāthi* and *appanā samāthi*. *Khanika samāthi* (a temporary concentration) is a concentration that we use in our life for working and reading. *Upacāra samāthi* (an elevated concentration, closer to the level of *appanā samāthi*) is deeper concentration that allows our mind to be still and calm for at least fifteen minutes. At this stage, mental images may occur (*nimitta*) and we can enlarge them and reduce them in size as we wish. If we use this calm to investigate our body either from the point of view of the Four Elements or through Loathsomeness, we can realize the truth that we are a

component of the Four Elements. When contemplating our body as loathsomeness, we can realize that, but when we contemplate “skin” we see it as beauty. When reaching the level of *upacāra samāthi*, we see skin with our eyes while closing the eyes in meditation because of the power of calmness. We can use this concentration to investigate the skin as loathsome by separating the body into many parts. This is skin; this is hair, hair of the body, nails, teeth, flesh, sinew, bones and so on. When these parts of the body are separated from each other, we cannot see our body as beauty. A complete being cannot be found. We find only many parts of the separated body which is loathsome.

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

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

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

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

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

Tranquil Meditation

- Deep physical rest and relaxation and improved physical health
- Complete mental rest along with the attainment of a high level of happiness

- A complete free mind
- Strengthened memory
- Increased learning power
- More effective job performance
- Initiative and creative wisdom
- A whole and effective outlet for coping with life's problems
- Subtle tranquility and happiness

Insight Meditation

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

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

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

The Mahasatipaṭṭhāna Sutta⁹: A Discourse on Mental Development

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

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

(Digha Nikāya 22)

The Mahasatipaṭṭhāna Sutta is divided into four sections as follows:

Kāyānupassanā contemplation of the body

Vedanānupassanā contemplation of feelings

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

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Cittānupassanā contemplation of the mind

Dhammānupassanā contemplation of Dhammas

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

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

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

Mindfulness of Breathing (*Ānāpānasati*):

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

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

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

Clear Comprehension (*satisampajañña*):

“Furthermore, when going forward and returning, he makes himself fully alert; when looking toward and looking away... when bending and extending his limbs... when carrying his outer cloak, his upper robe and his

bowl...when eating, drinking, chewing and savouring...when urinating and defecating...when walking, standing, sitting, falling asleep, waking up, talking, and remaining silent, he makes himself fully alert.

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

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

Reflection on the Modes of the Four Elements:

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

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

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

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

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

too. Such is its nature, such is its future, such is its unavoidable fate.’

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

“And how does a monk remain focused on feelings in and out of themselves?

There is the case where a monk, when feeling a painful feeling, discerns that he is feeling a painful feeling. When feeling a pleasant feeling, he discerns that he is feeling a pleasant feeling. When feeling a neither-painful-norpleasant feeling, he discerns that he is feeling a neither painful-nor-pleasant feeling.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Five Hindrances:

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

Five Aggregates:

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

Sixfold Internal and External Sense Media:

“Furthermore, the monk remains focused on mental qualities in or of themselves with reference to the *sixfold internal and external sense media*. And how does he remain focused on mental qualities in and of themselves with reference to the sixfold internal and external sense media? There is the case where he discerns the eye, he discerns form, he discerns the fetter dependent on both. He discerns how there is the arising of the unrisen fetter. And he discerns how there is the abandoning of a fetter once it has arisen. And he discerns how there is no further appearance in the future of a fetter
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that has been abandoned. (The same formula is repeated for the remaining sense media: ear, nose, tongue, body and intellect.)

Seven Factors of Awakening:

“Furthermore, the monk remains focused on mental qualities in and of themselves with reference to the Seven Factors of Awakening. And how does he remain focused on mental qualities in and of themselves with reference to the seven factors of awakening? There is the case where, he discerns that ‘Mindfulness as a factor of awakening is present in me.’ Or, there being no mindfulness as a factor of awakening present within, he discerns that ‘Mindfulness as a factor of awakening is not present within me.’ He discerns how there is the arising of unarisen mindfulness as a factor of

awakening. And he discerns how there is the culmination of the development of mindfulness as a factor of awakening once it has arisen.’ (The same formula is repeated for the remaining factors of awakening: analysis of qualities, persistence, rapture, serenity, concentration, and equanimity.)

The Four Noble Truths:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Eye-consciousness... Ear-consciousness... Nose-

consciousness... Tongueconsciousness... Body-consciousness... Intellect-consciousness...

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

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

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

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

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

“Thought directed at forms... Thought directed at sounds... Thought directed

at smells...Thought directed at tastes...Thought directed at tactile sensation...Thought directed at ideas...

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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“And what is right concentration? There is the case where a monk – quite withdrawn from sensuality, withdrawn from unskillful (mental) qualities – enters and remains in the first jhāna: rapture and pleasure born withdrawal,

accompanied by directed thought and evaluation. With the stilling of directed thought and evaluation, he enters and remains in the second jhāna: rapture and pleasure born from composure, unification of awareness free from directed thought – internal assurance. With the fading of rapture he remains in equanimity, mindful and alert, physically sensitive of pleasure. He enters and remains in the third jhāna, and of him the Noble Ones declare, ‘Equanimous and mindful, he has pleasurable abiding.’ With the abandoning of pleasure and pain – as with earlier disappearance of elation and distress – he enters and remains in the fourth jhāna: purity of equanimity and mindfulness, neither pleasure nor pain. This is called right concentration. This is called the noble truth of the path of practice leading to the cessation of stress.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Internal Forms External Forms

Contact

Internal Objects External Objects Consciousness

(*rūpa*) (*rūpa*) (*nāma*)

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

2. Paccaya-pariggaha-ñāna : knowledge of conditionality

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

10 *Vipassanā Ñāna* (Available Online) <http://www.buddhanet.net/knowledge.htm> (Access):
March 27,
2006.

Ibid. (Available online) <http://web.ukonline.co.uk/buddhism/vpsnana.htm>. (Access) March
27, 2006

Eyes

Nose

Ears

Tongue

Body

Object

Smell

Hearing

Taste

Touch

Experiencing
and knowing
of the contact
objects

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

3. Sammasana-ñāna : knowledge of mastery

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

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

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

5. Bhanga-ñāna : knowledge of dissolution

At this stage, practitioners see only the passing away of phenomena. There are two

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

6. Bhaya-ñāna : knowledge of fear

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

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7. Ādinava-ñāna : knowledge of contemplation on disadvantages

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

8. Nibbidā-ñāna : knowledge of contemplation

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

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

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

10. Patisankha-ñāna : knowledge of reflective contemplation

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

11. Sankhārupekkha-ñāna : knowledge of equanimity regarding formations

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

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12. Anuloma-ñāna : knowledge of adaptation

The special knowledge appears with the realization that physical and mental

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

13. Gotrabhū-ñāna : knowledge of connection

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

14. Magga-ñāna : knowledge of the path

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

11 Sotāpanna: Stream winner. A person has abandoned the first three of the fetters (*sanyojana*), selfidentification views (*sakkaya-ditthi*), uncertainty (*vicikicchā*), grasping at precepts and practices (*silabbata-paramasa*) that bind the mind to the cycle of rebirth and has thus entered the “stream”

flowing inexorably to *nibbāna*, ensuring that one will be reborn at mostly only seven more times, and only in human and higher realms.

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

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

14 Arahant: A “worthy one” or “pure one”; a person whose mind is free of defilements who has abandoned all ten of the fetters , self-identification views (*sakkaya ditthi*), uncertainty (*vicikicchā*), grasping at precepts and practices (*silahata-parāmasa*), sensual passion (*kāmarāga*), resistance (*pathiga*), passion for form (*rūpa-rāga*), passion for formless phenomena (*arāpa-rāga*), conceit (*māna*),

restlessness (*uddhacca*), and unawareness (*avijjā*) that bind the mind to the cycle of rebirth, whose heart is free of mental affluents (*āsava*), and who is thus not destined for further rebirth. This is the title of the Buddha and the highest level of his noble disciples.

15. Phala-ñāna : knowledge of fruition

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

16. Paccavekkhana-ñāna : knowledge of review

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

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