

*Namo Tassa,
Bhagavato,
Arahato,
Sammā-
Sambuddhassa.*

Homage To Him,
The Exalted One,
The Worthy One,
The Perfectly
Self-Enlightened One.

THE DISPENSATION'S USAGE

Our intention with this book is to explain the '*Mahā-Sati-Paṭṭhāna*' sutta.¹ But to understand such a sutta properly, we need to be familiar with the Dispensation's usage² (*Sāsana-yutti*).³ We need to be familiar with the Buddha's Teachings as a whole, how they are structured, how they are related, and what the different terms mean and do not mean in the various contexts. By way of an introduction, we shall therefore try briefly to explain the Dispensation's usage. We shall discuss it in principle, and then show how it works by comparing teachings from different suttas: we shall in this way explain how the teachings in the '*Mahā-Sati-Paṭṭhāna*' sutta are to be understood in accordance with the Dispensation's usage. Unless you are in some way familiar with the Dispensation's usage, our explanation of the '*Mahā-Sati-Paṭṭhāna*' sutta will otherwise be difficult to understand.

A SUTTA

First of all, what is a sutta?⁴ *Sutta* means string, line or thread. Say, for example, a carpenter wants to saw a piece of wood. At one end he measures where he wants to cut it, and puts a nail in. In the same way, he puts a nail in at the other end. Then he stretches a piece of string between the two nails. The string has been dipped in ink, and when he plucks the string, it strikes the wood, leaving a mark. Then he saws the wood using that mark as a guide-line. Likewise, when he makes the opening for a door or a window, or when he is setting up a post for the wall, he needs to make sure it is properly vertical. To measure that it is vertical, he uses a string with a weight at one end: it hangs down completely straight, and serves as a guideline.

In the same way, a sutta is a line as in a guideline: guiding the listeners to Nibbāna.⁵ We may also say a sutta is a line as in an outline. This quality in the

¹ D.ii.9 '*Mahā-Sati-Paṭṭhāna-Suttaṃ*' ('The Great Mindfulness-Foundation Sutta')

² usage: POD: 'customary practice esp. as creating a right or obligation or standard (*procedure sanctified by u.; the u. of the best writers*).' MW: 'firmly established and generally accepted practice or procedure.' WNW: 'long-continued or established practice; habitual or customary use of way of acting; custom; habit.'

³ the Dispensation's usage: it is mentioned in the '*Mahā-Sati-Paṭṭhāna*' sutta commentary, when it discusses the seven benefits listed by The Buddha: namely that when one is fulfilled, all are fulfilled. And it explains that to know this, one needs to be familiar with the usage, the paradigm, of the Dispensation (*Sāsana-yutti*). *Netti-Ppakaraṇaṃ* (*The Guidance Book*), by the Venerable Mahākaccāyana, discusses the Dispensation's usage in great detail: the *Pali Text Society* translation is by Ven. Nāṇamoli, entitled *The Guide*.

⁴ DhsA '*Nidāna-Kathā*' ('Introductory Discussion')

⁵ In his *The Guide*, Ven. Nāṇamoli translates 'sutta' as 'Thread-of-Argument.'

suttas is why they are always more or less brief: they do not provide many details. Even the long ‘*Mahā-Satipaṭṭhāna*’ sutta is in fact very brief: you will understand that as we explain it.

When we study the suttas we see also that they are not only brief, but they are varied: The Buddha gives many different guidelines. He does not use just one method of teaching. Why not? Because a Fully Enlightened Buddha possesses the power to understand the inclination of others, and He possesses also the power to understand the disposition of their faculties. Those two powers enable The Buddha first of all to discern which of His listeners can understand the Dhamma. Secondly, those two powers enable Him to discern which way of explanation is the most helpful for their understanding.¹ Beings are all very differently disposed, with faculties differently developed. So in the suttas, The Buddha gives many different guidelines. But (and please remember this) all the different guidelines guide only one way: to understanding the Four Noble Truths,² the way to put and end to suffering.³

MEANING VERSUS LETTER

In practical terms, the Buddha’s skill in teaching means, for example, that He uses terms which His listeners understand. As a result, He sometimes uses the same term to mean different things: for example, *saṅkhārā*. As the second factor of dependent origination, *saṅkhārā* means kamma-formation; as the third clinging-aggregate, it means all mental factors apart from feeling and perception; and as the formed element, it means all formations of mentality and materiality. In this case, the term is the same according to the letter (*byañjana*), but different according to the meaning (*attha*). If we do not know that, for example, *sarikhāra* in this way has a different meaning in different contexts, we may see no

¹ The Buddha explains these two powers in, for example, M.I.ii.2 ‘*Mahā-Sīha-Nāda-Suttaṃ*’ (‘The Great Lion’s-Roar Sutta’): ‘Again and further, Sāriputta, the Tathāgata understands according to reality how beings have different inclinations (*nān-ādhimuttikataṃ*). And whatever, Sāriputta, different inclinations beings have the Tathāgata understands according to reality, this then, Sāriputta, is a Tathāgata’s Tathāgata power, because of which power the Tathāgata assumes the bull’s stance, roars the lion’s roar in the assemblies, and sets in motion the divine wheel.... the Tathāgata understands according to reality other beings, other people’s disposition of faculties (*indriya-paropariyattaṃ*)... this then, Sāriputta, is a Tathāgata’s Tathāgata power.’ The Venerable Sāriputta refers to this power in D.iii.5 ‘*Sam-Pasādanīya-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Serene Faith Sutta’): ‘Also unsurpassed is the Blessed One’s way of teaching the Dhamma in regard to disposition towards instruction (*anusāsana-vidhāsu*).’

² In S.V.XII.ii.9 ‘*Saṅkāsana-Suttaṃ*’ (‘The Illustration Sutta’), The Buddha explains His teaching of the First Noble Truth: “This is the Noble Truth of Suffering.” Such has been made known by Me. In the statement, “This is the Noble Truth of Suffering”, there are innumerable nuances, innumerable elucidations, innumerable illustrations.’ He says the same about the Second, Third, and Fourth Noble Truth.

³ In M.I.iv.5 ‘*Cūḷa-Saccaka-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Small Saccaka Sutta’), The Buddha explains: ‘Enlightened is the Blessed One: He teaches the Dhamma for enlightenment.... Attained to Nibbāna is the Blessed One (*pari-nibbuto so Bhagavā*): He teaches the Dhamma for attaining Nibbāna (*parinibbānāya Dhammaṃ deseti*).’ And in, for example, M.I.iii.2 ‘*Alagadd-Ūpama-Suttaṃ*’ (‘The Snake-Simile Sutta’), He explains: ‘Before, bhikkhus, and now, I make known only suffering and suffering’s cessation.’

difference where a difference is to be seen. And confusion may arise. Because we do not understand, we are unable to see how all the different guidelines cohere. And we may find fault with teachings that are faultless.

Then there is the opposite, when The Buddha uses different terms to mean the same thing: for example, *citta*, *mana*, and *viññāṇa*. They all mean consciousness.¹ In this case, the term is different according to the letter, but the same according to the meaning. If we do not know that, for example, these three words have the same meaning, we may see a difference where there is no difference to be seen. And confusion may arise. Because we do not understand, we are unable to see how all the different guidelines cohere. And we may for a different reason find fault with teachings that are faultless.²

Another example of how The Buddha uses different terms to mean the same thing is His introduction to the '*Mahā-Sati-Paṭṭhāna*' sutta:

D.II.372

The only way (*ekāyano*), **bhikkhus, is this path, for beings' purification, for sorrow and lamentation's overcoming, for pain and displeasure's disappearance, for the true way's attainment, for Nibbāna's realization: that is, the four foundations of mindfulness** (*cattāro sati-paṭṭhānā*).

Here, The Buddha gives seven benefits of practising the four foundations of mindfulness. But they are not seven different benefits, they are seven different ways of saying the same thing. We may say that they all meet in the last one: realization of Nibbāna. Beings are purified only by realization of Nibbāna; sorrow and lamentation are overcome only by realization of Nibbāna; pain and displeasure disappear only by realization of Nibbāna, the true way (the Noble Eightfold Path) is attained only by realization of Nibbāna; and Nibbāna is realized only by practising the four foundations of mindfulness.

This way of explaining the same thing in many ways is used by The Buddha very, very often.³ Why? Because different beings understand things differently: one understands 'being's purification' best, while another understands 'sorrow and lamentation's overcoming' best, and yet another understands 'pain and displeasure's disappearance' best, etc.⁴

¹ S.II.vii.1 '*A-Ssutavā-Suttam*' ('The "Unlearned" Sutta'): 'Just as a monkey roaming through the forest grabs hold of one branch, lets that go and grabs another, then lets that go and grabs yet another, so too that, bhikkhus, which is called "thought" (*citta*), and "mentality" (*mana*), and "consciousness" (*viññāṇa*), arises as one thing and ceases as another, day and night.' The commentary explains that all three terms are synonyms for 'mind-base' (*man-āyatana*), the sixth internal base. And in, for example, S.V.III.v.2 '*Samudaya-Suttam*' ('The Origination Sutta'), The Buddha explains the origination of the four foundations of mindfulness. For consciousness, He explains: 'With the arising of mentality-materiality (*nāma-rūpa*), there is consciousness's arising (*cittassa samudayo*).' Here, consciousness is *citta*, whereas in dependent origination, it is *viññāṇa* that arises because of mentality-materiality. And see also quotation at 'The Meditation', p.15.

² The Buddha explains it in, for example, A.II.iv '*Sama-Citta Vaggo*' ('Tranquil Mind Chapter'): 'Those bhikkhus, bhikkhus, who get the suttas wrong (*du-ggahitehi suttantehi*), interpret according to the letter (*byañjana-ppatirūpakehi*), with the meaning (*attha*) [spirit] and the Dhamma contend.'

³ This is a rhetorical device called congeries (an accumulation of statements or phrases that say essentially the same thing), used very frequently by The Buddha.

⁴ In, for example, S.V.III.iii.2 '*Virāga-Suttam*' ('The Dispersion Sutta'), The Buddha explains that when the four foundations of mindfulness are developed and practised well, they lead to certain

THE DISCUSSION OF MEANING

Then how are we to know which things are the same and which are different? The Buddha Himself very rarely explains such things.¹ That is not His duty. So what are we to do? According to The Buddha, we are to study the Pali Texts and their commentaries.² It is only by studying the Pali Texts and their commentaries with faith, respect and humility that we are able to familiarize ourselves with the Dispensation's usage. Indeed, what else are we going to study? The Buddha is no longer alive, so we cannot ask Him to explain when there is something we do not understand. If there is something we do not understand, we can listen to the Buddha's explanation only through the commentaries, composed by the learned Venerable Commentary Teachers (*Aṭṭhakathā-Ācariyā*), the Early Teachers (*Pubb-Ācariya*), the Ancients (*Porāṇā*).³

The Pali word for commentary is *attha-kathā*. We just mentioned *attha*: meaning. *Kathā* means 'discussion'. *Attha-kathā* means 'discussion of meaning'. The commentaries discuss when the letter is the same and the meaning different, and when the meaning is the same and letter different. And the commentaries provide details, so that we may understand how to put the suttas into practice. For example, in the suttas, The Buddha mentions the ten kasiṇas, but in no sutta does He explain what the kasiṇas are; in several suttas, The Buddha discusses mindfulness-of-breathing up to jhāna, but in no sutta does He explain how and where one is to be mindful of the breath, or how one progresses to the jhānas; in many suttas, The Buddha mentions that one needs to know materiality derived from the four great essentials, but in no sutta does He explain materiality derived from the four great essentials; and in many suttas, The Buddha men-

disenchantment, dispassion, cessation, peace, direct knowledge, enlightenment, and Nibbāna.

¹ He does explain it in, for example, M.II.9 '*Bahu-Vedaniya-Suttam*' ('Many Kinds of Feeling Sutta'), He explains: 'I have stated two kinds of feeling in one presentation; I have stated three kinds of feeling in another presentation... five kinds... six kinds... eighteen kinds... thirty-six kinds...; I have stated one hundred and eight kinds of feeling in another presentation. That is how the Dhamma has been shown by me in presentations.' See also the sutta mentioned footnote 1, p.1.

² In M.II.ii.10 '*Kiṭṭāgiri-Suttam*' ('The Kiṭṭāgiri Sutta'), The Buddha explains that perfect knowledge (*aññā*) is not achieved at once: it requires gradual training (*anupubba-sikkhā*): faith→visiting a teacher→paying respect→giving ear→hearing the Dhamma→memorizing it→examining the meaning of what has been memorized→gaining considered acceptance→desire (*chanda*)→endeavour→investigation→striving→realization with the (mental) body. And The Buddha explains the faithful disciple (*saddhassa sāvakassa*): 'For a faithful disciple, bhikkhus, who were to begin probing the Teacher's Dispensation, this accords with the Dhamma [this is the proper way to regard things]: "The Blessed One is the Teacher, I am a disciple; the Blessed One knows, I do not know (*jānāti Bhagavā, n-āhaṃ jānāmi'ti*).'" And in D.ii.3

'*Mahā-Parinibbāna-Suttam*' ('Great Parinibbāna Sutta'), The Buddha explains the teacher after His Parinibbāna: 'What I have taught and explained to you as Dhamma-Vinaya will, at my passing, be your teacher.'

³ In M.I.iii.2 '*Alagadd-Ūpama-Suttam*' ('The Snake-Simile Sutta'), The Buddha says: 'Therefore, bhikkhus, when you understand the meaning of what I have said, that is how you should take it. And when, however, you do not understand the meaning of what I have said, you should ask me about it, or those bhikkhus who are learned.'

tions the five mundane psychic powers (walking on water, flying, the divine ear, divine eye, etc.) but in no sutta does He explain how to develop them.¹

This brevity of the suttas is another reason why misunderstandings may arise. We may, for example, not understand that even though the guidelines are many, they are in fact not very different. Reading different guidelines, we may think they explain different things, when in fact they explain the same thing only in different ways. When we do not understand that they in fact explain the same thing, confusion may arise.² And we may for yet another reason find fault with teachings that are faultless.³ The purpose of the commentaries is to prevent such misunderstanding and confusion.

When we study the commentaries, we may become proficient in the Dispensation's usage, and discover that all the different guidelines given by The Buddha are coherent.⁴ That way confusion does not arise, and we do not find fault with the faultless. Instead, our faith is strengthened, our learning is increased, and our practice is clear.⁵

¹ The five mundane psychic powers are: 1) being one, becoming many; being many, becoming one; appearing and disappearing; walking through walls and mountains as if through the air; diving into and arising from the earth as if it were water; walking on water as if it were the ground; cross-legged flying through the air; touching sun and moon with the hand; moving the body up to the Brahma world; 2) the divine ear, which can hear human and divine sounds far and near; 3) reading the minds of others; 4) recollecting many hundred thousand births, many world expansions/ world contractions, recollecting also concepts such as name, occupation, pleasures, etc.; 5) the divine eye, which can see how beings are reborn according to their kamma. There is also a sixth, supramundane psychic power: destruction of the taints (the sensuality-, existence-, and ignorance taint), which is Arahantship. Psychic powers 4, 5 and 6 are also called the three sciences (*te-vijjā*).

² S.IV.I.xix.8 '*Kimsuk-Opama-Suttam*' ('The Dhak-Tree Simile Sutta') describes how insufficient familiarity with the Dhamma can make one find fault with teachings that are faultless. There, an Arahant explains Arahantship as understanding the appearance/disappearance of the six bases according to reality; another Arahant explains it as such understanding of the five aggregates; another as such understanding of the four great essentials; another as understanding that any arising phenomenon is also a ceasing phenomenon. The bhikkhu they explain this to is in all cases dissatisfied with the answer: because they seem incomplete and contradictory. He then asks The Buddha. He explains that one might ask several men to describe a dhak tree and receive different answers: because each describes it as he saw it. In the same way, the different Arahants answered in accordance with their attainment. The Buddha then explains that through samatha and vipassanā, mindfulness is gained, and insight into the four great essentials and six bases (body and mind), whereby the Noble Eightfold Path arises, and Nibbāna is realized.

³ In, for example, A.V.ii.9 '*Tatiya Anāgata-Bhaya-Suttam*' ('The Third Future-Danger Sutta'), The Buddha explains how in the future, unqualified bhikkhus will ordain men, and be unable to train them properly in morality, concentration, and wisdom. And those new bhikkhus will ordain men, and so on. The result is corrupt Dhamma (*Dhamma-sandosa*) and corrupt Vinaya (*Vinaya-sandosa*). And The Buddha explains that such bhikkhus will be unable to understand the Abhidhamma, and will disparage the Abhidhamma and find fault with it. And instead of studying the profound, transcendent suttas connected with voidness, they will study other things, and also neglect the duties of seclusion, not making any effort to progress towards any Path&Fruition. For how this leads to True Dhamma's disappearance, see footnote 1, p.39.

⁴ In M.I.iii.2 '*Alagadd-Ūpama-Suttam*' ('The Snake-Simile Sutta'), The Buddha explains: 'Thus, well taught (*svākkhāto*), bhikkhus, is My Dhamma, evident (*uttāno*), open (*vivato*), made known (*pakāsīto*), deprived of patchwork (*chinna-pilotiko*).'

⁵ In A.V.II.iii.3 '*Paṭhama-Dhamma-Vihārī-Suttam*' ('The First Dhamma-Abiding Sutta'), The Buddha explains that the bhikkhu who masters the Texts, but does not devote all his time to such

Then we may hold certain views about the commentaries; we may refuse to accept the authority of the commentaries. We may refuse to believe that the main commentaries were recited at the First Council, we may refuse to believe that they were compiled by the learned elders at the time of The Buddha.¹ Such unfaith (*a-saddhā*) is a big problem.

Why? Because (as we have just explained) then it becomes very difficult for us properly to interpret according to the letter and the meaning. It becomes very difficult for us to see how the teachings cohere. And scepticism and confusion arises. Then is our understanding unsure, which means our practice also becomes unsure. Then are we unable to gain the superior results that are to be gained from study of the profound Dhamma, and we are unable properly to practice the profound Dhamma, and unable eventually to realize the profound Dhamma.²

COMPARING TWO SUTTAS

Now we have tried very briefly to explain the principles of the Dispensation's usage. But the best way to make it clear is by example. As example we shall compare the '*Mahā-Sati-Paṭṭhāna*' sutta with another sutta: the '*Sāmañña-Phala*' sutta.³ They are both suttas in the *Dīgha-Nikāya* (*Long Collection*).

TWO DIFFERENT AUDIENCES

In the '*Sāmañña-Phala*' sutta, one King Ajātasattu comes to see The Buddha, and asks Him a question. He asks The Buddha if there is any present fruit of asceticism (*sandittika samañña-phala*).

Dhamma-learning, does not neglect seclusion, and applies himself to internal mental tranquillity (*ajjhataṃ ceto-samathaṃ*), is Dhamma-abiding (*Dhamma-vihārī*). Those who are not Dhamma-abiding bhikkhus are the one devoted only to learning, only to teaching, only to recitation, and only to speculation. In A.V.ībid.4 '*Dutiya —"—*' ('The Second —"—'), the Dhamma-abiding bhikkhu is the one who further understands the meaning of the Dhamma with wisdom (*paññāya atthaṃ pajānāti*) <AA: by vipassanā understanding the four Paths&Fruits, penetrating the four Noble Truths>. And The Buddha concludes both suttas by telling the bhikkhu to go to a secluded place, and: 'Meditate, bhikkhu, do not delay! (*jhāyatha, bhikkhu, mā pamādattha!*)' <AA: practise samatha and vipassanā>.

¹ In his introduction to the commentary of the first four *Nikāyas*, the Venerable Buddhaghosa explains: '[I shall now take] the commentary (whose object is to clarify the meaning of the subtle and most excellent [e.g.] Long Collection (*Dīgha-Nikāya*)... set forth in detail by The Buddha and by his like [other teachers in the *Dīgha Nikāya*]) that in the beginning [First Council] was chanted and later rechanting [Second and Third], and was brought to the Sīhala Island [Sri Lanka] by the Arahant Mahinda the Great and rendered into the Sīhala tongue for the benefit of the islanders, and from that commentary I shall remove the Sīhala tongue, replacing it by the graceful language that conforms with Scripture and is purified and free from flaws.'

² In M.I.iii.2 '*Alagadd-Ūpama-Suttam*' ('The Snake-Simile Sutta'), The Buddha explains how study of the Dhamma with a critical mind deprives one of the good that may be gained from such study: 'And the benefit for which they [the critical readers] mastered the Dhamma, that benefit they do not experience. Those teachings, being badly grasped, lead to their long-term harm and suffering. What is the cause? Badly grasped, bhikkhus, are the teachings (*du-ggahitattā, bhikkhave, dhammānaṃ*).'

³ D.i.2 '*Sāmañña-Phala-Suttam*' ('The Asceticism-Fruit Sutta')

The king comes to see The Buddha together with his retinue. It includes ministers who follow other teachers: teachers with wrong view. The king and his ministers do not know anything about the Dhamma: they have not taken refuge in The Buddha, Dhamma and Saṃgha. They do not know about the threefold training: morality (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*), and wisdom (*paññā*).¹ That is the audience of the '*Sāmañña-Phala*' sutta.

The audience of the '*Mahā-Sati-Paṭṭhāna*' sutta, however, is quite different. There, The Buddha is teaching bhikkhus, and He is teaching in the Kuru country: most people in the Kuru country have taken refuge with The Buddha, Dhamma and Saṃgha. They are well familiar with the Dispensation's usage: they know the threefold training, and most have also undertaken the threefold training.

Properly to teach these two very different audiences, The Buddha must teach in two very different ways. But as we explained before, the aim of His teachings is the same: to explain the way to Arahantship.

TWO DIFFERENT OCCASIONS

The Buddha teaches the '*Sāmañña-Phala*' sutta because King Ajātasattu asks Him a question: the king asks The Buddha please to explain any present fruits of asceticism.

Now, the chief fruit of asceticism is Arahantship, but to explain that to King Ajātasattu and his retinue, The Buddha needs to begin from the very beginning, and slowly progress to the very end. He does it by explaining fourteen progressive present fruits of asceticism. The first present fruit of asceticism He explains is the bhikkhu's receiving alms, and the fourteenth fruit is the bhikkhu's attaining Arahantship. Having explained the attainment of Arahantship, The Buddha says to the king:

D.I.249

This, Your Majesty, is a present fruit of asceticism, [that is, compared to] the previous present fruits of asceticism, more excellent, and also more sublime. As for another present fruit of asceticism, higher and more sublime than this fruit of asceticism, there is none.

That is the occasion for the '*Sāmañña-Phala*' sutta. The occasion for the '*Mahā-Sati-Paṭṭhāna*' sutta, however, is quite different. There, nobody asks any question: The Buddha teaches of his own desire. And from the very beginning, He speaks of the highest present fruit of asceticism, and speaks of the meditation necessary to gain that fruit. Let us quote The Buddha's introduction again:

¹ The sutta begins with King Ajātasattu expressing the desire to visit an ascetic or Brahmin who can bring him peace of mind. His ministers suggest to him that he visit their teachers, but he ignores them. He then asks his court-physician Jīvaka Komārabhacca why he is silent. At this, Jīvaka suggests he should visit The Buddha. Readily the king agrees. When he arrives, he asks The Buddha if there are any present fruits of asceticism. And The Buddha asks him if he has asked this question of other teachers. When he says 'Yes', The Buddha asks him to recount what they said. The king then recounts the teachings of those other teachers, who are the teachers of his ministers. When the king has concluded his explanation, The Buddha then explains the fourteen fruits of asceticism.

D.II.372

The only way (*ek-āyano*), **bhikkhus, is this path, for beings' purification, for sorrow and lamentation's overcoming, for pain and displeasure's disappearance, for the true way's attainment, for Nibbāna's realization: that is, the four foundations of mindfulness** (*cattāro sati-paṭṭhānā*).

Afterwards, The Buddha gives an outline of the four foundations of mindfulness, divided into twenty-one contemplations. And at the end of each of the twenty-one contemplations, The Buddha concludes again with Arahantship:

D.II.374-385 & 403

And he abides independent, and does not cling to anything in the world.

That is the highest present fruit of asceticism: here The Buddha mentions it in the very beginning, and throughout the teaching. Thus, the Buddha's method of teaching in the '*Mahā-Sati-Paṭṭhāna*' sutta is quite different from His method of teaching in the '*Sāmañña-Phala*' sutta, but the aim is the same: to explain the path to Arahantship. The fruits of asceticism are fourteen successive fruits that end in Arahantship, whereas the contemplations are twenty-one different contemplations that lead to Arahantship. They both explain 'the only way'.

We have now compared the different audiences of the two suttas, the different occasions for them, and their different outlines. Let us then compare the two suttas in some detail.

DIFFERENT BEGINNINGS

MORALITY, SENSE RESTRAINT, ETC.

D.i.191-192 In the '*Sāmañña-Phala*' sutta, The Buddha begins His explanation of the path to Arahantship by describing how a householder or a householder's son gains faith in The Buddha, and goes forth as a bhikkhu. And then the Buddha explains:

D.i.193

Having gone forth, he lives restrained by the Pātimokkha-restraint, possessed of conduct and resort, in the slightest fault seeing fearsomeness, undertaking to train in the training rules.

Being possessed of good bodily action and verbal action, his livelihood is pure (*parisuddh-ājīvo*), **he is possessed of morality** (*sīla-sampanno*), **he is guarded at the doors of the faculties** (*indriyesu gutta-dvāro*), **possessed of mindfulness and discernment** (*sati-sampajaññena samannāgato*), **and is content** (*santuttho*).

This is the foundation of the practice: carefully observing the precepts, guarding the doors of the faculties (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind), being mindful and discerning, and being content.

D.i.194 Afterwards, The Buddha gives details about morality (*sīla*). First, He explains the basic abstinences of a bhikkhu. For example:

- 1) The bhikkhu abstains from killing, stealing, unchastity, false speech, slander, harsh speech, and prattle.
- 2) He abstains from eating after noon, and abstains from dancing, singing, music, and watching other entertainment.

- 3) He abstains from jewellery, perfume, and cosmetics, for the sake of adornment.
- 4) He abstains from accepting money under any form.
- 5) He abstains from buying and selling.

D.i.195 And after this, The Buddha gives a detailed explanation of how other ascetics and Brahmins practise base arts (*tīracchāna-vijjā*) and wrong livelihood (*micchā-ājīvā*), which the bhikkhu does not do. Having thus given details for how the bhikkhu's bodily and verbal action is purified, The Buddha then gives details for how the bhikkhu is guarded at the doors of the faculties, possessed of mindfulness and discernment, and is content.

This is how The Buddha begins His explanation of the path to Arahantship in the '*Sāmañña-Phala*' sutta. In the '*Mahā-Sati-Paṭṭhāna*' sutta, however, He begins His explanation of the path to Arahantship quite differently.

THE FOUR FOUNDATIONS OF MINDFULNESS

We quoted it before. Let us quote it again:

D.II.372

The only way (*ek-āyano*), bhikkhus, is this path, for beings' purification, for sorrow and lamentation's overcoming, for pain and displeasure's disappearance, for the true way's attainment, for Nibbāna's realization: that is, the four foundations of mindfulness (*cattāro sati-paṭṭhānā*).

Afterwards, The Buddha gives an outline of the four foundations of mindfulness:

D.II.373

What are the four?

- [1] **Here, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu abides contemplating the body as a body, ardent, discerning, mindful, removing covetousness and displeasure for the world.**
- [2] **He abides contemplating feelings as feelings, ardent, discerning, mindful, removing covetousness and displeasure for the world.**
- [3] **He abides contemplating consciousness as consciousness, ardent, discerning, mindful, removing covetousness and displeasure for the world.**
- [4] **He abides contemplating dhammas as dhammas,¹ ardent, discerning, mindful, removing covetousness and displeasure for the world.**

In each case, The Buddha explains the bhikkhu's practice as contemplation that is ardent, discerning and mindful, removing covetousness and displeasure for the world. After this introduction, The Buddha then explains each contemplation. Body-contemplation is fourteen contemplations, feelings-contem-

¹ dhammas: The Buddha uses this word in many ways. For example, as the sixth external base, it means all objects cognized by the mind apart from the objects cognized by the eye, ear, nose, tongue and body (see xx). Here, it refers to various objects of contemplation, including objects that He has already mentioned under the first three foundations of mindfulness. Hence, to avoid misunderstanding, the term is here left untranslated.

plation is one, consciousness-contemplation is one, and dhammas-contemplation is five contemplations: all in all twenty-one contemplations.¹

That is how The Buddha begins His explanation of the practice in the ‘*Mahā-Sati-Paṭṭhāna*’ sutta. But (as we just explained) in the ‘*Sāmañña-Phala*’ sutta, The Buddha begins by explaining how a man gains faith in The Buddha, ordains and then undertakes morality and Right Livelihood: The Buddha does not mention morality and Right Livelihood in the beginning of the ‘*Mahā-Sati-Paṭṭhāna*’ sutta. Then what do you think: are faith, morality and Right Livelihood not necessary for practising the four foundations of mindfulness?

Please remember what we explained earlier: The Buddha teaches according to His audience. In the ‘*Sāmañña-Phala*’ sutta, He is teaching the path to Arahantship to King Ajātasattu and his retinue. They do not have faith in The Buddha.² King Ajātasattu had his own father killed: that was because he did not practise morality.³ And King Ajātasattu’s retinue includes ministers who follow teachers with wrong view, teachers who for that reason do not observe the morality of an ascetic (*samaṇa*).⁴ The king and his retinue do not know about the threefold training: morality (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*), and wisdom (*paññā*). To explain the practice, The Buddha needs therefore to start with the basics: faith, morality and Right Livelihood. Furthermore, The Buddha needs to show King Ajātasattu how (from its very basis) the Buddha’s Teaching is different from the teachings of those other teachers.

In the ‘*Mahā-Sati-Paṭṭhāna*’ sutta, the Buddha’s audience is completely different. He is teaching bhikkhus, and devotees in the Kuru country. They have already taken refuge with The Buddha, Dhamma and Saṃgha. They do not need to have the basics explained: they know them already. They know that one begins by faith in The Buddha, and by establishing morality and Right Livelihood: to them, it is elementary.⁵

¹ They are listed at ‘Contemplating Arising/Perishing Phenomena’, p.19.

² This except the king’s physician: see footnote 1, p.7. He was a Stream-Enterer.

³ At the end of the sutta, he acknowledges to The Buddha that his parricide was a fault.

⁴ For how this is, see footnote 1, p.7.

⁵ In S.V.III.i.3 ‘*Bhikkhu-Suttam*’ (‘The Bhikkhu Sutta’), The Buddha explains: ‘And what is the beginning of wholesome things (*kusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ*)? Morality well purified, and view straightened (*ujukā*) [re kamma and rebirth]’ And He explains that once those two things have been achieved, then ‘dependent on morality (*sīlaṃ nissāya*), established in morality (*sīle patitthāya*)’, the bhikkhu can practise the four foundations of mindfulness. These words The Buddha uses also to explain practice of the Noble Eightfold Path (S.V.I), and the seven enlightenment factors (S.V.II). And in S.V.III.v.6 ‘*Pātimokkha-Saṃvara-Suttam*’ (‘The Pātimokkha-Restraint Sutta’), The Buddha explains the same, referring to the bhikkhu’s morality: ‘When, bhikkhu, you then live restrained by the *Pātimokkha*-restraint; possessed of conduct and resort, seeing fear-someness in the slightest fault: having undertaken the training rules, train in them, then dependent on morality... develop the four foundations of mindfulness.’ And, in, for example, A.X.I.i.1 ‘*Kīmatthiya-Suttam*’ (‘The What-Aim Sutta’), The Buddha explains the aims and rewards of wholesome morality: Non-remorse → gladness → joy → tranquillity → happiness → concentration (jhāna concentration) → knowledge&vision according to reality (vipassanā knowledge) → disenchantment (the Disenchantment Knowledge (see p.xx)) and dispassion (Arahant Path-Knowledge) → liberation by knowledge&vision (Arahant fruition/ reviewing knowledge). In A.X.I.i.2 ‘*Cetanā-Karaṇīya-Suttam*’ (‘The Necessary-Volition Sutta’), He explains that the practitioner need not wish for these things to arise one by one: they will inevitably arise. And in A.X.I.i.3 ‘*Path-*’ (Please see further next page.)

Please remember this: the Buddha's audience for the '*Mahā-Sati-Paṭṭhāna*' sutta are well familiar with the Dispensation's usage. To different audiences, The Buddha gives different guidelines.

Let us then continue comparing the two suttas.

PLACES TO MEDITATE

After He in the '*Sāmañña-Phala*' sutta has explained the bhikkhu's morality, etc., The Buddha explains how the bhikkhu goes to a secluded dwelling to meditate.

D.i.216

Possessed of this Noble aggregate of morality, possessed of this Noble facultative restraint, possessed of this Noble mindfulness and discernment, possessed of this Noble contentment, he resorts to a secluded dwelling (*vivittaṃ senāsanaṃ bhajati*): a forest (*araññaṃ*), the foot of a tree (*rukkhamūlaṃ*), a mountain (*pabbataṃ*), a gorge (*kandaraṃ*), a mountain cave (*giri-guhaṃ*), a charnel-ground (*susānaṃ*), a forest jungle (*vana-patthaṃ*), an open space (*abbhokāsaṃ*), a heap of straw (*palālapuñjaṃ*). Come back from his almsround, after the meal, he sits down (*nisīdati*), having crossed his legs (*pallaṅkaṃ ābhujitvā*), set his body straight (*ujuṃ kāyaṃ pañidhāya*), having established mindfulness before him (*parimukhaṃ satiṃ upaṭṭhapetvā*).

Here, The Buddha lists nine places where the bhikkhu can practise. In the '*Mahā-Sati-Paṭṭhāna*' sutta, however, The Buddha lists only three:

D.ii.374

Here, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu (gone to the forest (*arañña-gata*), or gone to the foot of a tree (*rukkha-mūla-gata*), or gone to an empty place (*suñña-gāra-gata*)) sits down (*nisīdati*), having crossed his legs (*pallaṅkaṃ ābhujitvā*), set his body straight (*ujuṃ kāyaṃ pañidhāya*), having established mindfulness before him (*parimukhaṃ satiṃ upaṭṭhapetvā*).

In the '*Sāmañña-Phala*' sutta, The Buddha says the bhikkhu resorts (*bhajati*) to a secluded dwelling (*vivitta senāsana*), and then lists nine kinds of secluded dwelling, including a forest (*arañña*) and the foot of a tree (*rukkha-mūla*). In the '*Mahā-Sati-Paṭṭhāna*' sutta, however, He says the bhikkhu is gone to the forest (*arañña-gata*), gone to the foot of a tree (*rukkha-mūla-gata*), or gone to an empty place (*suñña-gāra-gata*): only three places.

Here, according to the letter, The Buddha's instructions are different. According to the meaning, however, it is clear that the instructions are identical: the three places correspond to the nine places.¹

Then, in both cases, The Buddha concludes by explaining that in one of those places the bhikkhu

sits down, having crossed his legs, set his body straight, having established mindfulness before him.

The concluding instructions are identical according to both the letter and the meaning.

ama-Upanisa-Suttam' ('The First Presence Sutta'), He explains that without this succession of factors, there can be no successful meditation.

¹ Hence, the commentary to 'The Great Mindfulness-Foundation Sutta' explains that the three places correspond to the nine places. See also summary of sutta, footnote 3, p.13.

THINGS TO ABANDON

Let us then take the Buddha's next instruction in the 'Sāmañña-Phala' sutta. The bhikkhu has now found a secluded place, has sat down in meditation with mindfulness established before him, and then:

D.ii.217

- [1] **Abandoning** (*pahāya*) **covetousness** (*abhiijha*) **for the world** (*loke*), **he abides with a mind free of covetousness: he purifies his mind of covetousness.**
- [2] **Abandoning ill-will and hatred** (*byāpāda-padosa*), **he abides with a mind free of ill-will: without malice, compassionate towards all beings, he purifies his mind of ill-will.**
- [3] **Abandoning sloth&torpor** (*thīna-middha*), **he abides with a mind free of sloth&torpor: perceptive of light** (*āloka-saññī*), **mindful and discerning** (*sato-sampajāno*), **he purifies his mind of sloth&torpor.**
- [4] **Abandoning restlessness&remorse** (*uddhacca-kukkucca*), **he abides unagitated: with mind internally appeased, he purifies his mind of restlessness&remorse.**
- [5] **Abandoning scepticism** (*vicikicchā*), **he abides gone beyond scepticism, without having questions about wholesome things, he purifies his mind of scepticism.**

In many suttas, The Buddha gives these five things, and calls them the five hindrances (*pañca nīvaraṇa*).¹ He says they hinder concentration and wisdom.² Usually, however, the first one is sensual desire (*kāma-cchanda*), not covetousness (*abhiijha*). But it is not difficult to understand that in this context, covetousness (*abhiijha*) and sensual desire (*kāma-cchanda*), although different according to the letter, are identical according to the meaning.

Then what does The Buddha say in the 'Mahā-Sati-Paṭṭhāna' sutta? There, He explains how the bhikkhu sits down in meditation, establishing mindfulness before him, removing only two things:

D.ii.373

...removing covetousness and displeasure for the world (*vineyya loke abhiijhā-domanassaṃ*).

Covetousness (*abhiijhā*) The Buddha mentions in both suttas. But He does not mention the remaining hindrances in the 'Mahā-Sati-Paṭṭhāna' sutta, only displeasure (*domanassa*). According to the letter, His instructions in the two suttas are very different.³

¹ five hindrances: see 'The Hindrances Section' of the 'Mahā-Sati-Paṭṭhāna' sutta.

² In S.V.II.iv.3 'Upakkilesa-Suttaṃ' ('The Contamination Sutta'), The Buddha describes the hindrances as 'these five contaminations of the mind (*pañc-ime cittassa upakkilesā*) that contaminate the mind so it is neither flexible (*mudu*) nor wieldy (*kammaniyam*), nor radiant (*pabhassaram*) [with the light of wisdom], but brittle (*pabhaṅgu*), and not well concentrated (*na ca sammā samādhīyati*) for destruction of the taints.' And in S. *ibid.* 7 'Āvaraṇa-Nīvaraṇa-Suttaṃ' ('The Impediment & Hindrance Sutta'), He describes the hindrances also as impediments (*āvaraṇā*) and weakeners of wisdom (*paññāya du-bbalī-karaṇā*). In S.V.II.vi.2 'Pariyāya-Suttaṃ' ('The Theme Sutta'), He explains how the five hindrances become ten when each is regarded separately: sensual desire/ill-will/ and scepticism directed towards an internal/external object is six: sloth&torpor / restlessness&remorse regarded separately is four. See also footnote 6, p.61.

³ In also SN.v.13 'Udaya-Māṇava-Pucchā' ('The Udaya Student's Questions'), again explaining the way to Arahantship, The Buddha alludes to the five hindrances by way of a selection: 'Abandoning (*pahānam*) both sensual desire (*kāma-cchanda*) and displeasure (*domanassa*), and dispelling sloth (*thīna*), hindering remorse (*kukkucca*).' Here too, displeasure is the same as ill-will and hatred, sloth is the same as sloth&torpor, and remorse is the same as restlessness&remorse.

Then what do you think? To develop the four foundations of mindfulness, do we not need to remove the five hindrances?¹

If we keep in mind the Dispensation's usage, it is not difficult to understand that covetousness and displeasure in the '*Mahā-Sati-Paṭṭhāna*' sutta correspond to the five hindrances.² Whether The Buddha says the bhikkhu abandons the five hindrances or He says the bhikkhu removes covetousness and displeasure, it comes to the same thing.³ In fact, however The Buddha may put it, He means

¹ In this connection, VsM.iv.76 '*Cira-Ṭṭhiti-Sampādanam*' ('Lasting-Duration Obtainment') PP.iv.122 quotes S.V.III.i.8 '*Sūda-Suttam*' ('The Cook Sutta'). There, The Buddha describes the foolish, unlearned, unskilful bhikkhu as one who abides in the four contemplations removing covetousness/ displeasure, but whose mind does not become concentrated (*cittam na samādhiyati*), whose contaminations [see footnote 2, p.12] are not abandoned (*upakkilesā na pahīyanti*), and who does not pick up the nimitta [of samatha or vipassanā] (*nimittam na uggāḥhāti*), the reason being that he does not pick up his mind's nimitta (*cittassa nimittam*). (See also quotation, footnote 1, p.15.) And in M.II.ii.9 '*Subha-Suttam*' ('The Subha Sutta'), The Buddha explains how it is impossible to know, see, or realize a superhuman attainment (*uttarimanussa-dhamma*), a distinction in Noble knowledge and vision (*alamariya-nāṇa-dassana-vīsesa*) so long as the five hindrances are still present. In S.V.II.iv.10 '*Nīvaraṇa-Suttam*' ('The Hindrances Sutta'), The Buddha explains further: 'Five, bhikkhus, are these hindrances, makers of blindness (*andha-karaṇā*), makers of sightlessness (*a-cakkhu-karaṇā*), makers of non-knowledge (*a-ññāṇa-karaṇā*), stoppers of wisdom (*paññā-nirodhikā*), allies of opposition (*vighāta-pakkhiyā*), guides to non-Nibbāna (*a-Nibbāna-saṃvattanikā*).' And in A.V.II.i.1 '*Āvaraṇa-Suttam*' ('The Impediment Sutta'), He explains: 'Indeed, bhikkhus, that a bhikkhu without having abandoned these five impediments (*āvaraṇā*), hindrances (*nīvaraṇā*), mental surmounters (*cetaso ajjhāruhā*), weakeners of wisdom (*paññāya dubbalī-karaṇā*), that he (being without strength, weak in wisdom) should know his own good, or know another's good, or should know the good of both, or should realize a higher human attainment sufficient for distinction in Noble knowledge and vision, such a possibility is not known.'

² In, for example, D.iii.5 '*Sam-Pasādanīya-Suttam*' ('Serene Faith Sutta'), the Venerable Sāriputta explains that all Buddhas who arose in the past first abandoned the five hindrances, and then with mind well founded in the four foundations of mindfulness, having developed the seven factors of enlightenment according to reality, they attained Full Enlightenment. And He says the same about future Buddhas, and the present Buddha. The Buddha endorses his statement with '*Sādhu, sādhu, Sāriputta!*' For the exclusiveness of this approach, see A.X.II.v.5 '*Uttiya-Suttam*' ('The Uttiya Sutta'). There, one Uttiya asks The Buddha whether the whole, half or third of the world will escape by His teaching the Dhamma for the seven benefits. The Buddha does not answer. Then Ven. Ānanda explains that this is not the Tathāgata's concern. His concern is that whoever has escaped, whoever escapes, and whoever will escape from the world, every one does so by abandoning the five hindrances, by founding his mind well in the four mindfulness-foundations, and by developing the seven enlightenment-factors according to reality.

³ Hence, in, M.III.iii.5 '*Danta-Bhūmi-Suttam*' ('The Tamed Stage Sutta'), The Buddha explains how the bhikkhu resorts to one of the nine places, abandons the five hindrances (word by word as in the '*Samaññā-Phala*' sutta), and then: 'He, these five hindrances having abandoned (mental contaminations, weakeners of wisdom), abides contemplating the body as a body... feeling as feeling... consciousness as consciousness... dhammas as dhammas, ardent discerning, mindful, removing covetousness and displeasure for the world [word by word as in the '*Mahā-Sati-Paṭṭhāna*' sutta, and then the standard description for how the bhikkhu enters upon the second, third, and fourth jhānas, to develop the three sciences <see the psychic powers 4,5, and six, footnote 1, p.4>].' Accordingly, the commentary to 'The Great Mindfulness-Foundation Sutta' explains that covetousness and displeasure correspond to the five hindrances. Further to the hindrances, see M.III.ii.8 '*Ānāpāna-Ssati-Suttam*' ('The Mindfulness-of-Breathing Sutta'), and S.V.X.i.10 '*Kimila-Suttam*' ('The Kimila Sutta'): 'I do not, bhikkhus, say there is mindfulness-of-breathing for one who is forgetful (*muṭṭha-ssatissa*), for one who is undiscerning (*a-sampajānassa*).', and S.V.II.vi.5 '*Saṅgārava-Suttam*' ('The Saṅgārava Sutta'), where The Buddha explains that forgetfulness arises owing to the five hindrances. Also see S.V.II.vi.6 '*Abhaya-Suttam*' ('The [Prince]

that in order to meditate, one needs first to abandon all unwholesome things (*akusala dhamma*):¹ consciousnesses greed-rooted (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*) and delusion (*moha*).² This is achieved by attainment of access-concentration or the first *jhāna*.³ It is the standard procedure explained by The Buddha again and again throughout the *Ti-Piṭaka*.

Then you may think it is impossible to contemplate the unwholesome consciousnesses under consciousness-contemplation, if the five hindrances have been removed; and you may think it is in the same way impossible to contemplate the five hindrances under dhammas-contemplation. If we are not familiar with the Dispensation's usage, yes, then is it impossible, and then everything

Abhaya Sutta') for The Buddha's explanation of the root and cause for non-knowledge and non-vision: 'Here then, Royal-Son, at a time when one dwells with a mind full of sensual lust (*kāma-rāga*), overcome by lust, one does not know and not see (*na jānāti na passati*) the escape from arisen sensual lust according to reality (*yathā-bhūtaṃ*): this then, Royal Son, is the root, this is the cause for non-knowledge and non-vision.' And The Buddha gives the same explanation for ill-will, sloth&torpor, restlessness&remorse, and scepticism.

¹ The very purpose of practising morality is to replace unwholesome things with wholesome things: see references, etc., footnote 5, p.10. And in A.X.I.iv.1 '*Upāli-Suttaṃ*' ('The Upāli Sutta'), The Buddha explains as the fifth reason for laying down the bhikkhu rule, 'for the restraint of presently occurring taints (*diṭṭha-dhammikānaṃ āsavānaṃ saṁvarāya*).' And M.I.i.2 '*Sabb-Āsava-Suttaṃ*' ('The All-Taints Sutta'), for example, is devoted entirely to The Buddha's explaining how one needs to prevent arisen taints from arising and abandoning taints that have already arisen: by morality, mindfulness, knowledge, energy, and patience. And in His description of the first *jhāna*, He always speaks of the bhikkhu's being 'secluded from unwholesome things (*vivicca akusalehi dhammehi*)': see footnote 2, p.15. More passages could in this connection be referred to, which all have to do with the preliminaries to practising the four foundations of mindfulness: see also next footnote.

² The Buddha makes this very clear in M.I.ii.10 '*Vitakka-Saṅṭhāna-Suttaṃ*' ('The Application-Settlement Sutta'): 'Here, bhikkhus, owing to some sign, paying attention to some sign (*yaṃ nimittaṃ manasikaroto*), to a bhikkhu there arise evil (*pāpakā*), unwholesome applications (*akusalā vitakkā*): desire-related (*chand-ūpasamhīṭā-pi*), and hatred-related (*dos-ūpasamhīṭā-pi*), and delusion-related (*moh-ūpasamhīṭā-pi*). Then, bhikkhus, that bhikkhu should pay attention to that sign with another sign that is wholesome-related (*kusal-ūpasamhīṭaṃ*). Paying attention to that sign with another sign that is wholesome-related, whatever evil, unwholesome applications (desire-related, and hatred-related, and delusion-related), they are abandoned (*te pahiyanti*), they go away (*te abbhathāṃ gacchanti*). With their abandoning and going away, consciousness (*cittaṃ*) settles (*saṅ-ṭiṭṭhati*), rests (*sammasīdati*), is united (*ekodi hoti*), and concentrated (*samādhiyati*).' And then the Buddha compares it to a carpenter's pushing a rough peg out with a finished peg. <Here, application is a synonym for intention (*saṅkappa*): sensual intention (*kāma*), ill intention (*byāpāda*-), and harmful intention (*vihimsā-saṅkappa*).> In DhS.iv.1507 '*Nīvaraṇa-Gocchakaṃ*' ('The Hindrances Cluster'), He also explains: 'What phenomena are hindrance-associated (*nīvaraṇa-sampayuttā*)? The arising of the twelve unwholesome consciousnesses (*dvā-dasa akusala-citt-uppādā*).' And in DhS.ibid.1508, He explains that all remaining mental (and material) phenomena are hindrance-dissociated (*nīvaraṇa-vippayuttā*).

³ Accordingly, DA.ii.9 (379) '*Mahā Sati-Pathhāna-Suttaṃ*' ('The Great Mindfulness-Foundation Sutta') explains: 'Therein, the in&out-breath section, the repulsiveness section they are two absorption meditation-subjects (*appanā-kammaṭṭhānāni*); and the charnel-grounds by way of danger-contemplation (*sivathikānaṃ pana ādīnav-ānupassanā-vasena*) (included in the remaining twelve) are said to be just access meditation-subjects (*upacāra-kammaṭṭhānān-ēvāti*).' Thus, the postures and discerning subjects serve only as *vipassanā* meditation subjects, whereas the remaining twelve body-contemplations may serve both as *samatha* and *vipassanā* meditation subjects. DA.ii.ibid. (404), however, explains that according to the Venerable Long [Suttas] Reciter (*Dīgha-Bhāṇaka*) Mahāsīva, the nine charnel grounds can serve only

becomes very confused. But do not worry, The Buddha did not forget those two contemplations: the Venerable Commentary Teachers did not forget them either. We shall explain it when we get to those two contemplations.

Now you may begin to understand that if we are not familiar with the Dispensation's usage, much confusion can arise. We may see differences where none are to be seen, and we may give nourishment to scepticism (*vicikicchā*) and unfaith (*a-saddhā*).¹ That is very dangerous. How very dangerous it is we may understand when we go on to The Buddha's meditation instructions.

THE MEDITATION

Meditation is what The Buddha refers to when He says the bhikkhu abandons or removes the five hindrances. They are namely abandoned or removed by concentration. In the '*Sāmañña-Phala*' sutta, The Buddha explains:

D.1.225

When he observes how these five hindrances are abandoned in him, gladness arises; from gladness, joy arises (*pīti jāyati*), from the joyous mind his body is tranquil (*pīti-manassa kāyo passambhati*); with his body tranquilized (*passaddha-kāyo*), he experiences happiness (*sukhaṃ vedeti*), and being happy, his mind is concentrated (*cittaṃ samādhiyati*).

Here again, if we are not familiar with the Dispensation's usage, we may not understand that The Buddha is here describing how the bhikkhu progresses towards jhāna. When He afterwards explains the four jhānas, we see Him namely refer to the same aspects of jhāna: seclusion from sense pleasures (*viviceva kāmehi*), seclusion from unwholesome things (*vivicca akusalehi dhammehi*), (which is abandonment of the five hindrances), and rapture and happiness born of that seclusion (*vivekaja pīti-sukha*), which goes through the whole body.² In this way, we may understand that the five hindrances are abandoned with concentration, and concentration is achieved with abandonment of the five hindrances.³

Having now understood the relationship between abandoning the hindrances and developing concentration, we understand that in the '*Mahā-Sati-Paṭṭhāna*'

¹ In, for example, S.V.II.vi.1 '*Āhāra-Suttaṃ*' ('The Nourishment Sutta'), The Buddha speaks of the things that serve as nourishment (*āhāra*) for the hindrances. For scepticism, He says: 'There are, bhikkhus, things that lead to scepticism. Giving much unwise attention (*a-yoniso-manasikāra*) to them, that is nutriment for the arising of unarisen scepticism, and for further development and increase of arisen scepticism.' The denourishment of scepticism is achieved by six things: the first one is being very learned (*bahu-ssutatā*) both in the Pali and the meaning. That is the same as to say being well familiar with the Dispensation's usage (See the commentary to 'The Hindrances Section' of the '*Mahā-Sati-Paṭṭhāna*' sutta).

² Next after the quoted passage, The Buddha explains: 'He (secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome things) abides having entered the first jhāna, which is accompanied by application, sustainment, and seclusion-born joy and happiness. He soaks, steeps, fills, and impregnates this very body by seclusion-born joy and happiness, so that not any part of the body is unimpregnated by seclusion-born joy and happiness.'

³ Next after the quoted passage, The Buddha explains: 'He (secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome things) abides having entered the first jhāna, which is accompanied by application, sustainment, and seclusion-born joy and happiness. He soaks, steeps, fills, and impregnates this very body by seclusion-born joy and happiness, so that not any part of the body is unimpregnated by seclusion-born joy and happiness.'

sutta, **removing covetousness and displeasure** means to develop concentration.¹ King Ajātasattu and his retinue need to have it explained in some detail, whereas the audience in the Kuru country do not: most of them have practical experience of jhāna. They know that the only way to Nibbāna is threefold: morality (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*paññā*).

To understand that the Dispensation's usage works in this way becomes very easy if we always remember why The Buddha teaches the Dhamma. He teaches the Dhamma for one reason only: to attain Arahantship. It is for the attainment of Arahantship that The Buddha teaches the only way. And the only way is always the threefold training: training in morality (observing the precepts), training in concentration (samatha meditation), and training in wisdom (vipassanā meditation). The Buddha does not teach the only way for any other reason or in any other way. This is the Dispensation's usage: please do not forget this principle.

KNOWLEDGE AND VISION

In the '*Sāmañña-Phala*' sutta, The Buddha then explains in some detail how the bhikkhu develops the jhānas. He explains how the bhikkhu attains the first jhāna, the second jhāna, the third jhāna, and the fourth jhāna: there is no need, perhaps, for us here to discuss His explanation of the four jhānas. The four jhānas are samatha meditation (*samatha-bhāvanā*), the training of concentration (*samādhi*).²

Having explained how the bhikkhu attains the fourth jhāna, The Buddha then explains how the bhikkhu emerges from jhāna to practise vipassanā:

D.i.234

With consciousness thus concentrated (*samāhite citte*), purified (*parisuddhe*), cleansed (*pariyodāte*), unblemished (*anaṅgaṇe*), with contaminations gone (*vigat-ūpakkilese*), become flexible (*mudu-bhūte*), **wieldy (*kammaniye*), **fixed** (*ṭhite*), **attained to imperturbability** (*āneñja-ppatte*), **he****

¹ Hence, VsM.iv.76 '*Cira-Ṭṭhiti-Sampādanaṃ*' ('Lasting-Duration Obtainment') PP.iv.124-125 explains: 'When a bhikkhu enters upon a jhāna without [first] completely suppressing sensual lust by reviewing the dangers in sensuality, etc.... completely tranquillizing bodily irritability by tranquillizing the body... completely removing sloth&torpor by recollecting the element of initiative, etc.... completely abolishing restlessness&remorse by bringing to mind the samatha nimitta, etc.... completely purifying his mind of other things that constrict concentration (*samādhi-paribandhe dhamme*), then that bhikkhu soon comes out of that jhāna again, like a bee that has gone into an unpurified hive, like a king who has gone into an unclean park. But when he enters upon a jhāna after [first] completely purifying his mind of things that constrict concentration, then he remains in the attainment even for a whole day, like a bee that has gone into a completely purified hive, like a king who has gone into a perfectly clean park. Hence, the Ancients said: "So let him dispel sensual lust, and aversion, Restlessness and torpor, with doubt as the fifth/ With a mind made joyous in seclusion,/ Like a king in a garden where all is clean." So if he wants to obtain jhāna of lasting duration, he must enter upon it after [first] purifying his mind of constricting things.' In Vin.Pār.I.iv.232 '*Catuttha-Pārājikāṃ*' ('Fourth Defeat'), Ven. Mahāmogallāna reports having heard elephants bathing, trumpeting, etc. in the river Sappinikā while he was in the fourth jhāna. When other bhikkhus accuse him of making false claims to the attainment, The Buddha exonerates him: 'There is, bhikkhus, such concentration, but it is impure (*a-parisuddho*):' The commentary explains that he heard the elephants in between attainments (*an-to-samāpattiyāṃ*).

² For The Buddha's explanation of how samatha needs to be developed, see '3) What Needs to Be Developed by Direct Knowledge', p.33.

directs and turns his consciousness towards knowledge and vision (*ñāṇa-dassanaṇāya cittaṃ abhinīharati abhininnāmeti*).¹

TWO SIMILES

EXAMINING A GEM IN ONE'S HAND

And then to explain the bhikkhu's vipassanā meditation, The Buddha uses the simile of a man examining a gem in his hand:

D.i.235

And just as if, Your Majesty, there was a gem, a beryl, beautiful, genuine, well-cut into eight facets, translucent, clear, unclouded, in every way perfect, strung onto a thread (*sutam*): **a blue, yellow, red, white, or cream thread. A man with good eyesight having taken it into his hand were to consider it as such: 'This is a gem, a beryl, beautiful, genuine, well-cut into eight facets, clear, distinct, unstained, in every way perfect, strung onto a thread: a blue, yellow, red, white, or cream thread.'**

The man is able directly, clearly and distinctly to see the different characteristics of the gem in his hand.

UNDERSTANDING BODY & CONSCIOUSNESS

The Buddha uses this simile to explain how the bhikkhu with concentrated mind is able directly, clearly and distinctly to know and see the characteristics of materiality and mentality:

D.i.235

So too, Your Majesty, with consciousness thus concentrated, purified, cleansed, unblemished, with contaminations gone, become flexible, wieldy, fixed, attained to imperturbability, he directs and turns his consciousness towards knowledge and vision.

Thus he understands (*so evaṃ pajānāti*): **'This then is my body** (*kāyo*), **material, made of the four great essentials** (*cātu-mahā-bhūṭiko*), **come of the union of mother and father,**² **a heap of rice, gruel and curry,**³ **an impermanent, rubbable, squeezable, breakable and decomposable thing** (*anicc-ucchādana-parimaddana-bhedana-viddhaṃsana-dhammo*). **And this then is my consciousness** (*viññāṇaṃ*), **attached to it** (*ettha sitaṃ*), **and bound up with it** (*ettha paṭibaddhaṃ*).

This is how the bhikkhu knows and sees the materiality that is his body, knows and sees how it has come into being, knows and sees how it is main-

¹ This is what the commentaries call insight-basis jhāna (*vipassanā-pādaka-jjhāna*). VsM.xi.362 '*Samādhi-Ānisaṃsa-Kathā*' ('Discussion of the Concentration-Benefits') PP.xi.121 explains: 'When ordinary people and trainees [non-Arahant Noble Ones] develop it [concentration], thinking "After emerging we shall exercise insight with concentrated consciousness," the development of absorption concentration provides them with the benefit of insight by serving as the proximate cause for insight, and so too does access concentration.' This is followed by a quotation from S.III.I.i.5 '*Samādhi-Suttam*' ('The Concentration Sutta'): see quotations at 'Samatha Needs to Be Developed by Direct Knowledge', p.57. Insight-basis jhāna is the second of five benefits to be gained from developing concentration: see 'VsM.xi.362 '*Samādhi-Ānisaṃsa-Kathā*' ('Discussion of the Benefit of Concentration'), with sutta references.

² In M.I.iv.8 '*Mahā-Tanhā-Saṅkhaya-Suttam*' ('The Great Craving-Destruction Sutta'), The Buddha explains that the embryo is conceived in the womb when three factors are present: 1) union of mother & father; 2) it is the mother's season; 3) there is someone ready to be born, a *gandhabba* (MA: not someone nearby watching the union, but a being due to be reborn at that time because of the workings of kamma).

³ This refers to nutriment-born materiality.

tained, knows and sees that it is impermanent, and knows and sees that it perishes. In the same way, this is how the bhikkhu knows and sees the mentality that is his consciousness, and knows and sees how it is attached to and bound up with the body.¹ He knows and sees these various phenomena as directly, clearly and distinctly as a man with good eyesight sees the various characteristics of a beautiful, brilliant gem that he holds in his hand.²

D.i.236-248 Afterwards, The Buddha explains to King Ajātasattu how the bhikkhu develops the six psychic powers (*abhiññā*): flying, walking on water, the divine ear, the divine eye, etc.³ The sixth psychic power is the supramundane psychic power of the Taints-Destruction Knowledge (*Āsava Khaya-Ñāṇa*): that is the attainment of Arahantship.

WATCHING A MOUNTAIN LAKE

To describe the Taints-Destruction Knowledge, The Buddha again uses a simile that describes the clarity and detailed immediacy of the bhikkhu's knowing and seeing the Four Noble Truths:

D.i.249

And just as if, Your Majesty, there were a lake in the mountains (translucent, clear, unclouded), where a man with good eyesight (standing on the edge) could see shells, gravel, and pebbles, and also shoals of fish swimming about and resting. It would occur to him: 'This lake is translucent, clear, unclouded. Here are these shells, gravel and pebbles, and also these shoals of fish swimming about and resting.'

So too, Your Majesty, with consciousness thus concentrated (*samāhite citte*), purified (*parisuddhe*), cleansed (*pariyodāte*), unblemished (*anaṅgaṇe*), with contaminations gone (*vigat-ūpakilese*), become flexible (*mudu-bhūte*), wieldy (*kammaṇiye*), fixed (*thite*), attained to imperturbability (*āneñjappatte*), he directs and turns his consciousness towards the Taints Destruction Knowledge (*Āsavānaṃ Khaya-Ñāṇāya cittaṃ abhinīharati abhininnāmeti*).

- [1] **He understands according to reality: 'This is suffering (*idaṃ dukkhaṃ*).'**
- [2] **He understands according to reality: 'This is the origin of suffering (*ayaṃ dukkha-samudayo*).'**
- [3] **He understands according to reality: 'This is the cessation of suffering (*ayaṃ dukkha-nirodho*).'**
- [4] **He understands according to reality: 'This is the way leading to the cessation of suffering (*ayaṃ dukkha-nirodha-gāminī-paṭipadā*).'**⁴

¹ In S.V.III.v.2 '*Samudaya-Suttaṃ*' ('The Origin Sutta'), The Buddha explains the origin of each of the four foundations of mindfulness: the origin of the body is nutriment (*āhāra*); of feelings is contact (*phassa*); of consciousness (*citta*) is mentality-materiality (*nāma-rūpa*) (see dependent origination); and the origin of dhammas is attention (*manasikāra*). And in S.III.I.vii.9 '*Rādha-Suttaṃ*' ('The Rādha Sutta'), The Buddha explains that 'this body with consciousness' and all 'external signs' is the five aggregates of past, future, or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near.

² For such direct vision see also The Buddha's similes at 'The Five Similes for Vipassanā', p.35.

³ psychic powers: see footnote 1, p.4. Here, however, The Buddha describes the first psychic power as two separate present fruits of asceticism: (1) being one, becoming many; being many, becoming one; (2) appearing and disappearing, etc.

⁴ After this, The Buddha explains how the bhikkhu in the same way understands (*pajānati*) each of the taints according to reality (*yathā-bhūtaṃ*). And then 'Knowing thus, seeing thus (*tassa evaṃ jānato, evaṃ passato*)', his mind is liberated from the three taints: the sensuality-, existence-, and ignorance taint. Thus: 'With liberation, there is the knowledge of liberation (*vimuttasmiṃ vimut-* (Please see further next page.)

That is The Buddha's description of Arahantship.

As you will now have noticed, when The Buddha describes the practice of vipassanā, and realization of the Four Noble Truths (the realization of Nibbāna), He uses similes that describe direct and completely clear, detailed and distinct knowledge: knowing and seeing the different characteristics of a gem in one's hand, and knowing and seeing the small fish, gravel, sand, shells, etc. at the bottom of a translucent and clear lake. Please remember these similes, for we shall refer to them in our explanation of how the yogi discerns and contemplates ultimate materiality and ultimate mentality.

Now we have seen how The Buddha explains the practice to Arahantship in the '*Sāmañña-Phala*' sutta. Let us then see how He explains it in the '*Mahā-Sati-Paṭṭhāna*' sutta.

CONTEMPLATING ARISING/PERISHING PHENOMENA

As you will remember, The Buddha first explains how the bhikkhu undertakes the four contemplations, contemplating the body as a body, contemplating feelings as feelings, etc. And in all cases, He says that the bhikkhu undertakes the contemplation,

D.ii.373

...ardent, discerning, mindful, removing covetousness and displeasure for the world.

Afterwards, The Buddha explains each contemplation:

D.ii.374-403

I) Body-contemplation (*kāy-ānupassanā*) is contemplation of fourteen things:

- 1) the in&out-breath (*ān-āpāna*)
- 2) the postures (*iriyāpatha*)
- 3) discernment (*sam-pajāna*)
- 4) paying attention to repulsiveness (*paṭikkūla-manasikāra*)
- 5) paying attention to the elements (*dhātu-manasikāra*)
- 6-14) the nine charnel-grounds (*nava-sivathika*)

II) Feelings-contemplation (*vedan-ānupassanā*) is contemplation of one thing.

III) Consciousness-contemplation (*citt-ānupassanā*) is contemplation of one thing.

IV) Dhammas-contemplation (*dhamm-ānupassana*) is contemplation of five things (*dhamma*):

- 1) the hindrances (*nivarana*)
- 2) the aggregates (*khandha*)
- 3) the bases (*āyatana*)
- 4) the enlightenment factors (*bojjhaṅga*)
- 5) the Truths (*Sacca*)

All in all, there are twenty-one different contemplations (14+1+1+5).

For each of the fourteen body-contemplations, The Buddha gives the same seven instructions:

tamiti nānaṃ hoti). He understands (*pajānati*): "Birth is ended (*khūṇā jāti*), the holy life has been lived (*vusitaṃ brahmacariyaṃ*), done is what had to be done (*kataṃ karaṇīyaṃ*). There is no further of this being (*nāparaṃ ithattāya*)."

D.ii.374-379

- [1] **Thus he abides contemplating the body as a body internally** (*ajjhataṃ*),
 [2] **or he abides contemplating the body as a body externally** (*bahiddhā*),
 [3] **or he abides contemplating the body as a body** [both] **internally and externally.**
 [4] **He abides contemplating arising-phenomena** (*samudaya-dhammā*) **in the body;**
 [5] **or he abides contemplating perishing-phenomena** (*vaya-dhammā*) **in the body;**
 [6] **or he abides contemplating** [both] **arising&perishing phenomena in the body.**
 [7] **Or mindfulness that ‘there is the body’ is established just sufficient for knowledge**
 (*nāṇam-attāya*), **sufficient for mindfulness** (*paṭissatiṃ-attāya*).

In the same way, The Buddha says feelings are to be contemplated internally, externally, internally and externally, with arising phenomena to be contemplated, perishing phenomena, and arising&perishing phenomena. Or mindfulness that ‘there are feelings’ is to be established just sufficient for knowledge and mindfulness. He gives the same kind of instructions for consciousness-contemplation, and the five dhammas-contemplations.

At the end of each of the twenty-one contemplations, The Buddha explains how the bhikkhu attains Arahantship:

D.ii.374-385 & 403

And he abides independent, and does not cling to anything in the world.

DIFFERENT GUIDELINES

In the ‘*Sāmañña-Phala*’ sutta, the Buddha’s explanation of vipassanā was very brief: here, although it is more detailed, it is still very brief. But please remember The Buddha’s opening words in the ‘*Mahā-Sati-Paṭṭhāna*’ sutta:

D.ii.372

The only way, bhikkhus, is this path (*ek-āyano ayaṃ, bhikkhave, maggo*).

That means there is no other way. No other way to do what? The Buddha said there is no other way to realize Nibbāna. The path does not fork into two or three paths. There is only one way, but there are many different guidelines. The Path explained in the ‘*Sāmañña-Phala*’ sutta is the same as the path explained in ‘*Mahā-Sati-Paṭṭhāna*’ sutta: The Buddha’s very brief explanation of the path to King Ajātasattu covers the four foundations of mindfulness. The explanations are different according to the letter, but according to the meaning, they are the same: very brief guidelines on how to practice ‘the only way’.

To help us understand these very brief guidelines, we may refer to other guidelines. That is what the learned elders in the Buddha’s time would do, and that is what they explain in the commentaries: that is the purpose of the commentaries.

THE OBJECTS OF VIPASSANĀ

THE ALL

If we study the *Visuddhi-Magga*,¹ we see that to explain vipassanā, it quotes a sutta from the *Samyutta-Nikāya*: a sutta from the chapter on impermanence in the 'Saḷ-Āyatana-Samyutta'.² There, The Buddha explains:

S.IV.46

The all, bhikkhus, is to be known directly (*sabbaṃ, bhikkhave, abhiññeyyaṃ*).

And what, bhikkhus, is the all that is to be known directly?

[1] **The eye, bhikkhus, is to be known directly** (*cakkhu, bhikkhave, abhiññeyyaṃ*).

[2] **Sights are to be known directly** (*rūpā abhiññeyyā*).

[3] **Eye-consciousness is to be known directly** (*cakkhu-viññāṇaṃ abhiññeyyaṃ*).

[4] **Eye-contact is to be known directly** (*cakkhu-samphassa abhiññeyyo*).

[5] **And any feeling that arises because of eye-contact** (*yam-pidaṃ cakkhu-samphassa-paccayā uppajjati vedayitaṃ*), **be it pleasant** (*sukhaṃ vā*), **painful** (*dukkhaṃ vā*), **or neither painful nor pleasant** (*a-dukkhaṃ-a-sukhaṃ vā*), **that too is to be known directly** (*tam-pi abhiññeyyaṃ*).

These five phenomena to be known directly are the eye, sights, eye-consciousness, eye-contact, and any feeling arisen because of eye-contact.

The Buddha then explains five more phenomena that need to be known directly:

- the ear (*sota*), sounds (*sadda*), ear-consciousness (*sota-viññāṇa*), ear-contact (*sota-samphassa*), and any feeling that arises because of ear-contact, be it pleasant, painful or neither painful nor pleasant.
- the nose (*ghāna*), odours (*gandha*), nose-consciousness (*ghāna-viññāṇa*), nose-contact, and any feeling that arises because of nose-contact, be it pleasant, painful or neither painful nor pleasant.
- the tongue (*jivhā*), flavours (*rasa*), tongue-consciousness (*jivhā-viññāṇa*), tongue-contact (*jivhā-samphassa*), and any feeling that arises because of tongue-contact, be it pleasant, painful or neither painful nor pleasant.

¹ *Visuddhi-Magga (Purification Path)*: this is the chief commentary on the threefold training for Arahantship. It is organized into three sections: i) morality, ii) concentration, and iii) wisdom. In accordance with M.I.iii.4 'Ratha-Vinīta-Suttaṃ' ('The Chariot-Relay Sutta'), i) morality is explained as 1–Morality Purification; ii) concentration is explained as 2–Mind-Purification; and iii) wisdom is explained as 3–View-, 4–Doubt-Overcoming-, 5–Path&Non-Path-Knowledge & Vision-, 6–Practice of Knowledge&Vision-, and 7–Knowledge&Vision Purification. The *Visuddhi-Magga* is based on the ancient commentaries recited at the First Council and afterwards, which were brought to Sri Lanka by the Arahant Mahinda. He then had them translated into Sinhalese, and they were added to by learned elders of that time. Later, a Ven. Buddhaghosa translated the original ones back into Pali, as well as the later additions, and organized and edited them, thus providing authoritative commentaries for each of the Pali Texts. His chief work was the *Visuddhi-Magga* to which he would often refer in the other commentaries.

² Vs.xx.694 'Sammāsana-Ñāṇa-Kathā' ('Discussion of the Comprehension Knowledge') PP.xx.10 quotes S.IV.I.v.4 from the 'Sabba-Anicca-Vaggo' ('The "All Is Impermanent" Chapter'), referring to the quotation of it in the very beginning of Ps.I.I.3 'Suta-Maya-Ñāṇa-Niddeso' ('Exposition of Learning-Based Knowledge') PD.I.I.4.

- the body (*kāya*), tangibles (*phoṭṭhabba*), body-consciousness (*kāya-viññāṇa*), body-contact (*kāya-samphassa*), and any feeling that arises because of body-contact, be it pleasant, painful or neither painful nor pleasant.
- the mind (*mano*), other phenomena (*dhamma*),¹ mind-consciousness (*mano-viññāṇa*), mind-contact (*mano-samphassa*), and any feeling that arises because of mind-contact, be it pleasant, painful or neither painful nor pleasant.

In summary, the all (*sabba*) that needs to be known directly is:

- The six internal bases (*ajjhattika āyatana*): eye-, ear-, nose-, tongue-, body-, and mind base.
- The six external bases (*bāhir-āyatana*): sight-, sound-, odour-, flavour-, tangible- and dhamma base.
- The six types of consciousness (*viññāṇa*) that arise when those bases meet: eye-, ear, nose-, tongue-, body-, and mind-consciousness respectively.
- The six types of contact (*phassa*) that arise with the six types of consciousness: eye-, ear-, nose-, tongue-, body-, and mind-contact respectively.
- The feelings (*vedanā*) that arise with the six types of contact: pleasant feelings, painful feelings, and neither painful nor pleasant feelings, that arise because of eye-, ear-, nose-, tongue-, body-, and mind-contact.

These phenomena are the all (*sabba*). And The Buddha says the all must be known directly (*abhiññeyya*). S.IV.47-50 In other suttas,² The Buddha says also that the all must be fully known (*pariññeyya*), it must be abandoned (*pahātabba*), it must be realized (*sacchi-kātabba*), and it must be known fully with direct knowledge (*abhiññā-pariññeyya*). That means the all must be known directly with vipassanā knowledge.³

S.IV.26-27 In fact,⁴ The Buddha says that not knowing the all directly (*sabbaṃ an-abhijānaṃ*), not fully understanding the all (*sabbaṃ a-parijānaṃ*), not having dispas-

¹ other phenomena (*dhamma*): this refers to all phenomena cognizable by the mind other than the preceding five material objects. It includes Nibbāna and concepts.

² S.IV.I.v.5-8 ‘*Sabba-Anicca-Vaggo*’ (‘The “All Is Impermanent” Chapter’)

³ VsM.xx.693 ‘*Magga-Āmagga-Ñāṇa-Dassana-Visuddhi-Niddeso*’ (‘Exposition of the Path&Non-Path-Knowledge & Vision Purification’) PP.xx.3 quotes PsM.I.I.3 ‘*Suta-Maya-Ñāṇa-Niddeso*’ (‘Exposition of Learning-Based Knowledge’) PD.I.xx.413: ‘There are three types of mundane full knowledge (*lokiya-pariññā*): known full-knowledge (*ñāta-pariññā*), investigation full-knowledge (*tīraṇa-pariññā*), abandonment full-knowledge (*pahāna-pariññā*).’ VsM.xx.693/PP.xx.3-4 explains: the Known Full-Knowledge is the Mentality-Materiality Definition Knowledge (*Nāma-Rūpa-Pariccheda-Ñāṇa*), and Cause-Apprehending Knowledge (*Paccaya-Pariggaha-Ñāṇa*): they know ultimate mentality-materiality and their causes. Investigation Full-Knowledge is the Comprehension Knowledge (*Sammasana-Ñāṇa*), and Arise&Perish Knowledge (*Udaya-Bbaya-Ñāṇa*): they comprehend clearly the impermanent, suffering, and non-self nature of ultimate mentality-materiality and their causes. Abandonment Full-Knowledge is the higher insight-knowledges from the Dissolution Knowledge (*Bhaṅga-Ñāṇa*) to the Path Knowledge (*Magga-Ñāṇa*). For details, see ‘The Sixteen Knowledges’, p.36.

⁴ He says this in S.IV.I.iii.4 ‘*Paṭhama A-Parijānana-Suttaṃ*’ (‘The First Without-Fully-Knowing Sutta’). There, He gives the same list as above at ‘The All’, p.20. But in ibid.5 ‘*Dutiya A-Parijānana-Suttaṃ*’ (‘The Second ditto’), He lists the six internal bases, the six external bases, the six types of consciousness, and in each case, the things cognizable along with the individual type of consciousness: for example, the things cognizable along with eye-consciousness

(*cakkhu-viññāṇātābbā dhammā*). That is the mental factors associated with the fully-known eye-

(Please see further next page.)

sion for the all (*sabbaṃ a-virājayam*), and not abandoning the all (*sabbaṃ a-ppajajam*), it is impossible to destroy suffering (*abhabbo dukkha-kkhayāya*). That means we cannot destroy suffering unless we know the all directly with our own vipassanā knowledge.

THE BASES-ALL & IDENTITY-ALL

Here again, we need to be careful how we understand the all: the all may be the same according to the letter, but different according to the meaning.¹

According to the Dispensation's usage, when The Buddha explains the all, He means all phenomena: mundane phenomena (*lokiya-dhamma*) and supramundane phenomena (*lokuttara-dhamma*).² But when He says the all needs to be fully known and abandoned, the all He is referring to is only mundane phenomena: formed phenomena (*saṅkhāra-dhamma*), which are known by mundane full-knowledge (*lokiya-pariññā*). He is in that case not referring to supramundane phenomena, which are known by supramundane knowledge.³

There are nine supramundane phenomena: the four Paths (*Magga*), the four Fruitions (*Phala*), and Nibbāna. The Path- and Fruitions Consciousnesses are included in the sixth internal base (the mind-base (*man-āyatana*)), and Nibbāna is included in the sixth external base (the dhamma base (*dhamm-āyatana*)). These nine supramundane phenomena are not the object of vipassanā.

To distinguish between these two types of all, we call all phenomena the bases-all (*āyatana-sabba*): that includes the nine supramundane phenomena, and is all phenomena of the four planes.⁴ The all without the supramundane, we call the identity-all (*sakkāya-sabba*): that is all phenomena of the three mundane planes. The identity-all is the object of vipassanā.⁵

consciousness, which also need to be fully known.

¹ SA.IV.I.iii.1 '*Sabba-Suttaṃ*' ('The All Sutta') explains that there are four kinds of 'all': 1) the complete all (*sabba-sabba*) (the range of a Buddha's Omniscience Knowledge); 2) the bases-all (*āyatana-sabba*) (all phenomena of the four planes (*bhūmi*): the sensual-, fine-material-, immaterial-, and supramundane planes); 3) the identity-all (*sakkāya-sabba*) (all phenomena of the three mundane planes); 4) the part-all (*padesa-sabba*) (the five material objects, the material external bases: sights, sounds, odours, flavours, and tangibles). It explains that in this sutta, 'The All Sutta', the all is the bases-all.

² The Buddha does this in S.IV.I.iii.1 '*Sabba-Suttaṃ*' ('The All Sutta'): 'The all, bhikkhu, I shall teach you.' See further footnote 1, p.22.

³ See footnote 3, p.22.

⁴ The three mundane planes are also called the three elements (*dhātu*) (see footnote 1, p.29), and the inferior-, middle-, and superior element (see A.III.II.iii.6 '*Paṭhama-Bhava-Suttaṃ*' ('The First Existence Sutta')). The supramundane plane is also called the cessation element (*nirodha-dhātu*) (see Iti.II.iii.2 '*Dhātu-Suttaṃ*' ('The Element Sutta')), and the Nibbāna element (*Nibbāna-dhātu*) (see Iti.ii.8 '*Nibbāna-Dhātu-Suttaṃ*' ('The Nibbāna-Element Sutta')).

⁵ identity all: in M.I.i.1 '*Mūla-Pariyāya-Suttaṃ*' ('The Root-Theme Sutta'), The Buddha explains how the uneducated, ordinary person in one of four ways perceives an identity of self with all mentality-materiality (the all), including mistaken attainments of Nibbāna. And in M.III.v.6 '*Cha-Chakka-Suttaṃ*' ('The Six Sixes Sutta'), The Buddha explains that identity (*sakkāya*) originates in seeing the six internal and external bases (the all) as 'This is mine (*etaṃ mama*)', 'This I am (*eso-ham-asmi*)', or 'This is my self (*eso me attā*).' And in S.III.XV.2 '*Etaṃ-Mama-Suttaṃ*' ('The "This Is Mine" Sutta'), He explains the same with regard to clinging to the five aggregates: in the preceding/subsequent suttas, He explains also that such clinging is the origin of wrong
(Please see further next page.)

Please remember these two types of ‘the all’ when we again mention the all.

THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

Let us then look at another sutta from the *Samyutta-Nikāya*: the ‘*Kūṭā-Gāra*’ sutta. There, The Buddha explains what needs to be done to put a complete end to suffering according to the Noble Truths classification:¹

S.V.1114

Indeed, bhikkhus, if anyone said: ‘Without building the lower structure of a peaked house, I shall erect the upper structure’, such a possibility does not exist.

So too, if anyone said:

- [1] **‘Without penetrating (an-abhisamecca) the Noble Truth of Suffering (Dukkhaṃ Ariya-Saccaṃ) according to reality (yathā-bhūtaṃ), ‘I shall put a complete end to suffering’ (sammā dukkhassantaṃ karissāmi), such a possibility does not exist (n-etaṃ thānaṃ vijjati).**
- [2] **‘without penetrating the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering (Dukkha-Samudayaṃ Ariya-Saccaṃ) according to reality; ‘I shall put a complete end to suffering’, such a possibility does not exist.**
- [3] **‘without penetrating the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering (Dukkha-Nirodhaṃ Ariya-Saccaṃ) according to reality; ‘I shall put a complete end to suffering’, such a possibility does not exist.**
- [4] **‘without penetrating the Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering (Dukkha-Nirodha-Gāminī Paṭipadā Ariya-Saccaṃ) according to reality, ‘I shall put a complete end to suffering’, such a possibility does not exist.**

Here, The Buddha says that to put a complete end to suffering, you need to penetrate suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path leading to its cessation. And please remember, your knowledge and vision of the Four Noble Truths needs to be as direct, clear and distinct as knowing and seeing the small fish, gravel, sand, shells, etc. at the bottom of a translucent and clear lake.

THE FIVE CLINGING-AGGREGATES

What is suffering? It is the five clinging-aggregates (*pañc-upādāna-kkhandha*):²

S.V.1081

- 1) The materiality clinging-aggregate..... (*rūp-upādāna-kkhandha*)
- 2) The feeling clinging-aggregate..... (*vedan-upādāna-kkhandha*)
- 3) The perception clinging-aggregate..... (*saññ-upādāna-kkhandha*)

view, the identity view, and the view of self. In all the suttas, He then explains that such identification ceases with practice of vipassanā, to see that the bases / aggregates are not impermanent, suffering and non-self.

¹ S.V.XII.v.4. A peaked house is here a single-storied house with four outside pillars that are surmounted with beams supporting a peaked roof.

² In His first teaching, (S.V.XII.ii.1 ‘*Dhamma-Cakka-Ppavattana-Suttaṃ*’ (‘The Dhamma-Wheel Setting-in-Motion’)), The Buddha explains: ‘In short, the five aggregates of clinging are suffering (*saṃkhitteṇa pañcupādānakkhandhā dukkhā*).’ And in S.V.XII.ii.3 ‘*Khandha-Suttaṃ*’ (‘The Aggregate Sutta’), He explains: ‘And what, bhikkhus, is the Noble Truth of Suffering? This should be said: “The five clinging-aggregates.” That is: the materiality clinging-aggregate, the feeling... perception... formations... the consciousness clinging-aggregate. This is called, bhikkhus, the Noble Truth of Suffering.’ Further to the five aggregates, see also ‘The Five Clinging-Aggregates’, p.31.

- 4) The formations clinging-aggregate..... (*saṅkhār-upādāna-kkhandha*)
 5) The consciousness clinging-aggregate..... (*viññāṇ-upādāna-kkhandha*)

Thus, according to the aggregates classification, to put a complete end to suffering, we need to penetrate the five clinging-aggregates, their arising, their cessation, and the way leading to their cessation. S.III.57 And if we study more suttas,¹ we find that indeed, The Buddha also says that to gain just a footing in the Dhamma-Vinaya and to gain final liberation from suffering:

- we need to know the five clinging-aggregates directly,
- to know the arising of the five clinging-aggregates directly.
- we need to know the cessation of the five clinging-aggregates directly
- we need to know the way leading to the cessation of the five clinging-aggregates directly.

S.III.24 And again,² He explains:

- without directly and fully knowing the five clinging-aggregates,
- without having dispassion for the five clinging-aggregates,
- without abandoning the five clinging-aggregates,

we cannot destroy suffering.

THE SIX INTERNAL / EXTERNAL BASES

S.IV.21/22 Elsewhere,³ The Buddha explains the Noble Truth of Suffering according to the bases classification: the six internal and external bases. As we ex-

¹ In S.III.I.vi.4 ‘*Upādāna-Paripavatta*’ (‘The Clinging Full-Process Sutta’), The Buddha explains that so long as He had not undergone the full process of directly knowing the five aggregates in four ways, so long did He not claim to be enlightened. And He explains: ‘Whatever, bhikkhus, ascetics or Brahmins, having thus directly known [1] materiality (*evaṃ rūpaṃ abhiññāya*), having thus directly known [2] the origin of materiality, having thus directly known [3] the cessation of materiality, having thus directly known [4] the way leading to the cessation of materiality, are practising towards disenchantment for, dispassion for, and cessation of materiality: they are practising well (*su-ppaṭipannā*).’ And He explains the same four things for the remaining four aggregates.

² The Buddha explains this in S.III.I.iii.3 ‘*Abhijāna-Suttaṃ*’ (‘The Directly-Knowing Sutta’): ‘Without, bhikkhus, knowing directly (*an-abhijānaṃ*) materiality, without fully knowing it (*a-parijānaṃ*), without having dispassion for it (*a-virājayamaṃ*), without abandoning it (*a-ppajamaṃ*), one is incapable of destroying suffering (*a-bhabbo dukkha-kkhaṇḍayāya*).’ And He explains the same four things for the remaining four aggregates. The commentary to this sutta explains that this is the same as the three types of full understanding (*pariññā*): explained footnote 3, p.22).

³ In S.V.XII.ii.4 ‘*Ajjhattik-Āyatana-Suttaṃ*’ (‘The Internal Bases Sutta’), He explains: ‘And what, bhikkhus, is the Noble Truth of Suffering? This should be said: “The six internal bases.” That is: the eye-base, the ear-base, the nose-base, the tongue-base, the body-base, the mind-base. This is called, bhikkhus, the Noble Truth of Suffering.’ And in the suttas of S.III.v.1 ‘*Cakkhu-Suttaṃ*’ (‘The Eye-Sutta’), He explains: ‘Any, arising, bhikkhus, standing, generation, and manifestation, of the eye, that is the arising of suffering, the generation of sickness, and the manifestation of ageing&death. Any arising... of the ear... nose... tongue... body... mind... the manifestation of ageing&death.’ That is the six internal bases. In the remaining suttas of that section, The Buddha explains the same for each of the six external bases, the six types of consciousness, the six types of contact, the six types of perception, the six types of volition, the six types of craving, the four great essentials as well as the air-, and space element, and the five aggregates. And in, for example, S.IV.I.xv.7 ‘*Kim-Atthiya-Brahma-Cariya-Suttaṃ*’ (‘The What-Purpose-the-Holy-Life Sutta’),

(Please see further next page.)

plained earlier, it excludes the nine supramundane phenomena. ^{S.IV.23} In that case, the six internal and external bases are the same as the identity-all.¹

Can you see the pattern, the Dispensation's usage? Excluding the nine supramundane phenomena, the all is suffering, which is the same as to say the six internal and external bases are suffering, which is the same as to say the five clinging-aggregates are suffering:² these are merely different classifications of suffering (*dukkha*).³

THE FORMED & UNFORMED

The Buddha classifies the all as also only two phenomena: the formed (*saṅkhata*) and the Unformed (*A-Saṅkhata*).⁴ Now, perhaps, it is easy for you to work out what they mean. The formed is all formations, which is the same as the identity-all, the five aggregates, suffering; the Unformed is Nibbāna, the Ultimate Happiness (*Paramaṇi Sukham*).⁵

The Buddha equates suffering with the all (explained at 'The All', p.20). For how these things can be equivalent to the six internal and external bases, see footnote 1. p.25.

¹ In S.IV.I.iii.1 '*Sabba-Suttaṃ*' ('The All Sutta'), The Buddha explains the (bases-) all as just the six internal and external bases: the six types of consciousness (see quotation at 'The All', p.20) are in that case included in the sixth internal base (the mind-base), and the six types of contact, the feelings that have thereby arisen are included in the sixth external base (the dhamma base).

² In M.I.iii.8 '*Mahā-Hatthi-Pad-Opama-Suttaṃ*' ('The Great Elephant's-Footprint Simile Sutta'), Ven. Sāriputta explains how eye-consciousness arises with the meeting of the eye, external sights, and notice thereof (MA: notice = attention (*manasikāra*), which is the breaking off the flow of bhavaṅga consciousnesses by the five-door advertent consciousness (*pañca-dvār-āvajjana-citta*)). And He explains that the materiality that has then come to be is included in the materiality aggregate; the feeling that has then come to be is included in the feeling aggregate, etc.

³ Thus to explain learning-based knowledge, Ps.I.I.i.3-6 '*Suta-Maya-Nāṇa-Niddeso*' ('Exposition of Learning-Based Knowledge') PD.I.I.i.5 begins by quoting The Buddha's listing of the all that needs to be known directly (see reference in footnote 2, p.21), and then elaborates the all as: 5 aggregates, 6 internal-, 6 external bases, 6 types of consciousness, -contact, -feeling, -perception, -volition, -craving, -application, -sustainment, 6 elements, 10 kasiṇas, 32 parts of the body, 12 bases, 18 elements, 6 sense faculties, 1 life-faculty, 2 sex faculties, 5 faculties (feelings), 5 (controlling) faculties, 3 (supramundane) faculties, 3 elements (realms), 3 types of existence, another 3 types of existence, 3 types of constituent existence, 4 jhānas, 4 divine abidings, 4 immaterial jhānas, 12 factors of dependent origination (in all 201 things). And Ps.ibid.7 (PP.ibid.6-7) then explains that the Four Noble Truths need to be known directly, and explains that the 201 things need to be known accordingly: the 201 things need to be known directly, their origin, their cessation, and the way leading to their cessation. The text continues in this way to show how the formed needs to be known in the many ways explained by The Buddha.

⁴ In S.III.I.ii.10 '*Ānanda-Suttaṃ*' ('The Ānanda Sutta'), The Buddha explains: 'Materiality then, Ānanda, is impermanent (*aniccam*), formed (*saṅkhatam*), dependently originated (*paṭicca-samuppannam*), a destructible thing (*khaya-dhammam*), perishable thing (*vaya-dhammam*), a fading thing (*virāga-dhammam*), and ceasing thing (*nirodha-dhammam*).' And He says the same for the remaining four aggregates. And in S.II.I.ii.10 '*Paccaya-Suttaṃ*' ('The Cause Sutta'), He explains the same for the twelve factors of dependent origination. See also quotation, footnote 1, p.26.

⁵ The Buddha describes Nibbāna this way in, for example, Dh.p.xv.6 '*Sukha-Vagga*' ('Happiness Chapter'): 'Hunger is the ultimate illness, formations the ultimate suffering: one this having known according to reality, Nibbāna is the ultimate happiness (*Nibbānaṃ paramaṇi sukham*).'

MENTALITY-MATERIALITY

In yet another classification, The Buddha classifies the all as just mentality-materiality (*nāma-rūpa*).¹ Then the five aggregates are classified as just two phenomena: materiality is the material, and feeling, perception, formations, and consciousness are the immaterials (*arūpa*). The material aggregate is materiality (*rūpa*), the immaterial aggregates are mentality (*nāma*): mentality-materiality (*nāma-rūpa*). The five internal material bases are materiality, the sixth internal base is mentality; the five external material bases are materiality, and the material phenomena of the sixth external base (dhamma base) are also materiality, whereas the immaterial phenomena of the sixth external base are mentality. The material phenomena of the all are materiality, the immaterial phenomena of the all are mentality. Suffering is mentality-materiality (*nāma-rūpa*). This twofold classification is very easy to understand. In our explanations of the '*Mahā-Sati-Paṭṭhāna*' sutta, usually we use this easy classification.

BODY AND CONSCIOUSNESS

The last classification we shall here mention is the one The Buddha uses in, for example, the '*Samaññā-Phala*' sutta.² There He speaks of the five aggregates, mentality-materiality, as one's body and consciousness.³ Hence,

- when The Buddha in the '*Sāmañña-Phala*' sutta says the bhikkhu with knowledge and vision (*nāṇa-dassana*) understands his body and consciousness, it is the same as to say that he penetrates the Noble Truth of Suffering, the five aggregates.
- when The Buddha says the bhikkhu with knowledge and vision understands the origin of his body, it is the same as to say that he penetrates the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering, the origin of the five aggregates.
- when The Buddha says the bhikkhu develops the four jhānas and then emerges from jhāna and with knowledge and vision understands his body and consciousness, it is samatha and vipassanā, which is the same as to

¹ Mentality-materiality (*nāma-rūpa*) may be the same according to the letter, but different according to the meaning. As a factor of dependent origination, mentality-materiality is usually said to be caused by consciousness, i.e. descent of the rebirth-consciousness is the (conascent / simultaneously arising) cause of the rebirth mentality-materiality. In that case, mentality is only the feeling-, perception, and formations-aggregate. But in, for example, S.II.I.vi.8 '*Nāma-Rūpa-Suttaṃ*' ('The Mentality-Materiality Sutta'), The Buddha explains: 'When, bhikkhus, one lives contemplating enjoyment of things that can fetter (*assād-ānupassino*), there is descent of mentality-materiality (*nāma-rūpassa avakkanti hoti*). Because of mentality-materiality, the six bases.... [etc.]' In that case, mentality-materiality is equivalent to all five aggregates. This equivalence is found several other places, for example, in S.II.I.ii.9 '*Bāla-Paṇḍita-Suttaṃ*' ('Fool-Wise Man Sutta'), He explains: 'The hindrance of ignorance, bhikkhus, of the fool, associated with craving, is whereby this body has originated. That way there is this body [with consciousness], and also external mentality-materiality: that way a pair. Dependent just on the pair of six bases, [there is] contact, touched by which (or by a certain one of them) the fool experiences pleasure and pain.... with the breakup of the body, the fool fares on to [another] body. Faring on to [another] body, he is not freed from birth, ageing and death....'

² See 'Understanding Body & Consciousness', p.17.

³ See footnote 2, p.23.

say that he penetrates the Noble Truth of the Way Leading to the Cessation of Suffering, the cessation of the five aggregates.

INTERNALLY & EXTERNALLY

If, however, we know and see only our own materiality and mentality, we will not have directly and fully known all phenomena of the four planes, will we? Our own materiality and mentality are internal (*ajjhata*), but there is also materiality and mentality that is external (*bahiddhā*). The Buddha explains it in, for example, the ‘*Mahā-Sati-Paṭṭhāna*’ sutta. Let us quote it from the body-contemplation section again:

D.ii.374-379

- [1] **Thus he abides contemplating the body as a body internally,**
 [2] **or he abides contemplating the body as a body externally,**
 [3] **or he abides contemplating the body as a body [both] internally and externally.**

In the ‘*Mahā-Sati-Paṭṭhāna*’ sutta, The Buddha explains that the bhikkhu needs also contemplate feelings internally and externally, consciousness internally and externally, and dhammas internally and externally. Only then are you able directly and fully to know the all.

ARISING, STANDING, AND PERISHING

Materiality and mentality are the formed (*saṅkhata*). The formed has three stages: arising (*uppāda*), standing (*thīti*), and perishing (*vaya*).¹ That is materiality and mentality’s impermanence characteristic. By understanding their impermanence characteristic, you understand their suffering characteristic. And by understanding their impermanence and suffering characteristics, you understand their non-self characteristic. Such understanding of the three characteristics of materiality and mentality is vipassanā. Directly and fully knowing the three characteristics of materiality and mentality is necessary for directly knowing and seeing Nibbāna, the Unformed.²

ARISING AND PERISHING PHENOMENA

Directly and fully knowing the three characteristics of the formed is vipassanā. But it may be said also in another way. We may say that vipassanā is directly and fully to see that any arising phenomenon (*samudaya-dhamma*) is also a

¹ In A.III.I.v.7 ‘*Saṅkhata-Lakkhaṇa-Suttam*’ (‘The Formed Characteristic Sutta’), The Buddha explains three characteristics of the formed: ‘Three, bhikkhus, are the formed characteristics of the formed. What three? Arising is known, perishing is known, change in standing is known.’ In S.III.I.iv.5 ‘*Ānanda-Suttam*’ (‘The Ānanda Sutta’), He explains the same for each of the five aggregates.

² In A.III.I.v.8 ‘*A-Saṅkhata-Lakkhaṇa-Suttam*’ (‘The Unformed Characteristic Sutta’), The Buddha explains three characteristics of the Unformed: ‘Three, bhikkhus, are the unformed characteristics of the Unformed. What three? Arising is not known, perishing is not known, change in standing is not known.’

perishing phenomenon (*vaya-dhamma*).¹ That is how The Buddha refers to vipassanā meditation in the '*Mahā-Sati-Paṭṭhāna*' sutta. We quoted it before; let us quote it again:

D.ii.374-379

- [4] **He abides contemplating arising-phenomena in the body;**
 [5] **or he abides contemplating perishing-phenomena in the body;**
 [6] **or he abides contemplating [both] arising&perishing phenomena in the body.**

THE PHENOMENA ARE THE SAME

Now we have explained The Buddha's different classifications of the objects for vipassanā: the all (the bases all), the First and Second Noble Truths (suffering and its cause), the five clinging-aggregates, the six internal and external bases, the formed, mentality-materiality, and body and consciousness. And we could even give more.² And you may now understand that unless we are familiar with the Dispensation's usage, we may think all these explanations are very different, and we may get confused. But, as you may now also understand, these different classifications and explanations are different only according to the letter: according to meaning, they are the same. Ultimately, when you practise vipassanā, the phenomena you need to know directly, and investigate with vipassanā knowledge are always the same, namely:

- Ultimate materiality and ultimate mentality: materiality is the material aggregate, mentality is the four immaterial aggregates, consciousness and mental factors. That is the Noble Truth of Suffering.
- The origins of materiality and mentality: there are four origins of materiality. The first origin is kamma: it produces the materiality at rebirth, and depends on the union of mother and father. In order to understand this, the bhikkhu needs thus to know and see dependent origination: he needs to know and see the arising of the rebirth-linking consciousness and rebirth-linking mentality-materiality, and the six bases. And, he needs to know and see that their cause is past ignorance, kamma-formations, craving,

¹ In S.V.XII.ii.1 '*Dhamma-Cakka-Ppavattana-Suttaṃ*' ('The Dhamma-Wheel Setting-in-Motion'), when the Venerable Kondañña attains Stream-Entry, it is described as his understanding 'Whatever arising phenomenon, all that is a ceasing phenomenon (*yaṃ kiñci samudaya-dhammaṃ, sabbaṃ taṃ nirodha-dhammaṃ*).' This is also one of the explanations of the way to Arahantship given by one of the Arahants in 'The Dhak-Tree Simile Sutta': see above footnote 2, p.5.

² In, for example, M.III.ii.5 '*Bahu-Dhātuka-Suttaṃ*' ('The Six Sixes Sutta'), The Buddha explains: 'When, Ānanda, a bhikkhu is in the elements skilled (*dhātu-kusalo*), is in the bases skilled (*āyatana-kusalo*), is in dependent origination skilled (*paṭicca-samuppāda-kusalo*), is in the possible and impossible skilled (*thān-āṭhāna-kusalo*), in that way he can be called a wise man (*pañḍito*) and an enquirer (*vīmaṃsako*).' He explains the elements as eighteen (the eye-element (*cakkhu-dhātu*), the sight-element (*rūpa-dhātu*), the eye-consciousness element (*cakkhu-viññāṇa-dhātu*), the ear-element (*sota-dhātu*), etc. <See 'The All', etc., p.20ff>), as six (the four great essentials and the air-, and space element), another six (the pleasure-, pain-, joy-, grief-, equanimity-, and ignorance element), another six (the sensual-, renunciative-, ill-will, cruelty-, non ill-will, non cruelty element), three elements (the sensual-, fine-material-, and immaterial element), and two elements (the formed and Unformed element). The bases, He explains as the six internal and external bases: the eye and sights, the ear and sounds, etc. (See 'The Six Internal / External Bases', p.25.)

clinging and kamma-existence. How else is he going to understand the cause of his body? And understand it as directly, clearly, and distinctly as understanding the characteristics of a gem in his hand?

Then the bhikkhu needs also to know and see the other three causes for materiality: consciousness, temperature, and nutriment. Nutriment is the same as to say food, which is rice, gruel and curry. The origins of materiality and mentality are the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering.

Whether The Buddha says the all, the five clinging-aggregates, the six internal and external bases, the formed, mentality-materiality, or body and consciousness, it comes to the same thing. The objects of vipassanā are always the same: ultimate materiality and ultimate mentality.¹ Indeed, we may ask, how could the objects of vipassanā ever be different? Vipassanā meditation is never more and never less than just two meditation subjects: the mentality meditation-subject (*nāma-kammaṭṭhāna*) and the materiality meditation-subject (*rūpa-kammaṭṭhāna*).²

Please remember, The Buddha's opening words in the '*Mahā-Sati-Paṭṭhāna*' sutta:

D.II.373

The only way, bhikkhus, is this path (*ek-āyano ayaṃ, bhikkhave, maggo*).

Please remember also The Buddha's descriptions of the yogi's knowledge: it is as direct, clear, distinct and detailed as knowing and seeing the different characteristics of a gem in one's hand, and as direct, clear, distinct and detailed as knowing and seeing the small fish, gravel, sand, shells, etc. at the bottom of a translucent and clear lake.

Perhaps now you will have understood a little bit about how dangerous it is not to be familiar with the Dispensation's usage.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE BY DIRECT KNOWLEDGE

Let us then conclude our explanation by looking at the '*Mahā-Saḷ-Āyatanika*' sutta of the *Majjhima-Nikāya*.³ There, The Buddha explains what happens if one does not know and see the all according to reality:

M.III.430

- **The eye, bhikkhus, not knowing and not seeing according to reality** (*a-jānaṃ a-passaṃ yathā-bhūtaṃ*),
 - **sights not knowing and not seeing according to reality,**
 - **eye-consciousness not knowing and not seeing according to reality,**
 - **eye-contact not knowing and not seeing according to reality,**
 - **and any feeling that arises because of eye-contact (be it pleasant, painful, or neither painful nor pleasant), that also not knowing and not seeing according to reality,**
- then to the eye one is attached, to sights one is attached** (*sārajjati*), **to eye-consciousness one is attached, to eye-contact one is attached, and to any feeling that arises because of eye-contact (be it pleasant, painful, or neither painful nor pleasant) to that too one is attached.**

¹ For yet other guidelines, see footnote 2, p.29.

² See also quotation at 'Understanding Body & Consciousness', p.17.

³ M.III.v.7 '*Mahā-Saḷ-Āyatanika-Suttam*' ('The Great Sixfold-Base Sutta')

Then The Buddha explains that when one is attached, and remains contemplating gratification of the eye, then will one generate new clinging-aggregates in the future: one will generate further rebirth. And He explains the same for the ear and sounds, ear-consciousness, ear-contact, etc. We discussed it before. It is the six internal bases, the six external bases, the six types of consciousness, the six types of contact, and the eighteen types of feeling. In one word, it is the all that we discussed earlier: the Noble Truth of Suffering. Attachment to these phenomena is the cause of suffering, the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering.

If, however, one does know and see the all according to reality, then (says The Buddha) one becomes unattached to the all, contemplating its danger, and one's future five clinging-aggregates will be limited: one's running on in the round of rebirth will be limited.¹

Knowing and seeing the six internal and external bases according to reality is knowing and seeing them with vipassanā knowledge. When you know and see them with vipassanā knowledge, your attachment is abandoned temporarily: when the Arahant Path&Fruition Knowledges arise, your attachment is abandoned forever. To achieve this, however, The Buddha explains that you need to do four things by direct knowledge.²

1) WHAT NEEDS TO FULLY KNOWN BY DIRECT KNOWLEDGE

First The Buddha explains the things that by direct knowledge need to be fully known:

M.III.431&433

The materiality clinging-aggregate (*rūp-upādāna-kkhandho*), **the feeling clinging-aggregate** (*vedan-upādāna-kkhandho*), **the perception clinging-aggregate** (*saññ-upādāna-kkhandho*), **the formations clinging-aggregate** (*saṅkhār-upādāna-kkhandho*), **the consciousness clinging-aggregate** (*viññāṇ-upādāna-kkhandho*):

these things need to be fully known by direct knowledge (*ime dhammā abhiññā pariññeyyā*).

The five clinging-aggregates need to be fully known by direct knowledge. We discussed this before, so perhaps there is no longer need to explain that this is the Noble Truth of Suffering: it needs to be fully known by direct knowledge.

Before we continue, however, we need to make clear what The Buddha means when He speaks of these five clinging-aggregates.

¹ The Buddha explains: 'Certainly, bhikkhus, the eye knowing and seeing according to reality (*jānaṃ passaṃ yathā-bhūtaṃ*), sights... eye-consciousness... eye-contact... any feeling that arises because of eye-contact (be it pleasant, painful, or neither painful nor pleasant)... knowing and seeing according to reality, then to the eye one is not attached (*na saraṇjati*), to sights [etc.] one is not attached.' And He explains the same for the remaining five internal/external bases, types of consciousness, contact, and the feelings arisen because of that contact. According to the meaning, this explanation is identical to The Buddha's explanation quoted (second) at 'Develop Concentration, Bhikkhus', p.59.

² In A.IV.V.vi.1 'Abhiññā-Suttam' ('The Direct Knowledge Sutta'), He explains the exact same four things, but instead says they need to be fully known with direct knowledge (*abhiññā-pariññeyyā*).

THE FIVE CLINGING-AGGREGATES

The Buddha explains the five clinging-aggregates in, for example, the ‘*Khandha*’ sutta (‘The Aggregate Sutta’) of the *Samyutta-Nikāya*:¹

S.III.48

What then, bhikkhus, are the five clinging-aggregates (*pañc-upādāna-kkhandhā*)?

- 1) **Whatever, bhikkhus, materiality (*Yaṃ kiñci, bhikkhave, rūpaṃ*),**
 [i-i] **past, future, or present (*atīt-ānāgata-paccuppannaṃ*),**
 [iii-v] **internal or external (*ajjhattaṃ vā bahiddhā vā*),**
 [vi-vii] **gross or subtle (*oḷārikaṃ vā sukhumāṃ vā*),**
 [viii-ix] **inferior or superior (*hīnaṃ vā paṇītaṃ vā*),**
 [x-xi] **far or near (*yaṃ dūre santike vā*),**

that is tainted and can be clung to, this is called the materiality clinging-aggregate (*ayaṃ vuccati rūp-upādāna-kkhandho*).

- 2) **Whatever feelings (*yā kāci vedanā*), past, future, or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near, that are tainted and can be clung to, this is called the feeling clinging-aggregate (*ayaṃ vuccati vedan-upādāna-kkhandho*).**
- 3) **Whatever perceptions (*yā kāci saññā*), past, future, or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near, that are tainted and can be clung to, this is called the perception clinging-aggregate (*ayaṃ vuccati saññ-upādāna-kkhandho*).**
- 4) **Whatever formations (*ye keci saṅkhārā*), past, future, or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near, that are tainted and can be clung to, this is called the formation clinging-aggregate (*ayaṃ vuccati saṅkhār-upādāna-kkhandho*).**
- 5) **Whatever consciousness (*yaṃ kiñci viññānaṃ*), past, future, or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near, that are tainted and can be clung to, this is called the consciousness clinging-aggregate (*ayaṃ vuccati viññān-upādāna-kkhandho*).**

These are called, bhikkhus, the five clinging-aggregates (*ime vuccanti, bhikkhave, pañc-upādāna-kkhandhā*).

S.III.82 The Buddha explains that the term ‘aggregate’ applies to the five aggregates because they are each an aggregate of eleven categories: that is the meaning of aggregate (*khandha*).²

We may thus understand that fully to know the five clinging-aggregates by direct knowledge means fully to know those five aggregates in their eleven categories by direct knowledge: as directly, clearly, distinctly and detailed as knowing and seeing the different characteristics of a gem in one’s hand.

2) WHAT NEEDS TO BE ABANDONED BY DIRECT KNOWLEDGE

Second, The Buddha explains the things that by direct knowledge need to be abandoned:

M.III.431&433

¹ S.III.I.v.6 ‘*Khandha-Suttaṃ*’ (‘The Aggregate Sutta’)

² In S.III.I.viii.10 ‘*Piṇṇama-Suttaṃ*’ (‘The Fullmoon-Night Sutta’), a bhikkhu asks The Buddha: ‘In what way then, Venerable Sir, are the aggregates called aggregates?’ (*Kittāvatā nu kho, Bhante, khandhānaṃ khandh-ādhivacanaṃ*)’ And The Buddha lists the aggregation of eleven categories for each of the five aggregates, respectively saying: ‘This is called the materiality-aggregate, this is called the feeling-aggregate [etc.]’ And He concludes: ‘This then is how, bhikkhu, the aggregates are called aggregates (*Ettāvatā kho, bhikkhu, khandhānaṃ khandh-ādhivacanaṃ* ti).’

Ignorance and existence-craving (*avijjā ca bhava-taṅhā ca*):
these things need to be abandoned by direct knowledge (*ime dhammā abhiññā pahātabbā*).

Perhaps by now we no longer need to explain that this is just another way of saying the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering, which is dependent origination, beginning with ignorance. Ignorance is non-knowledge (*a-ññāṇa*) of the Four Noble Truths:¹ it needs to be fully abandoned by direct knowledge.²

3) WHAT NEEDS TO BE DEVELOPED BY DIRECT KNOWLEDGE

Third, The Buddha explains the things that by direct knowledge need to be developed (*abhiññā bhāvetabbā*):

M.III.431&433

Samatha and vipassanā (*samatho ca vipassanā ca*):
these things need to be developed by direct knowledge (*ime dhammā abhiññā bhāvetabbā*).

SAMATHA

To develop samatha by direct knowledge is to develop concentration (*samādhi*), mental one-pointedness (*citt-ekaggatā*).³ either access-concentration (*upacāra samādhi*) or absorption concentration (*appanā samādhi*). Absorption concentration is the four jhānas. As you will remember from the '*Sāmañña-Phala*' sutta, the purpose of developing samatha by direct knowledge is so as to be able to develop vipassanā by direct knowledge.

VIPASSANĀ

Vipassanā is direct knowledge of all phenomena. But that knowledge is divided into two:⁴

VsM.xiv.427

- 1) **Mundane vipassanā** (*lokiya-vipassanā*): it takes as object the identity all (*sakkāya-sabba*), the formed element (*saṅkhata-dhātu*). That is, ultimate materiality (*paramattha-rūpa*) and ultimate mentality (*paramattha-nāma*), the Noble Truth of Suffering and the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering.

¹ In, for example, S.II.I.2 '*Vibhaṅga-Suttaṃ*' ('Analysis Sutta'), The Buddha explains ignorance: 'And what, bhikkhus, is ignorance? Whatever then, bhikkhu, is non-knowledge (*aññāṇaṃ*) of suffering... the origin of suffering... the cessation of suffering... the path leading to the cessation of suffering, that, bhikkhus, is called ignorance.'

² In His usual description of beings running on in the round of rebirth, The Buddha speaks of 'ignorance-hindered beings (*avijjā-nivaraṇānaṃ sattānaṃ*) fettered by craving (*taṅhā-saṃyojanānaṃ*). Craving is threefold: sensual-, existence-, non-existence craving. Whereas non-existence craving is eradicated with Stream-Entry, sensual craving is eradicated with Non-Return, and view-associated existence-craving is eradicated with Stream-Entry, view-dissociated existence craving is eradicated only with Arahantship. Hence, The Buddha is here explaining the most fundamental causes for rebirth that need to be eradicated.

³ AA.IV.V.vi.1 '*Abhiññā-Suttaṃ*' ('The Direct Knowledge Sutta') explains that samatha is mental one-pointedness, and vipassanā is the vipassanā knowledge of formations definiton (*saṅkhāra-pariggaha-vipassanā-ñāṇā*). AT explains that the mental one-pointedness is concentration (*samādhi*), and the vipassanā is seeing the impermanence, etc. in various ways.

⁴ VsM.xiv.427 '*Khandha-Niddesa*' ('Exposition of the Aggregates') PP.xiv.15 explains that knowledge of sensual-, fine-material-, and immaterial sphere things is mundane vipassanā, whereas knowledge of Nibbāna is supramundane vipassanā.

- 2) Supramundane vipassanā (*lokuttara-vipassanā*): it takes as object the Unformed element (*Asaṅkhata-dhātu*). That is, Nibbāna, the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering.¹

We need first to practise mundane vipassanā. Only then are we able to practise supramundane vipassanā. Only then do we have direct knowledge of all phenomena, the Four Noble Truths.

TWO TYPES OF CHARACTERISTIC

^{VsM.xx.693} Again, mundane vipassanā is direct knowledge of two types of characteristic (*lakkhaṇa*).²

Firstly, it is direct knowledge of mentality-materiality's individual characteristics (*paccatta-lakkhaṇa*):³ knowing the individual characteristics of each and every type of mentality, and each and every type of materiality, and their causes. Secondly, vipassanā is direct knowledge of mentality-materiality's general characteristics (*sammañña-lakkhaṇa*): knowing the characteristics general to all types of materiality and all types of mentality, general to all formations. The characteristics general to all formations are what we call the three characteristics (*ti-lakkhaṇa*): the impermanence characteristic (*anicca-lakkhaṇa*), the suffering characteristic (*dukkha-lakkhaṇa*), and the non-self characteristic (*an-atta-lakkhaṇa*).⁴

VIPASSANĀ ON THE FIVE CLINGING-AGGREGATES

The Buddha explains vipassanā in many suttas. For example, in the '*An-Atta-Lakkhaṇa*' sutta, He explains vipassanā on the five clinging-aggregates:⁵

S.III.59

- [1] **What do you think, bhikkhus, is materiality permanent or impermanent?**
(Impermanent, Venerable Sir.)
- [2] **That which is impermanent, is it suffering or happiness?**
(Suffering, Venerable Sir.)
- [3] **Is that which is impermanent, suffering and subject to change, fit to be regarded thus: 'This is mine; this I am; this is my self'?**
(No, Venerable Sir.)

Therefore, bhikkhus, any whatsoever materiality, past, future or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near: all materiality (*sabbaṃ rūpaṃ*), thus,

¹ In M.III.v.7 '*Mahā-Saḷ-Āyatana-Suttaṃ*' ('The Great Sixfold-Base Sutta'), The Buddha explains that when the Noble Eightfold Path arises, 'These two things occur concurrently yoked: samatha [Right Concentration] and vipassanā [Right View].' The commentary explains that they arise at the same time.

² VsM.xx.693 '*Sammasana-Ñāṇa-Kathā*' ('Discussion of the Comprehension Knowledge') PP.xx.3

³ individual characteristic (*paccatta-lakkhaṇa*) is synonymous with natural characteristic (*sa-bhāva-lakkhaṇa*).

⁴ Hence, in DhP.xx.5 '*Magga-Vagga*' ('Path Chapter'), The Buddha explains: "'All formations are impermanent' Whenever one sees this with wisdom, then one is disenchanted with suffering: this is the path to purification.' And in ibid.6, He says the same with regard to the suffering characteristic of all formations, whereas in ibid.7, He says all things are non-self (*sabbe dhammā anattā'ti*), because He is referring to the all, which is all formations as well as Nibbāna (the Unformed): it is neither impermanent nor suffering.

⁵ S.III.I.II.1.7 '*An-Atta-Lakkhaṇa-Suttaṃ*' ('The Non-self Characteristic Sutta')

according to reality (*evametaṃ yathābhūtaṃ*), **with Right Wisdom is to be seen** (*samma-ppaññāya daṭṭhabbā*): **'This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.'**

And He repeats this explanation for vipassanā on the remaining four clinging-aggregates: feelings, perception, formations, and consciousness.

In this connection, you will remember how The Buddha in the '*Sāmañña-Phala*' sutta explains your vipassanā knowledge: you need to examine the characteristics of ultimate materiality and ultimate mentality and their causes as directly, clearly and distinctly as you may examine the characteristics of a gem that you hold in your hand: that is ultimate materiality and mentality of past, future, and present, internally and externally, gross and subtle, inferior and superior, far and near.

FIVE SIMILES FOR VIPASSANĀ

In case there is any doubt about this, let us then listen to the '*Pheṇa-Piṇḍ-Ūpama*' sutta.¹ There The Buddha uses five similes to explain how the bhikkhu contemplates the five clinging-aggregates with vipassanā knowledge.

First He explains that if one were to see a lump of foam floating down the Ganges River, and one were to examine it carefully, one would see that it was only hollow, only insubstantial. And He compares such knowledge to the knowledge that arises with vipassanā meditation on the materiality clinging-aggregate:

S.III.95

So too, bhikkhus, whatever kind of materiality there is, whether past, future, or present; internal or external; gross or subtle; inferior or superior; far or near, if a bhikkhu were to see it (*passeya*), contemplate it (*nijjhāyeyya*), and carefully investigate it (*yoniso upaparikkheyya*); as he saw it, contemplated it, and carefully investigated it, it would appear to him void only, hollow only, insubstantial only. For what substance could there be in materiality?

That is how The Buddha says you should practise vipassanā on the materiality-aggregate: seeing, contemplating and carefully investigating the eleven categories of materiality.

Then He describes how rain falling on water produces water bubbles. If one examines such bubbles, one sees that a bubble arises and then bursts: it has no substance. And He compares it to the knowledge that arises with vipassanā meditation on the feelings clinging-aggregate:

S.III.95

So too, bhikkhus, whatever kind of feeling there is, whether past, future or present; internal or external; gross or subtle; inferior or superior; far or near, if a bhikkhu were to see it, contemplate it, and carefully investigate it; as he saw it, contemplated it, and carefully investigated it, it would appear to him void only, hollow only, insubstantial only. For what substance could there be in feeling?

That is how The Buddha says you should practise vipassanā on the feeling clinging-aggregate: seeing, contemplating and carefully investigating the eleven categories of feeling.

Then He explains how the bhikkhu practises vipassanā on the eleven categories of perception: they appear to him as void, hollow and insubstantial as a mi-

¹ S.III.Ix.3 '*Pheṇa-Piṇḍ-Ūpama-Suttam*' ('The Lump-of-Foam Simile Sutta')

rage. And when the bhikkhu contemplates the eleven categories of formations, they appear to him as void as the trunk of a banana tree. You know, a banana tree has a false trunk: it consists of many rolls. If one removes the many rolls, one will find nothing inside. Lastly, The Buddha explains that when the bhikkhu practises vipassanā on the eleven categories of consciousness, they appear to him as void as a magician's illusion, a mere trick, devoid of substance. That is how The Buddha says you should practise vipassanā on the five clinging-aggregates: seeing, contemplating and carefully investigating all eleven categories of the five aggregates, as directly, clearly and distinctly as you may contemplate and carefully investigate the voidness of a lump of foam, of a water bubble, etc., as directly, clearly and distinctly as you may contemplate and carefully investigate a gem that you hold in your hand.

THE SIXTEEN KNOWLEDGES

Seeing all eleven categories of the five aggregates is knowledge of the individual characteristics of mentality-materiality and their causes: that is two separate knowledges. Knowledge of the individual characteristics of mentality-materiality is knowledge of the First Noble Truth, which is one vipassanā knowledge, the Mentality-Materiality Definition Knowledge (*Nāma-Rūpa-Pariccheda-Ñāna*). Knowledge of the individual characteristics of the causes of the five aggregates is knowledge of the Second Noble Truth, which is another vipassanā knowledge: the Cause-Apprehension Knowledge (*Paccaya-Pariggaha-Ñāna*).

Contemplating and carefully investigating the impermanence, suffering, and non-self characteristics of the eleven categories of the five aggregates is knowledge of the general characteristics of mentality-materiality. But that is a series of progressively profound vipassanā knowledges: they end in direct knowledge of Nibbāna.¹

To explain how you progress from one such vipassanā knowledge to the next, the Venerable Commentary-Teachers speak of sixteen progressive knowledges: mundane (*lokiya*) and supramundane (*lokuttara*).² Let us discuss them briefly.

¹ Thus, in S.V.III.i.10 '*Bhikkhun-Upassaya-Suttaṃ*' ('The Bhikkhunī Quarters Sutta'), The Buddha explains how one who dwells with a mind well established in the four foundations of mindfulness will know (gain) successively higher distinctions (*uḷāraṃ pubben-āparaṃ visesaṃ sañjānissati*). And in M.III.ii.8 '*Ānāpāna-Ssati-Suttaṃ*' ('The Mindfulness of Breathing Sutta'), there is an explanation of how The Buddha extends His rains-retreat one extra month, because He is pleased with the intensive meditation being practised by the bhikkhus under their respective teachers, as they discern successively higher distinctions. And He urges them to arouse more energy in order to attain Arahantship. Then He explains to the bhikkhu Saṃgha how all the bhikkhus in different ways are devoted to the thirty-seven requisites of enlightenment, using different meditation subjects. And He explains how by gradually developing and fulfilling mindfulness of breathing, one gradually develops and fulfils body-, feelings-, consciousness-, and dhammas contemplation: the four foundations of mindfulness. He also explains how development of the four foundations of mindfulness is fulfilment of the seven enlightenment factors.

² VsM.xiv.427 '*Khandha-Niddesa*' ('Exposition of the Aggregates') PP.xiv.15 explains that knowledge of sensual-, fine-material-, and immaterial sphere things is mundane insight (*lokiya-vipassanā*), whereas knowledge of Nibbāna is supramundane insight (*lokuttara-vipassanā*). See also quotation, endnote 3, p.42.

- 1) The Mentality-Materiality Definition Knowledge (*Nāma-Rūpa-Pariccheda-Ñāna*):¹ this is direct knowledge of the individual characteristics of mentality-materiality. For example, knowing the eye directly, you define the individual characteristics of each of the four great essentials, and the derived materiality that is found in the eye. And you do the same for the ear, nose, tongue, body, and heart-base. Knowing mentality directly, you define the individual characteristics of the different types of consciousness and their mental factors of the different types of mental process.

With the Mentality-Materiality Definition Knowledge, your understanding of mentality and materiality is in accordance with reality (*yathā-bhūta*). Such understanding overcomes (temporarily) the perception of a being (*satta-saññā*), the personality view (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*). Why? Because having with direct knowledge defined mentality-materiality, you will have broken down the delusion of compactness. You will have known the characteristic (*lakkhāṇa*), function (*rasa*), manifestation (*paccupatthāna*), and proximate cause (*padatthāna*) of each of the twenty-eight types of materiality (*rūpa*), and fifty-four types of consciousness (*citta*) with their fifty-two types of mental factor (*cetasika*). Having done that, you will also have known and seen that as soon as these formations arise, they perish. And this you will have known and seen as directly, clearly, and distinctly as a man with good eyesight may know and see the many characteristics of a gem that he holds in his hand, Then is it impossible to hold any view about materiality or mentality being somehow related to a self. That is why the Mentality-Materiality Definition Knowledge is also called View Purification (*Diṭṭhi-Visuddhi*).² Since it takes the formed as object, it is mundane.

- 2) The Cause-Apprehending Knowledge (*Paccaya-Pariggaha-Ñāna*):³ this is direct knowledge of the individual characteristics of mentality-materiality's causes: directly knowing how ignorance, kamma-formations, craving, clinging, and the existence of kamma are the causes of consciousness, mentality-materiality, the six bases, contact, and feeling. It is usually in this connection that you will have discerned the consciousnesses unassociated with cognition (process-separated (*vīthi-mutta*)): the rebirth-linking consciousness, the life-continuum consciousness, and the death consciousness. You will also have known and seen how the cessation of the five causes in a future life gives rise to the cessation of the five results, at your Parinibbāna.

The Cause-Apprehending Knowledge overcomes (temporarily) any doubts about the past, present and future five clinging-aggregates, and overcomes (temporarily) any wrong view about the self: either an eternity view or an annihilation view. Why? Because having known dependent origination directly, you will have known and seen the workings of kam-

¹ VsM.xviii 'Diṭṭhi-Visuddhi-Niddesa' ('Exposition of the View-Purification') PP.xviii

² View Purification: the third of the seven purifications discussed in M.I.iii.4 'Ratha-Vinīta-Suttam' ('The Chariot-Relay Sutta'): see footnote 1, p.20.

³ VsM.xix 'Kankhā-Vitaraṇa-Visuddhi-Niddesa' ('Exposition of the Doubt-Overcoming Purification') PP.xix

ma over a number of past lives up to this life, and into the future. And you will have known and seen those workings of kamma as directly, clearly and distinctly as a man with good eyesight may know and see the many characteristics of a gem that he holds in his hand. Then is it impossible to have any doubts about kamma, the results of kamma, rebirth, etc.¹ That is why the Cause-Apprehending Knowledge is also called Doubt-Overcoming Purification (*Kaṅkhā-Vitarāṇa-Visuddhi*).² Since this knowledge also takes the formed as object, it too is mundane.

These two knowledges are the foundation for any vipassanā meditation.³ Why? To develop vipassanā by direct knowledge first you need to know the objects of vipassanā by direct knowledge: you need to know suffering directly, and the origin of suffering, which is to know the five clinging-aggregates directly (of past, future, present, internal and external, gross and subtle, inferior and superior, far and near), and the origin of those five clinging-aggregates; which is also to know the six internal and external bases directly, and their origin; and to know the body and consciousness directly, and their origin; which is to know formations and their origin.⁴ It is to know ultimate mentality and ultimate materiality and their causes with direct knowledge: to know and see things according to reality (*yathā-bhūta*). Hence, with these two knowledges, the defilements are suppressed.

The Mentality-Materiality Definition Knowledge is direct knowledge of ultimate mentality and materiality, and the Cause-Apprehending Knowledge is direct knowledge of their causes. Development of vipassanā is to again know all these formations directly, but this time directly to know them in accordance with the three characteristics (*ti-lakkhaṇa*): the impermanence characteristic (*anicca-lakkhaṇa*), the suffering characteristic (*dukkha-lakkhaṇa*), and the non-self characteristic (*an-atta-lakkhaṇa*).

Here, please remember how you need to know the three characteristics of all those formations and their causes. They are not to be inferred; they are to be

¹ The Buddha explains it in, for example, S.II.I.ii.5 ‘*Kaccānagotta-Suttam*’: ‘But, Kaccāna, when one sees (as it really is, with Right Wisdom) the origin of the world, there is no non-existence in regard to the world. And, Kaccāna, when one sees (as it really is, with Right Wisdom) the cessation of the world, there is no existence in the world... this [Noble] one does not... take a stand about “my self”. He has no perplexity or doubt that what arises is only suffering’s arising, what ceases is only suffering’s ceasing... It is in this way, Kaccāna, that there is Right View.’ And He says: ‘His knowledge (*nāṇa*) about this is not because of another (*a-para-paccayā*). It is in this way, Kaccāna, that there is Right View (*Sammā Ditthi hoti*).’ VsM.xix.679 ‘*Paccaya-Pariggaha-Kathā*’ (‘Discussion of Cause-Apprehension’) PP.xix.5 explains: ‘When he has thus seen that the occurrence of mentality-materiality is due to causes (*paccayato*), then he sees (*samanupassati*) that, as now, so in the past too its occurrence was due to causes, and in the future too its occurrence will be due to causes.’

² Doubt-Overcoming Purification: the fourth of the seven purifications discussed in M.I.iii.4 ‘*Ratha-Vinīta-Suttam*’ (‘The Chariot-Relay Sutta’): see footnote 1, p.20.

³ One of the Most Venerable Sayadaw’s disciples (authorized to teach meditation), explains that the Mentality-Materiality Definition Knowledge is like learning the English ABC. The Cause-Apprehension Knowledge is like learning English grammar. Only when one is familiar with the ABC and grammar can one read and understand English sentences and paragraphs.

⁴ The Mentality-Materiality Definition Knowledge is also known as formations definition (*saṅkhāra-pariccheda*).

discerned, perceived, known to you as directly, clearly and distinctly as a man with good eyesight may know and see the many characteristics of a gem that he holds in his hand.¹

Development of vipassanā by direct knowledge is the development of fourteen successively more profound vipassanā knowledges.

- 3) The Comprehension Knowledge (*Sammasana-Ñāṇa*):² this is direct knowledge of the three characteristics of all formations. That is, the impermanence, suffering and non-self of the body and consciousness, of the five clinging-aggregates, of the six internal and external bases, of the twelve factors of dependent origination, of the four foundations of mindfulness, of ultimate materiality and mentality, etc.³ Since this knowledge takes the formed as object, it too is mundane.
- 4) The Arise&Perish Contemplation Knowledge (*Udaya-Bbay-Ānupassanā-Ñāṇa*):⁴ this is direct knowledge of the arising and perishing of materiality from rebirth up to death in every past life you have discerned, this life, and all the future lives you have discerned, up to your Parinibbāna. And you will have done the same for all mentality of past lives, the present life, and future lives.⁵ Practising in this way, you will have known and seen how all formations arise and perish, which means they are possessed of impermanence, suffering and non-self. Since this knowledge takes the formed as object, it too is mundane.

At this early stage of developing vipassanā, you may experience light such as you have never experienced before; your knowledge of mentality-materiality may be sharp such as you have never experienced before, and you may also experience joy, tireless tranquillity, very refined happiness, very strong confidence and decision, very well balanced and continuous exertion, very well established mindfulness, and equanimity, such as you have never experienced before. And because of your inexperience, you may very easily think these things mean you have attained a Path&Fruit: and you may become attached to them, and develop wrong view and conceit. That is how those things can become what we call insight contaminations (*vipassan-upakkilesa*).⁶ They are very dan-

¹ See in this connection the quotation at 'Develop Concentration, Bhikkhus', p.58.

² VsM.xx.694-722 '*Magg-Āmagga-Ñāṇa-Dassana-Visuddhi-Niddeso*' ('Exposition of the Path&Non-Path Knowledge&Vision Purification') PP.xx.6-92.

³ Since this vipassanā knowledge discerns formations in these various groupings, it is also called Grouping-Comprehension (*Kalāpa-Sammasana*). And VsM.xx.692 '*Sammasana-Ñāṇa-Kathā*' ('Discussion of the Grouping-Comprehension Knowledge') says: 'Group-Comprehension is the beginning of vipassanā.' See the 201 things footnote 3, p.26.

⁴ VsM. *ibid.* 723-731 / PP.xx.93-104.

⁵ It is impossible for a disciple (even an Arahant) to discern the materiality and mentality arising and perishing at every single consciousness-moment: within one snap of the fingers, there arise many thousand million mental processes. But the yogi needs to discern every type of materiality and mentality as it arises and passes away, and needs to do so at intervals in each life. It is in principle as Pali Text's explanation of Ven. Mahāmoggallāna's vipassanā practice. It compares it to walking with a walking-stick: the stick strikes the ground only at intervals, and more ground is untouched by the stick than touched by it.

⁶ VsM. *ibid.* 732-735 '*Vipassan-Upakkilesa-Kathā*' ('Discussion of Insight-Contamination')

(Please see further next page.)

gerous, because they lead you off the right path onto the wrong path.¹ But if you have a sufficiently skilled teacher, you may come to know and see those things as impermanent, suffering and non-self. That way you are able again to suppress the defilements, and decide what is the path and what is not the path. That is why the Comprehension Knowledge and Arise&Perish Contemplation Knowledge are also called the Path&Non-Path Knowledge&Vision Purification (*Magg-Āmagga-Ñāṇa-Dassana-Visuddhi*).²

Having thus cleared your vipassanā meditation of wrong knowledges, you may then continue on the right path towards the higher vipassanā knowledges.

- 5) The Dissolution-Contemplation Knowledge (*Bhaṅg-Ānupassanā-Ñāṇa*):³ this is direct knowledge of formations with emphasis on their perishing and dissolution. Seeing them in this way, you will have gained more powerful knowledge of how all formations are possessed of impermanence, suffering and non-self. Again, since this knowledge takes the formed as object, it too is mundane.
- 6) The Fearsomeness-Appearance Knowledge (*Bhayat-Upatthāna-Ñāṇa*): this is direct knowledge of the fearsomeness of all formations of past, future and present: they appear fearsome, because of their inevitable dissolution. Since this knowledge takes the formed as object, it too is mundane.
- 7) The Danger-Contemplation Knowledge (*Ādīnav-Ānupassanā-Ñāṇa*): this is direct knowledge of danger in the arising, standing, and perishing of all formations of past, future, and present.⁴ Since this knowledge takes the formed as object, it is mundane.

PP.xx.105-125

¹ Misunderstood contaminations are one of the reasons for the disappearance of the True Dhamma. In S.II.v.13 ‘*Saddhamma-Ppatirūpaka Sutta*’ (The Counterfeit True-Dhamma Sutta) the Buddha explains: ‘There is no disappearance of the True Dhamma, Kassapa, till a counterfeit Dhamma appears in the world; but when a counterfeit True Dhamma (*Sa-Ddhamma-Ppatirūpakaṃ*) appears in the world, then is there a disappearance of the True Dhamma.’ The Buddha explains further that this happens when there in the Bhikkhu Saṅgha appear hollow men (*mogha-purisa*) (see also footnote 35.) The commentary explains that the counterfeit True Dhamma is twofold: as counterfeit attainment (*adhigama*) (contamination-born vipassanā knowledge (*vipassanā-ñāṇassa upakkilesa-jātam*)), and counterfeit learning (*pariyatti*) (texts contrary to those authorized by the first three councils, being not The Buddha’s Word (*a-Buddha-Vacana*)). See also quotation, footnote 2, p.46.

² Path&Non-Path-Knowledge & Vision Purification: the fifth of the seven purifications discussed in M.I.iii.4 ‘*Ratha-Vinīta-Suttaṃ*’ (‘The Chariot-Relay Sutta’): see footnote 1, p.20. See also VsM.ibid.736 ‘*Magg-Āmagga-Vavatthāna-Kathā*’ (‘Discussion of the Path&Non-Path Definition’) PP.ibid.126-129.

³ For details on this knowledge up to knowledge no. 11, ‘Formations Equanimity Knowledge’, see VsM.xxi.741-803 ‘*Paṭipadā-Ñāṇa-Dassana-Visuddhi-Niddeso*’ (‘Exposition of the Way to Knowledge&Vision Purification’) PP.xxi.10-127.

⁴ In, for example, M.II.ii.4 ‘*Mahā-Mālukya-Suttaṃ*’ (‘The Great Mālukya Sutta’), The Buddha explains this knowledge. He explains how the bhikkhu develops the fine-material-, and immaterial jhānas, and then practises vipassanā on the materiality and mentality associated with them. The aggregates then appear as aggregates of danger, without anything satisfactory, without anything substantial, as a disease (*roga*), as a tumour (*gaṇḍa*), as a dart (*salla*), as misery (*agha*), as an affliction (*ābādha*), as only danger (*ādīnava*). Also, throughout His Teachings, The Buddha speaks of the enjoyment, danger of, and escape from sensual pleasure, the elements, and the five aggregates. E.g. in S.III.I.iii.5 ‘*Assāda-Suttaṃ*’ (‘The Enjoyment Sutta’), He explains: ‘Whatever happiness
(Please see further next page.)

- 8) The Disenchantment-Contemplation Knowledge (*Nibbid-Ānupassanā-Ñāṇa*): this is direct knowledge of the unenchanting characteristic of formations. Having seen how all formations are impermanent, fearsome and dangerous, you are no longer enchanted with formations of past, future, and present. And you regard only the peace of non-arising, the state of peace, to be desirable. Then will your mind incline naturally towards Nibbāna. Since this knowledge also takes the formed as object, it is mundane.
- 9) The Release-Longing Knowledge (*Muñcitu-Kamyatā-Ñāṇa*): this is the desire for escape from all formations. It arises very strongly now because of the previous vipassanā knowledges. Again, since this knowledge takes formations as object, it is mundane.
- 10) The Reflection-Contemplation Knowledge (*Paṭisaṅkh-Ānupassanā-Ñāṇa*): this is again direct knowledge of how all formations of past, future and present are possessed of impermanence, suffering and non-self, except that the power of your knowledge is greater than ever before. Again, since this knowledge takes all formations as object, it is mundane.
- 11) The Formations-Equanimity Knowledge (*Saṅkhār-Upekkhā-Ñāṇa*): this is indifference towards formations. Here, your perception of all formations will have changed: rather than see them as fearsome or delightful, you now regard them with a neutral mind. Again, since this knowledge takes all formations as object, it is mundane. And it is the highest mundane insight knowledge.

According to your pāramī, as you continue to practise vipassanā, sooner or later your mind may turn towards Nibbāna, the Unformed, and you may attain a Path- and Fruition Knowledge. In that case, the next knowledge arises:

- 12) The Conformity Knowledge (*Anuloma-Ñāṇa*): it prepares the way for transition from insight knowledge with the formed as object to the Path&-Fruition Knowledges with the Unformed as object. It functions as preparation for, access to and conformity with the next knowledge.

These last eight knowledges, from the Dissolution-Contemplation Knowledge up to the Formations-Equanimity Knowledge and then the Conformity Knowledge, all serve as the way to knowledge and vision (*ñāṇa-dassana*). That is why these knowledges together are also called 'The Way-to-Knowledge&Vision Purification' (*Paṭipadā-Ñāṇa-Dassana-Visuddhi*).¹ Once the Conformity Knowledge has arisen, it is inevitable that you will attain the last four knowledges:

and pleasure arises dependent on materiality [etc.]: this is enjoyment of materiality [etc.]. Any materiality [etc.] is impermanent, suffering, a changing thing: this is the danger in materiality [etc.]. The abandonment of desire and lust, the removal of desire and lust for materiality: this is the escape from materiality.' And in the following sutta, He explains that so long as He did not directly know the enjoyment, danger of, and escape from the five aggregates, so long did He not claim to be enlightened.

¹ The Way-to-Knowledge&Vision Purification: the sixth of the seven purifications discussed in M.I.iii.4 'Ratha-Vinīta-Suttaṃ' ('The Chariot-Relay Sutta'): see footnote 1, p.20. See also VsM.xxi.805 'Vuṭṭhāna-Gāminī-Vipassanā-Kathā' ('Discussion of Emergence-Leading Vipassanā') PP.xxi.135, which includes sutta references.

- 13) The Change of Lineage Knowledge (*Gotrabhu-Ñāṇa*):¹ it takes Nibbāna as object, and marks the transition of knowledge from the ordinary-person lineage (*puthu-jjana-gotta*) to the Noble lineage (*Ariya-gotta*). Even though it takes Nibbāna as object, it is not supramundane, because it does not destroy defilements. So far, all the vipassanā knowledges one has attained only suppress the defilements.
- 14) The Path-Knowledge (*Magga-Ñāṇa*):² it takes Nibbāna as object, and is the first arising of the Noble Eightfold Path in one continuity of mentality-materiality, whereby three defilements are destroyed. Then, as one progresses through the higher Path Knowledges, more and more defilements are destroyed, till with the Arahant Path Knowledge, absolutely all defilements will have been destroyed without remainder. The Path-consciousnesses are all absorption consciousnesses, minimum the first-jhāna.³ Since they take Nibbāna as object, they are all supramundane.
- 15) The Fruition Knowledge (*Phala-Ñāṇa*): it follows immediately after the Path-Knowledge, and also takes Nibbāna as object. That makes it also a supramundane knowledge.
- 16) The Reviewing Knowledge (*Paccavekkhaṇa-Ñāṇa*): there are five Reviewing Knowledges. They arise after the Path- and Fruition Knowledges. They review the Path Knowledge, the Fruition Knowledge, the defilements that have been destroyed, and the defilements that remain, and Nibbāna.

The Stream-Entry Path-Knowledge (*Sot-Āpatti-Magga-Ñāṇa*) is the first Path-Knowledge to arise in one mentality-materiality continuity: it is the first instance of knowledge&vision. That is why these final knowledges are also called Purification by Knowledge&Vision (*Ñāṇa-Dassana-Visuddhi*).⁴

Stream-Entry is not the goal, however: Arahantship is the goal. Once the Stream-Entry Path&Fruition Knowledges have arisen, you need to continue practising vipassanā: over and over again knowing the three characteristics of mentality and materiality of past, future, present, internal and external, gross and subtle, inferior and superior, far and near.

¹ Change-of-Lineage Knowledge: it takes Nibbāna as object, but is not supramundane, because it does not destroy defilements. In preparation to a higher path, it is called cleansing (*vodāna*), because one is in that case already a Noble One.

² Path-Knowledge: this knowledge's primary result is the Fruition-Knowledge. The secondary result is destruction of defilements. see VsM.xxii 'Ñāṇa-Dassana-Visuddhi-Niddeso' ('Exposition of the Knowledge&Vision Purification' PP.xxii).

³ In M.III.v.7 'Mahā-Saḷ-Āyatanika-Suttaṃ' ('The Great Sixfold-Base Sutta'), The Buddha also explains that when the Noble Eightfold Path arises, 'These two things occur concurrently yoked: samatha [MA: Right Concentration] and vipassanā [MA: Right View].' MA explains that they arise at the same time.

⁴ Knowledge&Vision Purification: the seventh of the seven purifications discussed in M.I.iii.4 'Ratha-Vinīta-Suttaṃ' ('The Chariot-Relay Sutta'): see footnote 1, p.20. VsM.xxi.806 'Paṭhama-Magga-Ñāṇa-Kathā' ('Discussion of the First Path-Knowledge') PP.xxi.1-2 explains that since the Change of Lineage Knowledge adverts to the Path, it belongs neither to the previous purification, nor this seventh purification: it is intermediate. But since it follows upon vipassanā, and is followed by vipassanā, it should still be regarded as vipassanā. Nonetheless, Knowledge&Vision Purification properly consists of the four Path Knowledges.

According to your pāramī, the subsequent Path-Knowledges may arise sooner or later. The second one is the Once-Return Path-Knowledge (*Sakad-Āgāmi-Magga-Ñāna*), the third the Non-Return Path-Knowledge (*An-Āgāmi-Magga-Ñāna*), and the fourth is the Arahant Path-Knowledge (*Arahatta-Magga-Ñāna*). The first three gradually destroy defilements, and the Arahant Path-Knowledge destroys the last two defilements: ignorance and existence-craving.

With the Arahant Path-Knowledge, there is no more for you to do, for you will then have done what needs to be done.

4) WHAT NEEDS TO BE REALIZED BY DIRECT KNOWLEDGE

The Arahant Path- and Fruition Knowledges are the things The Buddha explains need to be realized by direct knowledge:¹

M.III.431&433

Knowledge and liberation (*vijjā ca vimutti ca*):
these things need to be realized by direct knowledge (*ime dhammā abhiññā sacchikātabbā*).

Here, please remember The Buddha's description to King Ajātasattu of how the Arahant Path knowledge arises. Let us listen to it again:

D.i.249

And just as if, Your Majesty, there were a lake in the mountains (translucent, clear, unclouded), where a man with good eyesight (standing on the edge) could see shells, gravel, and pebbles, and also shoals of fish swimming about and resting. It would occur to him: 'This lake is translucent, clear, unclouded. Here are these shells, gravel and pebbles, and also these shoals of fish swimming about and resting.'

So too, Your Majesty, with consciousness thus concentrated, purified, cleansed, unblemished, with contaminations gone, become flexible, wieldy, fixed, attained to imperturbability, he directs and turns his consciousness towards the Taints Destruction Knowledge.

[1] **He understands as it really is: 'This is suffering.'**

[2] **He understands as it really is: 'This is the origin of suffering.'**

[3] **He understands as it really is: 'This is the cessation of suffering.'**

[4] **He understands as it really is: 'This is the way leading to the cessation of suffering.'**

That concludes our explanation of the four things which The Buddha says need to be done by direct knowledge:²

- 1) the five clinging aggregates need to be fully known by direct knowledge;
- 2) ignorance and existence-craving need to be abandoned by direct knowledge;
- 3) samatha and vipassanā need to be developed by direct knowledge;

¹ The commentary to this sutta explains that knowledge and liberation is the Arahant Path- & Fruition Knowledges.

² In His very first teaching, S.V.XII.ii.1 '*Dhamma-Cakka-Ppavattana-Suttam*' ('The Dhamma-Wheel Setting-in-Motion Sutta'), The Buddha explains the four things that need to be done by direct knowledge by way of the Four Noble Truths. There, He explains that He was not Buddha until He had fully known the Noble Truth of Suffering, had abandoned the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering, had Realized the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering, and had Developed the Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering. And in S.V '*Mahā-Vagga*' ('Great Chapter'), The Buddha explains the same fourfold procedure for all thirty-seven requisites of enlightenment: the Noble Eightfold Path, the seven enlightenment factors, the four foundations of mindfulness, the five faculties, the four Right Strivings, the five powers, and the four bases for success. And He explains the same for the four jhānas.

- 4) knowledge and liberation need to be realized by direct knowledge.

THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH
COMES TO FULFILMENT

The Buddha then explains that the view of one who knows and sees things in this way is Right View (*Sammā-Diṭṭhi*). At that time, the other factors of the Noble Eightfold Path also arise. He says:

M.III.431&433

- **The view (*diṭṭhi*) of any such one is Right View (*Sammā-Diṭṭhi*);**
- **the intention (*saṅkappo*) of any such one is Right Intention (*Sammā-Saṅkappo*);**
- **the effort (*vāyāmo*) of any such one is Right Effort (*Sammā-Vāyāmo*);**
- **the mindfulness (*sati*) of any such one is Right Mindfulness (*Sammā-Sati*);**
- **the concentration (*samādhi*) of any such one is Right Concentration (*Sammā-Samādhi*).**

Earlier then, one's bodily action (*kāya-kammaṃ*), verbal action (*vacī-kammaṃ*), and livelihood (*ājīvo*) are purified.

That way, by development the Noble Eightfold Path (*Ariyo Atthaṅgiko Maggo*) comes to fulfilment.

Here, The Buddha is explaining that at the time of knowing and seeing ultimate materiality and ultimate mentality according to reality, your defilements are temporarily abandoned, and the wisdom and concentration factors arise.¹ Until you have attained the Path, however, the morality factors do not yet arise: but you will have undertaken morality before undertaking samatha and vipassanā meditation.² Then by continuously practising vipassanā on ultimate materiality and ultimate mentality, eventually, you attain a Path and Fruition: that is how the Noble Eightfold Path is developed. Then by again and again practising vipassanā on ultimate materiality and ultimate mentality, eventually you may attain Arahantship: that is how the Noble Eightfold Path comes to fulfilment.³

¹ In M.I.v.4 'Cūḷa-Vedalla-Suttamī' ('Small Catechism Sutta'), the Arahant Dhammadinnā explains that the factors of the Noble Eightfold Path may be grouped into three: 1) morality (*sīla*) (Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood); 2) concentration (*samādhi*) (Right Effort, right mindfulness, Right Concentration); 3) wisdom (*paññā*) (Right View, Right Intention). And she adds: 'The three groupings are not included by the Noble Eightfold Path, friend Visākha, but the Noble Eightfold Path is included by the three groupings.'

² For The Buddha's explanation of this prerequisite, see footnote 5, p.10.

³ The Buddha explains this same procedure differently in, for example, M.II.v.5 'Cankī-Suttamī' ('The Cankī Sutta'). There, The Buddha explains that when one has gained a considered acceptance of the teachings, one endeavours (*ussahati*) (MA: undertakes morality, concentration and wisdom). Having endeavoured, one examines (*tuleti*) (MA: vipassanā). Having examined, one strives (*padahati*). Resolutely striving, then even with the body (*kāyena*) (MA: the mental body (*nāma-kāya*)), one realizes the ultimate Truth (*parama-saccamī*) (MA: Nibbāna), and one sees it acutely (*ativijja passati*). with wisdom (*paññāya*). And The Buddha explains that this is understanding of the Truth (*Sacc-ānubodho hoti*) (MA: Stream-Entry), but He says this is not full attainment of the Truth (*Sacc-ānuppatti*). That, He explains, is achieved by repetition (*āsevanā*), development (*bhāvanā*) and much practice (*bahulī-kammamī*) of those same things (*dhammānamī*).

THE THIRTY-SEVEN REQUISITES OF ENLIGHTENMENT
COME TO FULFILMENT

When the Noble Eightfold Path comes to fulfilment this way, the thirty-seven requisites of enlightenment (*Satta-Tiṃsa-Bodhi-Pakkhiya-Dhammā*) come to fulfilment.

The Buddha explains:

M.III.431&433

For one who in this way develops the Noble Eightfold Path,

- **the four foundations of mindfulness** (*cattāri satipaṭṭhānā*) **also come to fulfilment,**
- **the four right strivings** (*cattāri samma-ppadhānā*) **also come to fulfilment,**
- **the four means to success** (*cattāri iddhipādā*) **also come to fulfilment,**
- **the five faculties** (*pañca indriyāni*) **also come to fulfilment,**
- **the five powers** (*pañca balāni*) **also come to fulfilment,**
- **the seven enlightenment-factors** (*satta bojjhaṅgā*) **also come to fulfilment.**

If you add all these things up, they come to thirty-seven.¹ They need to be developed for you to attain a Path&Fruition. That is why the Venerable Commentary-Teachers call them the thirty-seven requisites of enlightenment (*Satta-Tiṃsa-Bodhi-Pakkhiya-Dhammā*).² And they come to fulfilment with the arising of the Arahant Path&Fruition.³

They are all different ways of saying just the threefold training (morality, concentration and wisdom), or saying just samatha and vipassanā,⁴ or full knowledge of the all, or the four foundations of mindfulness, the only way.⁵ As the Buddha explains, development and fulfilment of one category is development and fulfilment of all categories. In all cases, The Buddha explains that when you have attained Arahantship, then have you done the four things that need to be done by direct knowledge. All these different explanations are mere-

¹ The thirty-seven requisites of enlightenment: <1-8> Noble Eightfold Path (Right View, -Intention, -Speech, -Action, -Livelihood, -Effort, -Mindfulness, -Concentration) <9-12> four foundations of mindfulness (body, feeling, consciousness, dhammas); <13-16> four right strivings (striving to prevent unwholesome things from arising, to eradicate those that have arisen, to make wholesome things arise, to develop them up to Arahantship); <17-20> four bases for achievement (desire, energy, consciousness, investigation); <21-25> five faculties (faith, effort, mindfulness, concentration, wisdom); <26-30> five powers (same as the faculties but unshakeable); <31-37> seven enlightenment factors (mindfulness, investigation of phenomena, effort, joy, tranquillity, concentration, equanimity).

² They are all discussed in, for example, M.II.iii.7 '*Mahā-Sakuludāyī-Suttaṃ*' (Great Sakuludāyī Sutta). And each category has its own group of suttas in S.V '*Mahā-Vagga*' ('Great Chapter'); S.V.I '*Magga-Saṃyutta*' ('Path Group'), S.V.II '*Bojjh-Aṅga-Saṃyutta*' ('Enlightenment-Factor Group'), S.V.III '*Sati-Paṭṭhāna-Saṃyutta*' ('Mindfulness-Foundation Group'), S.V.IV '*Indriya-Saṃyutta*' ('Faculty Group'), S.V.V '*Samma-Ppadhāna-Saṃyutta*' ('Right-Striving Group'), S.V.VI '*Bala-Saṃyutta*' ('Power Group'), S.V.VII '*Iddhi-Pāda-Saṃyutta*' ('Power-Means Group').

³ In also M.II.iii.7 '*Mahā-Sakuludāyī-Suttaṃ*' (The Great Sakuludāyī Sutta), The Buddha explains how development of each of the groupings in the thirty-seven requisites of enlightenment leads to Arahantship.

⁴ See quotation at '3) What Needs to Be Developed by Direct Knowledge', p.33.

⁵ In S.V.III.iv.3 '*Viraddha-Suttaṃ*' ('The "Omitted" Sutta'), The Buddha explains: 'Whosoever, bhikkhus, have omitted the four foundations of mindfulness, they have omitted the Noble Path leading to the complete destruction of suffering (*Ariyo Mago sammā dukkha-kkhaya-gāmi*). And whosoever, bhikkhus, have begun the four foundations of mindfulness, they have begun the Noble Path leading to the complete destruction of suffering.'

ly different ways of explaining the only way, the four foundations of mindfulness.

PAST AND FUTURE

Here again, unless we are sufficiently familiar with the Dispensation's usage, we may doubt that we should practise vipassanā on the past and future aggregates. This is a problem. Why? Because as we explained earlier, The Buddha says very clearly, and many times, that one needs to practise vipassanā on the five aggregates of past, future, present, internal and external, gross and subtle, inferior and superior, far and near.¹ If, in fact, one needs only to practise vipassanā on only the present aggregates, it would mean The Buddha's instructions about vipassanā meditation are incoherent. It is better not to think The Buddha's Teachings are incoherent: it is better to think we are yet inexpert in His teachings. Then we may, on the other hand, think the learned elders of the past confused The Buddha's Teachings, and the Pali Texts are unreliable. It is better to think the learned elders of the past were learned: it is better to read the Pali Texts with faith and care.²

LET ONE NOT RETURN TO THE PAST

Yes, it is true that The Buddha says we should not go after past or future five clinging-aggregates. He says it in, for example, a verse in the '*Bhaddeka-Ratta*' sutta.³

M.III.272

*Atītaṃ n-ānvāgameyya, na-ppaṭikankhe anāgataṃ;
yadatītaṃ pahīnaṃ taṃ, a-ppattañca anāgataṃ.
Paccuppannañca yo dhammaṃ, tatha tatha vipassati;
asaṃhīraṃ asaṃkappaṃ, taṃ vidvā manu-brūhaye.*

**Let one not return to the past, nor wish for the future;
The past it is left behind, and the future not reached.
Whatever present thing, there and then with insight one sees;
Immovable and unshakeable, let the wise one repeatedly develop that.**

This is a very brief teaching. And we should be very careful when we study such very brief teachings. The Buddha is here telling one not to return to the past, meaning one must not recollect past experiences (in this life or past lives)

¹ See quotations at 'The Five Clinging-Aggregates', p.31, and 'Vipassanā on the Five Clinging-Aggregates', p.34.

² In S.II.v.13 '*Saddhamma-Ppatirūpaka Sutta*' (The Counterfeit True-Dhamma Sutta) the Buddha explains that five things lead to the adulteration and eventually the disappearance of the True Dhamma: 'Which five? It is when bhikkhus and bhikkunis, male and female lay-disciples live in defiance of and are disrespectful towards the Teacher... the Dhamma... the Saṃgha... the training [morality (precepts/Vinaya), concentration, and wisdom]... concentration (*samādhi*) [SA: jhāna].' See also quotation, footnote 1, p.39.

³ M.III.iv.1 '*Bhaddeka-Ratta-Suttam*' ('The Excellent-Night Sutta'): there The Buddha explains the meaning of the verse by way of the five aggregates. In M.III.iv.3 '*Mahākaccāna-Bhadd-Eka-Ratta-Suttam*', He only recites the verse. And the bhikkhus who hear it then go to Ven. Mahākaccāna to have it explained: he explains it by way of the six internal and external bases.

with delight (*nandi*): that is, one must not recollect them with craving or a view associated with craving (a personality view (*sakkāya-dīṭṭhi*)).¹ And The Buddha is here telling one not to wish for the future, meaning one must not long for future experiences (in this life or a future life) with delight, desire and lust. The Buddha is then referring to the uneducated ordinary person. And as He explains, such a person regards not only the past and future clinging-aggregates that way, but also the present clinging-aggregates. Why? Because the uneducated, ordinary person does not practise vipassanā.

One may, for example, discern a past life as a deva, or as a very rich person, enjoying many sensual pleasures.² If one delights in those past experiences, thinking, for example, 'I was a beautiful deva in my past!' then one cannot progress in one's meditation.

M.III.273 In His explanation of the verse, The Buddha then explains how not to regard past and future aggregates that way. He says that while regarding past aggregates, one does not bring in delight (*nandiṃ na samanvānēti*); while regarding future aggregates, one does not bring in delight.

How not to bring in delight? By practising vipassanā on past and future aggregates: not only on past and future aggregates, but also on present aggregates. Discerning a past life as a deva, for example, one discerns that deva's materiality and mentality, and sees that they are impermanent, suffering and non-self.

M.III.282 Explaining the same verse, the Venerable Mahākaccāna explains that one should regard past internal and external bases with consciousness that is not bound up with desire and lust (*na chanda-rāga-ppaṭibaddham hoti viññāṇam*); M.III.283 One should regard future internal and external bases with a mind that is not longing to obtain the unobtained (*a-ppaṭiladdhassa paṭilābhāya cittaṃ na-ppanidāhati*). In both cases, the Venerable Mahākaccāna explains that because one regards past and future internal and external bases with such a mind, one does not delight in them.

Neither The Buddha nor the Venerable Mahākaccāna mentions that one should not discern past and future aggregates with vipassanā knowledge. Such a misunderstanding arises only because of reading the verse alone (according to the letter (*byañjana*)), without reading it according to the meaning as it is explained by The Buddha and the Venerable Mahākaccāna.

When we read the sutta according to the meaning (*attha*), it is clear that we should not go after past, future, and present clinging-aggregates with craving and views: we should go after past, future and present clinging-aggregates without craving and views. In other words, we should examine past and future

¹ MA.III.iv.1 explains that to recollect past aggregates and wish for new ones with delight means to do so with craving or a view associated with craving. In, for example, Sn.iv.15 'At-ta-Daṇḍa-Suttaṃ', The Buddha gives a similar teaching: 'What is before (*pubbe*), that get rid of, let there not be anything afterwards (*pacchā*), And if you do not grasp what is in the middle (*majjhe*), then shall you walk in peace.'

² In order to discern the workings of dependent origination with one's own direct knowledge, one needs to discern a number of past and future lives. And one may see that in one or several past lives, one was a being of a lower or higher realm, or a superior human being: it may also happen when discerning future lives. Unless one has developed the the psychic power, Recollection of Past Lives (*pubbe-nivās-ānussati-abhiññā*), one is not, however, able to see concepts such as one's past name or race, etc. Using only one's vipassanā power, one is able to see only the five clinging-aggregates.

clinging-aggregates with craving suppressed by vipassanā Right View (*vipassanā Sammā-Diṭṭhi*). Once we understand that, we understand that the different suttas cohere.¹

Why is it necessary to discern the past and future? Because to put an end to suffering, we need not only to discern suffering (the five aggregates), we need also to discern the origin of suffering (the origin of the five aggregates): that is dependent origination (*paṭicca-samuppāda*). Let us discuss that now.

DISCERNING DEPENDENT ORIGINATION

To put an end to suffering, you need to penetrate and know the Four Noble Truths with your own insight knowledge.² That includes the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering: dependent origination. It describes the arising of suffering.

Suffering is the five aggregates. They arise at the moment of rebirth:³ for example, at a human rebirth, when the rebirth-linking consciousness (*paṭisandhi-citta*) descends into the mother's womb, together with the rebirth-linking mentality-materiality (*paṭisandhi-nāma-rūpa*).⁴ That is the first arising of the five aggregates in a human life. They arise because of past wholesome kamma:⁵ kamma is the cause, the five aggregates are the effect.

¹ In S.III.i.9-11 '*Kāla-Ttaya-Anicca-[/Dukkha/An-Atta]Suttaṃ*' ('The Triple-Period Impermanence [/Suffering /Non-Self] Sutta'), The Buddha explains how the meditator knows the five aggregates of the past, present and future: 'Materiality, bhikkhus, of the past and future is impermanent: not to speak of the present. Seeing thus, bhikkhus, the educated Noble Disciple is indifferent towards past materiality; does not delight in future materiality; and practises towards disenchantment, dispassion, and cessation for the eye. Feeling... Perception.... Formations.... Consciousness of the past and future is impermanent... suffering... non-self: not to speak of the present. Seeing thus, bhikkhus, the educated Noble Disciple is indifferent towards past consciousness; does not delight in future consciousness....' And in S.IV.i.7-12 '*Ajjhatt-[/Bāhir]Ānicca-[/Dukkha/An-Att]Ātī-Ānāgata-Suttaṃ*' ('The Internal [/External] Impermanence [/Suffering/Non-Self] Sutta'), He explains the same with regard to the six internal and external bases of past, present and future.

² See quotation at 'The Four Noble Truths', p.23.

³ In the '*Mahā-Sati-Paṭṭhāna*' sutta, for example, The Buddha explains birth: 'In whatever beings, of whatever class of beings, there is birth (*jāti*), rebirth (*sañjāti*), descent (*okkanti*), regeneration, manifestation of aggregates (*khandhānaṃ pātubhāvo*), acquisition of the bases (*āyatanānaṃ paṭilābho*), that, bhikkhus, is called birth (*jāti*).'

⁴ The Buddha explains it in, for example, D.ii.2 '*Mahā-Nidāna-Suttaṃ*' ('The Great Causation Sutta'): 'I have said: "Because of consciousness, there is mentality-materiality (*viññāṇa-paccayā nāma-rūpaṃ*)," and this is the way it should be understood. If consciousness, Ānanda, were not to descend into the mother's womb, would mentality-materiality develop there? ... Or if consciousness, Ānanda, having descended into the mother's womb, were to turn away, would mentality-materiality come to birth in this life?... And if the consciousness, Ānanda, of one only young, of a boy or of a girl, were thus cut off, would mentality-materiality grow, develop and mature?' In each case, Ven. Ānanda answers: 'It would not, Venerable Sir.' See also footnote 2, p.17.

⁵ In M.II.i.7 '*Kukkura-Vatika-Suttaṃ*' ('Dog-Duty Ascetic Sutta'), The Buddha explains to an ascetic how someone having performed harmful bodily- (*kāya*-), verbal- (*vacī*-), mental formation (*mano-saṅkhāra*) is reborn in a harmful world, such as hell; having performed the same threefold harmless formation, is reborn in a harmless world, such as certain deva worlds; having performed both such threefold harmful and harmless formations, is reborn in a world that is both harmful and harmless, such as human beings, certain lower beings, and lower devas. For each explanation, The Buddha adds: 'Therefore, Puṇṇa, a being's rebirth is owing to a being (*Iti kho, Puṇṇa, bhūtā*) (Please see further next page.)

Now we shall ask you a question. Which comes first: cause or effect? Cause. The cause comes first, the effect comes afterwards. If the human five aggregates are the effect, and past wholesome kamma is the cause, which comes first? The wholesome kamma. Maybe we can all agree to that.

Then say you are sitting in meditation, and want to discern the cause of your five aggregates. If they arose at the moment of your rebirth, where do you find the cause: in the present moment while meditating, or in a moment in a past life?

Please listen to The Buddha explain it to the Venerable Ānanda, in the 'Mahā-Nidāna' sutta:¹

D.II.116

Therefore, Ānanda, just this is the root, the causation, the origin, the cause of consciousness, namely mentality-materiality.

Thus far then, Ānanda, go birth and decay, death and falling into other states and being reborn; thus far extends the way of designations, of concepts; thus far is the sphere of understanding; thus far the round [of rebirth] goes as much as can be discerned in this life (*itthattaṃ paññāpanāya*), that is mentality-materiality together with consciousness (*yad-idaṃ nāmarūpaṃ saha viññāṇena aññam-añña-paccayatā pavattati*).

Here, The Buddha is explaining that within this life, you can discern no further than to the mutual causation between consciousness and mentality-materiality.² That means you cannot in this life discern the root causes: the ignorance and formations that gave rise to your present life's rebirth-linking consciousness. As we just explained, the cause of consciousness must come before the arising of consciousness. Since the rebirth-linking consciousness is the first consciousness of one life, the cause must be found before that life: in a past life.

Now maybe, you can understand that according to The Buddha's Teaching, you cannot know and see dependent origination with your own direct knowledge unless you discern past lives. And please do not think you can just depend on reasoning. It is not enough to say, 'I know these five aggregates are the effect of past kamma.' That is not penetrating the Second Noble Truth with your own direct knowledge, as clearly as knowing a gem in your hand. Please do not forget The Buddha's words:³

bhūtaṃ upapatti hoti): one is reborn according to what one has done.... Thus, Puṇṇa, "Beings are heirs to their kamma," do I declare ("*Kamma-dāyādā sattā'ti, vadāmi*)." And in M.I.i.4 'Bhaya-Bherava-Suttaṃ' ('The Fear&Dread Sutta'), The Buddha explains how He (on the night of His enlightenment, with the divine eye) saw the cause of rebirth is past kamma: "I understood how beings pass on according to their kamma thus... "These dear beings, of wrong bodily conduct... wrong verbal conduct... wrong mental conduct possessed, criticizers of Noble Ones, holders of wrong view, undertakers of kamma based on wrong view, with the breakup of the body, after death, have been reborn in the plane of misery, in a bad destination, in the nether world, in hell.. But these dear beings, of good bodily conduct... good verbal conduct... good mental conduct possessed, not criticizers of Noble Ones, holders of Right View, undertakers of kamma based on Right View, with the breakup of the body, after death, have been reborn in a good destination, in a heavenly world." This knowledge He also mentions in the 'Sāmaññā-Phala' sutta, being one of the psychic powers developed by the bhikkhu: see 'Understanding Body & Consciousness', p.17.

¹ D.ii.2 'Mahā-Nidāna-Suttaṃ' ('Great Causation Sutta')

² DA.ii.1 explains 'this life' (*itthattaṃ*) as "Thus state/condition means these five aggregates (*ittham bhāvo, khandha-pañcakass-etaṃ nāma*)."

³ M.I.iii.6 'Pāsa-Rāsi-Suttaṃ' ('The Mass of Snares Sutta') (This sutta is also called 'Ariya-Pari-
(Please see further next page.)

M.I.281

This Dhamma that I have arrived at is profound, hard to see, and hard to understand, peaceful and sublime, unattainable by mere reasoning, subtle, to be experienced by the wise.

You cannot put an end to suffering by practising vipassanā on reasoned reality: proper vipassanā takes as object only ultimate reality. So, if the cause of the five aggregates is in a past life, you cannot penetrate and know the origin of the five aggregates in this life: you need to discern that past life.¹

It is very straightforward. If you want to put an end to suffering, you need to know dependent origination with your own direct knowledge: because of ignorance, formations arise; because of formations, consciousness; because of consciousness, mentality-materiality, etc. Formations is past kamma, based on past ignorance: here, ‘past’ means it is in a past life. Consciousness and mentality-materiality are the arising of the five aggregates. And you need to see the same process take place into future lives.²

You need to know and see the past, present and future aggregates with your own insight knowledge. They are the objects of insight knowledge. Without discerning the past, present and future mentality-materiality, it is impossible for you to discern the arising&perishing of causes and effects; it is impossible for you to contemplate the causes and effects as impermanent, suffering, and non-self.³ That being impossible, it is impossible for you to destroy birth, and to do

yesanā-Suttam’ (‘The Noble Search Sutta’)). The whole passage is quoted in the Most Venerable Pa-Auk Tawya Sayadaw’s preface.

¹ In, for example, S.II.I.iv.7 ‘*Na-Tumha-Suttam’* (‘The Not-Yours Sutta’), The Buddha explains how the Noble Disciple discerns that the body is dependently originated by past kamma: ‘This body, bhikkhus, is not your own, nor others. This thing, bhikkhus, is to be regarded as by past kamma formed, willed and experienced. There indeed, bhikkhus, the educated Noble Disciple attends well and wisely to only dependent origination: “Thus, this being, that is; this arising, that arises. This not being, that is not; this ceasing, that ceases. That is, ignorance is the cause of formations...[+12 factors of dependent origination/ cessation] displeasure and despair cease.”’ And in S.IV.I.xv.1 ‘*Kamma-Nirodha-Suttam’* (‘The Kamma-Cessation Sutta’), The Buddha explains that the six faculties may as a metaphor be regarded as ‘old kamma’, since kamma is the cause for their arising: ‘And what, bhikkhus, is old kamma? The eye is old kamma, to be seen as accomplished, and willed, and to be experienced. The ear... nose... tongue... body... mind.... This is called old kamma.’

² VsM.xix.687 ‘*Kaṅkhā-Vitarāṇa-Visuddhi-Niddeso’* (‘Exposition of the Doubt-Transcendence Purification’) PP.xix.17 explains: ‘The succession of kamma and its result in the twelve categories of kamma is clear in its true nature only to The Buddha’s Knowledge of Kamma and Its Result [*Kamma-Vipāka-Ñāṇa*], which knowledge is not shared by disciples. But the succession of kamma and its result can be known in part by one practising insight [Vipassanā].’ VsTi explains: ‘Because it is a speciality of The Buddha, and because it is the province of the knowledge that is not shared by disciples, it is called “not shared by disciples” (*a-sādhāraṇam sāvakehi*). That is why only a part can be known; it cannot all be known because it is not the province of such knowledge. A part must be known; knowing it all without remainder cannot be done, is inaccessible. Not knowing it at all, the Cause-Apprehending [Knowledge] (*Paccaya-Pariggaha* [*Ñāṇa*]) cannot be fulfilled.’

³ In S.II.I.vii.4 ‘*Atthi-Rāga-Suttam’* (‘The There-Is-Lust Sutta’) and SA. *ibid.*, The Buddha explains that with delight and craving for the nutriments edible food/ contact/ mental volition/ consciousness, consciousness becomes established there by kamma that can produce rebirth. Whenever the resultant rebirth-consciousness then is established, there is descent of mentality-materiality, which means there is new production of kamma, which means there is production of re-

(Please see further next page.)

what has to be done. Please listen to the explanation given in the *Visuddhi-Magga*:¹

VsM.XVII.659

There is no one, even in a dream, who has got out of the fearful round of rebirths, which is ever destroying like a thunderbolt, unless he has severed with the knife of knowledge well whetted on the stone of sublime concentration, this Wheel of Becoming, which offers no footing owing to its great profundity, and is hard to get by owing to the maze of many methods. And this has been said by the Blessed One:

Then the *Visuddhi-Magga* quotes The Buddha's words from the '*Mahā-Nidāna*' sutta:²

D.ii.95

Profound (*gambhīro*), **Ānanda**, is this dependent origination, and profound it appears (*gambhīr-āvabhāso*). It is because, **Ānanda**, of not understanding (*an-anubodhā*), not penetrating (*a-ppaṭivedhā*) this phenomenon, that the world has become like a tangled ball of thread, matted like a bird's nest, tangled like reeds, unable to pass beyond the woeful states, the woeful destination, ruin, and the round of rebirth.³

Please do not forget these The Buddha's words: dependent origination is profound and appears profound. Without knowing the past and seeing the future, it is impossible for you to understand or penetrate dependent origination.

WITHOUT KNOWING THE PAST

The Buddha makes this very clear in the '*Vekhanassa*' sutta.⁴ He explains it to a wanderer whom He calls Kaccāna:

If, Kaccāna, any ascetics and Brahmins, without knowing the past (*a-jānantā pubbantam*), **without seeing the future** (*a-passantā aparantam*), **claim 'Birth is destroyed, the holy life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more coming into any state of being,' such with this, in accordance with the Dhamma, are confuted** (*tesam soyeva saha-dhammiko niggaho hoti*).²

If you remember that The Buddha says we need to know and see and contemplate the five aggregates of past, future, present, internal and external, gross and subtle, inferior and superior, far and near, it is not difficult to understand this explanation.

existence (*atthi āyatim puna-bbhav-ābhiniḍḍatti*). And in S.II.v.1 '*Pari-Vīmaṃsana-Suttaṃ*' ('The Thorough-Examination Sutta'), The Buddha explains that for each of the twelve factors of dependent origination, the bhikkhu thoroughly investigates the causation (*nidāna*), the origin (*samudaya*), from what it is born (*jātika*) and produced (*pabhava*), from what being (*sati*) it comes to be (*hoti*), and from what not being (*a-sati*) it does not come to be (*na hoti*). That way, explains The Buddha, the bhikkhu understands each factor, understands the arising of each factor, the cessation of each factor, and the way leading to the cessation of each factor. And for each such examination, He adds: 'This is called, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu who practises for the full and complete destruction of suffering (*sabbaso sammā dukkha-kkhaṇḍayā paṭipanno jāti-nirodhāya*), for the cessation of ageing&death (*jarā-marāṇa-nirodhāya*)... of birth... of existence... of clinging... of craving [etc.]'

¹ VsM.xvii.659 '*Bhava-Cakka-Kathā*' ('Discussion of the Wheel of Existence') PP.xvii.314

² D.ii.2 '*Mahā-Nidāna-Suttaṃ*' ('The Great Causation Sutta')

³ DA.ii.10 explains that 'not understanding' refers to the absence of known full-knowledge, and 'not penetrating' refers to the absence of investigation full-knowledge and abandonment full-knowledge. These knowledges are explained footnote 3, p.22.

⁴ M.II.iii.10 '*Vekhanassa-Suttaṃ*' ('The Vekhanassa Sutta')

That concludes our explanation of how other guidelines in the Pali Texts may help us properly to understand what The Buddha means when He in the ‘*Sāmañña-Phala*’ sutta speaks of the bhikkhu’s knowledge and vision of his body and consciousness, and when He in the ‘*Mahā-Sati-Paṭṭhāna*’ sutta speaks of the bhikkhu’s contemplating the four foundations of mindfulness internally, externally, internally and externally, with arising phenomena to be contemplated, perishing phenomena, and arising&perishing phenomena.

All the different explanations of the only way are different only according to the letter: according to the spirit, they are the same: they have to be.

THERE IS NO OTHER WAY

Let us then try to match The Buddha’s different explanations of what needs to be done with His statement that the four foundations of mindfulness are ‘the only way’.

The only way means there is no other way. No other way to do what? The Buddha said there is no other way to become purified, no other way to overcome sorrow and lamentation, to make pain and displeasure disappear, to attain the true way, and no other to realize Nibbāna. If we look at the different suttas we have discussed, it means also:

- There is no other way directly and fully to know the body and consciousness (materiality and mentality).
- There is no other way directly and fully to know the six internal bases, the six external bases, the six types of consciousness, the six types of contact, and the three types of feeling arising with the six types of contact.
- There is no other way directly and fully to know the five clinging-aggregates.
- There is no other way to penetrate the Four Noble Truths.
- There is no other way to do the four things that need to be done by direct knowledge. That is:
 - 1) There is no other way fully to know the five aggregates by direct knowledge.
 - 2) There is no other way to abandon ignorance and existence-craving by direct knowledge.
 - 3) There is no other way to develop samatha and vipassanā by direct knowledge.
 - 4) There is no other way to realize knowledge and liberation by direct knowledge.

RECONCILIATION

The only way is the the four contemplations: body-contemplation, feeling-contemplation, consciousness-contemplation, and dhammas-contemplation. Let us then try to reconcile all these different teachings with those four contemplations:

- The body is included in body-contemplation, and dhammas-contemplation.

- Consciousness is included in consciousness-contemplation, and dhammas-contemplation.
- The six internal bases and six external bases are included in dhammas-contemplation.
- The six types of consciousness are included in consciousness-contemplation and dhammas-contemplation.
- The six types of contact are included in dhammas-contemplation.
- The three types of feeling are included in feelings-contemplation and dhammas-contemplation.
- The materiality clinging-aggregate is included in body-contemplation and dhammas-contemplation.
- The feelings clinging-aggregate is included in feelings-contemplation and dhammas-contemplation.
- The perception clinging-aggregate is included in dhammas-contemplation.
- The formations clinging-aggregate is included in dhammas-contemplation.
- The consciousness clinging-aggregate is included in consciousness-contemplation.
- The five clinging-aggregates are included in dhammas-contemplation.
- The four Noble Truths are included in dhammas-contemplation.

According to the suttas that we have discussed, none of these things can be left out. If none of these things can be left out, it means we need to contemplate all four foundations of mindfulness, all twenty-one contemplations: do you agree?

When we realize that all twenty-one contemplations are necessary for proper practice, and when we study the commentary to the '*Mahā-Sati-Paṭṭhāna*' sutta, and the *Visuddhi-Magga*, we may begin to understand that practice of the four foundations of mindfulness is not easy: in fact, as The Buddha says very clearly, the practice is indeed profound, hard to see, and hard to understand, peaceful and sublime, unattainable by mere reasoning, subtle, to be experienced by the wise.¹

Then we may ask, 'If we have to practise all four foundations of mindfulness, where do we begin?' Indeed, 'How do we begin?' This The Buddha does not explain in the sutta: it is a sutta. Suttas do not give detailed meditation instructions: as we explained earlier, that is not their purpose. And to His audience in the '*Mahā-Sati-Paṭṭhāna*' sutta, The Buddha does not need to explain such things.

If we want to know where and how to begin, we need to consult those who know: the ancient commentary-teachers. The Venerable Buddhaghosa edited their works so that we now have an extensive commentary explaining where and how to put The Buddha's brief instructions into practice.

Let us then look briefly at where and how you are to begin your practice.

¹ This is a reference to The Buddha's own description of the Dhamma: see quotation, p.49.

THE FOUR FOUNDATIONS OF MINDFULNESS

A yogi should as his foundation of mindfulness undertake the contemplation that suits his speed and temperament.¹ That does not mean he should contemplate only that one subject: it means that one subject is the most suitable for him; that is where he begins; that is his chief subject. But he needs to contemplate also the remaining three subjects, for unless he does so, he will not have contemplated all five clinging-aggregates, he will not have contemplated the all, will he?

Take the quick yogi of a lustful temperament. He is advised to take as his foundation of mindfulness the subtle feelings-contemplation. He may then work hard fully to understand that feelings are impermanent, suffering and non-self. But so long as he contemplates only feelings, he will never fully understand feelings. Why? Because fully to understand feelings, he needs to understand that feelings arise and perish owing to causes.² The causes for a feeling to arise cannot be found in the feeling itself, can it?

Furthermore, it is not enough either to understand only that feelings are impermanent, suffering and non-self, for then is there still ignorance regarding the true nature of the remaining clinging-aggregates.³ Thus, to overcome ignorance and escape from suffering, every yogi needs to contemplate all four foundations of mindfulness, and fully understand all five clinging-aggregates, all mentality-

¹ This is explained in the commentary to ‘*Mahā-Sati-Paṭṭhāna*’ sutta.

² Feelings arise because of contact. It is explained in M.I.ii.18 ‘*Madhu-Piṇḍika-Suttaṃ*’ (‘The Honey-Ball Sutta’) by the Venerable Mahākaccāna: ‘Dependent, friend, on the eye and sights, there arises eye-consciousness (*cakkhu-viññāṇaṃ*) <ear/sounds, ear-consciousness, etc.>. The meeting of the three is contact (*phasso*). Because of contact, there is feeling (*phassa-paccayā vedanā*)’ [‘What one feels, that one perceives (*yaṃ vedeti, taṃ sañjānāti*)’] [‘What one perceives, that one thinks about (*vitakketi*).’]. And in M.I.v.3 ‘*Mahā-Vedalla-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Great Questions-and-Answers Sutta’), the Ven. Sāriputta explains: ‘For, friend, what one feels, that one perceives; what one perceives, that one cognizes. That is why these things (*dhammā*) are conjoined, not disjoined, and it is not possible to separate each of these things from the others in order to describe the difference between them.’ Also in S.IV.II.iv.10 ‘*Dutiya-Dvaya-Suttaṃ*’ (‘The Second Pair Sutta’), The Buddha explains: ‘Contacted (*phuṭṭho*), bhikkhus, one feels (*vedeti*); contacted, one perceives (*sañjānāri*); contacted, one wills (*ceṭeti*).’ There The Buddha explains also how consciousness arises dependent on an internal base and an external base: eye/sight, ear/sound, etc., the meeting of the three being contact. Thus, when consciousness arises, there arise also the mental factors contact, feeling, perception, volition, and (excepting the second to fourth jhānas) also application (*vitakka*), the meeting of the internal base, the respective external base, and the respective consciousness. See also footnote 1, p.17.

³ In A.I.xix ‘*Kāya-Gatā-Sati Vaggo*’ (‘Body-Related Mindfulness Chapter’), The Buddha explains that one cannot realize the Deathless without having practised body-related mindfulness (*kāya-gatā-sati*). For example: ‘The Deathless (*Amataṃ*), bhikkhus, they do not savour who body-related mindfulness do not savour. The Deathless, bhikkhus, they savour, who body-related mindfulness savour.’ ‘The Deathless, bhikkhus, they are without who body-related mindfulness are without. The Deathless, bhikkhus, they are not without who body-related mindfulness are not without.’ ‘The Deathless, bhikkhus, they neglect who body-related mindfulness neglect. The Deathless, bhikkhus, they do not neglect who do body-related mindfulness not neglect.’ ‘The Deathless, bhikkhus, for those is undeveloped for whom body-related mindfulness is undeveloped. The Deathless, bhikkhus, for those is developed for whom body-related mindfulness is developed.’ ‘The Deathless, bhikkhus, for those is unrealized for whom body-related mindfulness is unrealized. The Deathless, bhikkhus, for those is realized for whom body-related mindfulness is realized.’

materiality and their causes: their arising, perishing, and that they are impermanent, suffering and non-self. That is why The Buddha teaches four contemplations:

- 1) Body-contemplation (*kāyānupassanā*): with body-contemplation, the main subject is the body of materiality. But as we have now discussed at some length, The Buddha makes it very clear that contemplating materiality alone is not enough: we need to contemplate also mentality, the remaining four clinging-aggregates: feelings, perception, volitional formations and consciousness.
- 2) Feeling-contemplation (*vedanānupassanā*): with feeling-contemplation, the main subject is feeling: nine types of feeling. Feeling is mentality. But according to The Buddha's Teaching, contemplating feeling alone is not enough: we need to contemplate also materiality, and the remaining three types of mentality: perception, volitional formations and consciousness.
- 3) Consciousness-contemplation (*cittānupassanā*): with consciousness-contemplation, the main subject is consciousness: fourteen types of consciousness. But those fourteen types of consciousness are determined by their mental factors. That means we cannot distinguish those fourteen types of consciousness without contemplating their mental factors. And here again, contemplating consciousness alone is not enough: we need to contemplate also the materiality clinging-aggregate, in order to understand the base of consciousness.
- 4) Dhammas-contemplation (*dhammānupassanā*): with dhammas-contemplation, the main subject is one of the five categories (the five hindrances, the five clinging-aggregates, twelve bases, seven enlightenment factors, and the Four Noble Truths). The five hindrances and the seven enlightenment factors are mental factors. But according to the Buddha's Teaching, contemplating some mental factors alone is not enough: we need to contemplate also the materiality clinging-aggregate, the feeling clinging-aggregate, the perception clinging-aggregate, the remaining mental factors of the formations clinging-aggregate, and the consciousness clinging-aggregate. The five clinging-aggregates, the twelve bases, and the Four Noble Truths cover all five clinging-aggregates, and the way to contemplate them is discussed in the first three foundations of mindfulness.

We may compare the four foundations of mindfulness to the four legs of a table. If three legs are removed, the table cannot stand; if two legs are removed, the table cannot stand; if one leg is removed, the table can stand, but can support no weight. Only when there are four legs can the table stand firm and support any weight we put on it. In the same way, unless we practise all four foundations of mindfulness, there can be no support for the arising of a genuine Path&Fruit.

THIS DHAMMA IS PROFOUND, HARD TO SEE AND HARD TO UNDERSTAND

As you may now have understood, if we are not familiar with the Dispensation's usage we may think The Buddha's many different guidelines mean that there are many different ways to practise: some very, very easy, and some very,

very difficult. That way, the teachings of The Buddha may look incoherent, and confusion may arise.

Such confusion is not surprising. For example, once there was a wanderer called Vacchagotta who became confounded and confused by the Buddha's Teachings. He thought they were incoherent. Then The Buddha said to him:¹

M.II.190

It is enough, Vaccha, for you to become confounded, for you to become confused. For this Dhamma, Vaccha, is profound (*gambhīro*), hard to see (*duddaso*), and hard to understand (*duranubodho*), peaceful (*santo*), and sublime (*paṇīto*), unattainable by mere reasoning (*atakkāva-caro*), subtle (*nipuṇo*), to be experienced by the wise (*pañña-vedanīyo*).

It is hard for you to understand it when you hold another view, accept another teaching, approve of another teaching, pursue a different training, and follow a different teacher.

If The Buddha Himself says this about the Dhamma, who are we to say the Dhamma is easy?² The Dhamma is not easy to understand. It is better to make that very clear in our minds. The Buddha says it very many times. To understand how to practise the four foundations of mindfulness is profound, hard to understand, and unattainable by mere reasoning. To practise the four foundations of mindfulness with direct knowledge is even more profound, harder to see, and harder to understand.

As The Buddha says to Vacchagotta the wanderer, we cannot attain vipassanā knowledge by mere inference and reasoning. Proper vipassanā means to see the five clinging-aggregates of past, future, present, internal and external, gross and subtle, inferior and superior, far and near as directly, clearly and distinctly as a man with good eyesight sees the various characteristics of a beautiful, brilliant gem that he holds in his hand. Proper vipassanā means to see, contemplate and carefully investigate the three characteristics of the five clinging-aggregates as directly, clearly and distinctly as a man with good eyesight may examine and carefully contemplate a lump of foam to see that it is without substance, and see that a water bubble arises and then bursts, see that the trunk of a banana tree has no core, and see that a magician's illusion is a mere trick, devoid of substance.

KNOWING AND SEEING THE OBJECTS OF VIPASSANĀ

CONVENTIONAL / ULTIMATE TRUTH

Let us then discuss this further. Please raise your right hand and look at it, examine it, and carefully contemplate it. What do you see? You see a hand.

¹ M.II.iii.2 'Aggi-Vaccha-Suttaṃ' ('The Fire-Vaccha Sutta')

² In S.V.XII.v.5 'Vāla-Suttaṃ' ('The Hair Sutta'), The Buddha explains how an archer may take a strand from a hair split into seven, fix it to the arrowhead, and at a distance shoot the arrow to penetrate another strand that has been fixed to an egg-plant. He then explains that it is far more difficult to penetrate the Four Noble Truths. And in M.I.iii.6 'Pāsa-Rāsi-Suttaṃ' ('The Mass of Snares Sutta') (This sutta is also called 'Ariya-Pariyesanā-Suttaṃ' ('The Noble Search Sutta')) The Buddha recounts His thoughts just after His enlightenment: 'With difficulty have I arrived [at this]: enough now with making it known. This Dhamma is not understood by those overcome by lust and hatred. Going against the stream (*paṭi-sota-gāmiṃ*), subtle (*nipuṇaṃ*), profound (*gambhīraṃ*), hard to see (*du-ddasaṃ*), and infinitesimal (*aṇuṃ*), those excited by lust cannot see it, being covered by a mass of darkness.'

Now, you may be able to infer that your hands, your eyes, and ears, etc. are older than they were when you were younger, but can you know and see with direct knowledge the arising and perishing phenomena that are your hand? Can you see your hand's impermanence in the present moment? Can you see that your eye is impermanent? Your ear? No. You cannot see anything but concepts: hands, eyes, ears, etc.¹ So how are you going to contemplate the body? How are you going to contemplate materiality?

Looking at your hand is looking at a concept (*paññati*). Looking at the lump of flesh in your eye-socket is looking at a concept. Looking at your body is looking at a concept. Concepts are not impermanent, because concepts are not ultimate truth (*paramattha-sacca*), concepts are conventional truth (*sammuti-sacca*). You cannot practise vipassanā on conventional truth for there is nothing for you to see. To practise vipassanā, you need to look at ultimate truth.

Ultimate truth is ultimate materiality, ultimate mentality and their causes, and Nibbāna. To know Nibbāna with direct knowledge, you need first to know ultimate materiality and ultimate mentality and their causes with direct knowledge, and then you need to contemplate them with direct knowledge as impermanent, suffering and non-self. That is vipassanā.

If one is unable to know and see ultimate materiality and mentality and their causes with direct knowledge, then how is one going to develop vipassanā by direct knowledge?

SAMATHA NEEDS TO BE DEVELOPED BY DIRECT KNOWLEDGE

According to The Buddha, if you want to practise vipassanā, you need to develop samatha. That is why He says:

M.III.431&433

Samatha and vipassanā (*samatho ca vipassanā ca*):
these things need to be developed by direct knowledge (*ime dhammā abhiññā bhāvetabbā*).

As we explained earlier, samatha is the development of concentration (*samādhi*), which is access-concentration or jhāna.²

THE CONCENTRATED ONE KNOWS AND SEES ACCORDING TO REALITY

Concentration is necessary for the practice of vipassanā, which is understanding things according to reality (*yathā-bhūta*), knowledge and vision. It is a natural law (*dhammatā*), that the proximate cause of knowledge and vision is concentration.³ That is why The Buddha says:⁴

¹ The Most Venerable Pa-Auk Tawya Sayadaw explains that even if the yogi is able to see the rūpa-kalāpas, they are merely concepts. There is still neither knowledge of the momentary arising and perishing of materiality nor of the causal arising and perishing, because there is neither knowledge of the four great essentials and materiality derived from the four great essentials nor knowledge of their causes.

² This is what the commentaries call insight-basis jhāna (*vipassanā-pādaka-jjhāna*): see 'Knowledge and Vision', p.16.

³ This is described very clearly at 'Examining a Gem in One's Hand', p.17.

⁴ A.X.I.i.2 'Cetanā-Karaṇīya-Suttam' ('The Necessary-Volition Sutta'). It is quoted by VsM.xiv.-424 'Paññā-Kathā' ('Discussion of Wisdom') PP.xiv.7 to explain the proximate cause of wisdom. (Please see further next page.)

A.X.2

For the concentrated one, bhikkhus, volition does not need to be made: ‘May I know and see according to reality! (yathā-bhūtaṃ jānāmi passāmi!)’

It is a law of nature, bhikkhus, that the concentrated one knows and sees according to reality (Dhammatā esā, bhikkhave, yaṃ samāhito yathā-bhūtaṃ jānāti, passati).

Only with concentration is one able to know and see the four foundations of mindfulness according to reality (yathā-bhūta).

ABIDE CONCENTRATED, OF ONE-POINTED CONSCIOUSNESS

The Buddha explains it in, for example, the fourth sutta of the ‘*Sati-Paṭṭhāna*’ section of the ‘*Samyutta-Nikāya*’, the ‘*Sāla*’ sutta. There, The Buddha tells the bhikkhus how to establish the newly ordained bhikkhus in the four foundations of mindfulness with one-pointed, concentrated consciousness. He says they should say to newly ordained bhikkhu:¹

S.V.370

Here, friend, do you

- [1] **abide contemplating the body in the body, ardent, discerning, of unified (ekodibhūta), of clear consciousness (vipassanna-cittā), concentrated (samāhīta), of one-pointed consciousness (ek-aggā-cittā), in order to know the body according to reality (kāyassa yathā-bhūtaṃ ñāṇāya);**
- [2] **abide contemplating feelings in feelings, ardent, discerning, become unified, of clear consciousness, concentrated, of one-pointed consciousness, in order to know feelings according to reality (vedanānaṃ yathābhūtaṃ ñāṇāya);**
- [3] **abide contemplating consciousness in consciousness, ardent, discerning, become unified, of clear consciousness, concentrated, of one-pointed consciousness, in order to know consciousness according to reality (cittassa yathābhūtaṃ ñāṇāya).**
- [4] **Abide contemplating dhammas in dhammas, ardent, discerning, become unified, of clear consciousness, concentrated, of one-pointed consciousness, in order to know dhammas according to reality (dhammānaṃ yathābhūtaṃ ñāṇāya).**

And The Buddha says those who have attained one of the lower Paths should abide contemplating the four foundations of mindfulness in the same way. And then He explains that the Arahants contemplate the four foundations of mindfulness in this way.

DEVELOP CONCENTRATION, BHIKKHUS

What is their contemplation? It is vipassanā. Vipassanā is knowing and seeing the impermanence of the five aggregates according to reality (yathā-bhūta), knowing and seeing the six internal and external bases according to reality, etc. That requires strong and powerful concentration.

With such concentration, one is able to know, for example, the eye according to reality, and all the phenomena associated with the eye. The Buddha explains it in, for example, the ‘*Jīvaka-Amba-Vana-Samādhi*’ sutta:²

S.IV.160

See also quotation, footnote 4, p.60.

¹ S.V.III.i.4 ‘*Sāla-Suttaṃ*’ (‘The Sāla Sutta’)

² S.IV.I.xvi.5 ‘*Jīvaka-Amba-Vana-Samādhi-Suttaṃ*’ (‘The Jīvaka’s-Mango-Grove Concentration Sutta’)

Develop concentration, bhikkhus (*Samādhiṃ, bhikkhave, bhāvētha*). **When concentrated, bhikkhus, things become manifest to the bhikkhu, according to reality** (*Samāhitassa, bhikkhave, bhikkhuno yathā-bhūtaṃ okkhāyati*).¹

And what becomes manifest according to reality?

- [1] **The eye becomes manifest according to reality as impermanent** (*Cakkhuṃ aniccanti yathā-bhūtaṃ okkhāyati*).
- [2] **Sights become manifest according to reality as impermanent.**
- [3] **Eye-consciousness becomes manifest according to reality as impermanent.**
- [4] **Eye-contact becomes manifest according to reality as impermanent.**
- [5] **And any feeling that arises because of eye-contact (be it pleasant, unpleasant, or neither unpleasant nor pleasant) becomes manifest according to reality as impermanent.**

The Buddha explains that with concentration, also the ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind manifest according to reality as impermanent: also their respective objects, their respective types of consciousness, contact, and the feelings that arise because of that contact.

You will remember that these things are what The Buddha calls 'the all'. And you will remember that He says the all must be known directly, that is, the all must manifest to the yogi. And vipassanā meditation is possible only when the impermanence characteristic manifests as directly, clearly and distinctly as the characteristics of a beautiful, brilliant gem manifest to a man with good eyesight who holds it in his hand.

In the '*Mahā-Sati-Paṭṭhāna*' sutta, The Buddha describes vipassanā as the bhikkhu's seeing that ultimate materiality and mentality are arising phenomena (*samudaya-dhamma*) and perishing phenomena (*vaya-dhamma*). They arise and perish moment by moment. That is why Venerable Commentary Teachers refer to it as their momentary arising (*khanato udaya*) and momentary perishing (*khanato vaya*).² But it is not enough merely to see their momentary arising and perishing. You need also to see their causal arising (*paccayato udaya*) and causal perishing (*paccayato vaya*): that is, you need also to practise vipassanā on their causes with direct knowledge. That you can only do, of course, with developed concentration (*samādhi*).

DEVELOP CONCENTRATION, BHIKKHUS

The Buddha explains it in, for example, the '*Samādhi*' sutta of the '*Khandha-Saṃyutta*':³

Develop concentration, bhikkhus (*Samādhiṃ, bhikkhave, bhāvētha*). **Concentrated, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu according to reality understands** (*samāhito, bhikkhave, bhikkhu yathā-bhūtaṃ pajānāti*). **And what according to reality does he understand?**

- [1] **Materiality's arising** (*samudaya*) **and disappearance** (*atthaṅgama*);
- [2] **feeling's arising and disappearance;**

¹ SA explains that 'become manifest' (*okkhāyati*) means they become manifest (*paccakkhāyati*), knowable (*paññāyati*), and evident (*pākataṃ*): *paccakkha* (discernible, perceivable, known to the senses, manifest) is the opposite of *anumāna* (inference).

² VsM.xx.724-730 '*Udaya-Bbaya-Ñāṇa-Kathā*' ('Arise&Perish Knowledge Discussion')

³ S.III.I.5 '*Samādhi-Suttam*' ('The Concentration Sutta'). It is referred to in VsM to explain one of the benefits of concentration: see footnote 1, p.16.

- [3] perception's arising and disappearance;
 [4] formations' arising and disappearance;
 [5] consciousness's arising and disappearance.

Here, The Buddha explains that the bhikkhu understands the arising of the five aggregates according to reality: that is dependent origination (*paticca-samuppāda*). And then He explains what it is the bhikkhu understands. For example, materiality:

S.III.5

One delights much in materiality (*rūpaṃ abhinandati*), **one approves of it** (*abhivadati*), **one keeps holding on to it** (*ajjhosāya tīṭṭhati*).

Delighting much in that materiality, approving of it, remaining holding on to it, delight arises. That delight in materiality, it is clinging (*upādāna*). **Because of that clinging, there is existence** (*tass-upādāna-paccayā bhavo*). **Because of existence, birth** (*bhava-paccayā jāti*). **Because of birth, ageing&death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure, and despair** (*jāti-paccayā, jarā-maraṇaṃ soka-parideva-dukkha-domanass-upāyāsā*).

Such is the origin of this whole mass of suffering (*Evam-etassa kevalassa dukkha-kkhandhassa samudayo hoti*).¹

The Buddha gives the same explanation for the remaining five aggregates: feeling, perception, formations, and consciousness. And He explains that when there is no such clinging, there is the cessation of the whole mass of suffering. That is how the bhikkhu who has developed concentration is able with direct knowledge to understand the causal arising and perishing of the five aggregates. Without concentration, it can only be inferred, but vipassanā cannot be developed by inference alone: as we have now explained at some length, there has to be direct knowledge.

In the '*Mahā-Sati-Paṭṭhāna*' sutta, the causal arising and perishing is included in The Buddha's explanation of the bhikkhu's seeing arising phenomena (*samudaya-dhamma*) and perishing phenomena (*vaya-dhamma*).

THE LIGHT OF WISDOM

Then, what is concentration (*samādhi*)? It is mental one-pointedness (*ek-aggatā*). In the *Visuddhi-Magga*, it is called consciousness-purification (*citta-visuddhi*), which is explained as the eight attainments (*aṭṭha samāpattiyo*) and access concentration (*upacāra samādhi*).²

The eight attainments are absorption concentration (*appanā samādhi*), which is the four fine-material jhānas (*rūpa-jjhāna*), and four immaterial jhānas (*arūpa-jjhāna*). Access-concentration is strong and powerful concentration just before the arising of absorption concentration: that is why it is called 'access' concentration. In both cases, there is light: The Buddha calls it the splendour of wisdom (*paññābhā*), the brightness of wisdom (*paññā-pajjoto*), the brilliance of wisdom (*paññā-obhāso*), the radiance of wisdom (*paññā-pabhā*), and the light of wisdom (*paññā-āloko*).³

¹ According to the meaning, this explanation is identical to the one given at 'What Needs to Be Done by Direct Knowledge', p.30.

² Vs.xviii.662 '*Diṭṭhi-Visuddhi-Niddesa*' ('View-Purification Description') PP.xviii.1-2

³ A.IV.III.v.1-5 '*Ābhā-*', '*Pabhā-*', '*Āloka-*', '*Obhā-*', and '*Pajjota-Suttaṃ*' ('The Splendour-', '-Brightness-', '-Brilliance-', '-Radiance-', 'The Light Sutta'). In each sutta, The Buddha speaks of
 (Please see further next page.)

The light of wisdom is truly wonderful. Why? Because it allows you directly to know and see things according to reality: ultimate materiality, ultimate mentality, their causes, and their impermanence characteristic, their suffering characteristic, and their non-self characteristic. The light of wisdom allows you to penetrate the delusions of compactness, to transcend concepts (conventional truth) and penetrate ultimate truth. That is why The Buddha says you must develop concentration.¹

Absorption concentration is the best, which is why The Buddha always describes the jhānas, for example, in the '*Sāmañña-Phala*' sutta.² But if you do not want to develop absorption concentration, you can develop strong and powerful access concentration instead.

When you want to develop vipassanā, you emerge from your concentration and direct your mind to vipassanā. You will remember how The Buddha explains this in the '*Sāmañña-Phala*' sutta:

With consciousness thus concentrated, purified, cleansed, unblemished, with contaminations gone, become flexible, wieldy, fixed, attained to imperturbability, he directs and turns his consciousness towards knowledge and vision (*nāṇa-dassana*).

Here, please remember. When your consciousness is concentrated in absorption or access concentration, it takes one unchanging object. For one, or two, or three hours, etc., countless consciousnesses take, for example, the unchanging breath nimitta as object. But once you direct your consciousness towards vipassanā, of course, your consciousness is no longer in absorption or access-concentration. Vipassanā meditation is knowing and seeing the individual characteristics of ultimate materiality and mentality and their causes (their individual characteristic, function, manifestation and proximate cause), and knowing the general characteristics of ultimate materiality and ultimate mentality and their causes (their impermanence, suffering, and non-self nature). As soon as they arise, they perish: that means the object changes all the time. So, even though your concentration is still deep and profound (because of your previously established absorption or access concentration), even though it has the same power as access-concentration, even though there is still bright, brilliant and radiant light of wisdom,³ even though the mind does not leave its mediation subject, it

the same quality produced by the moon, the sun, fire, and lastly by wisdom. And in, for example, S.V.XII.ii.1 '*Dhamma-Cakka-Ppavattana-Suttaṃ*' ('The Dhamma-Wheel Setting-in-Motion Sutta'), He mentions also the arising of light at His enlightenment: '...thus, bhikkhus, in regard to things (*dhammā*) unheard before, in me vision arose (*cakkhum*), knowledge arose (*nāṇam*), wisdom arose (*paññā*), science arose (*vijjā*), light arose (*āloko*).'

¹ In, for example, S.II.iii.3 '*Upanisa-Suttaṃ*' ('The Proximate Cause Sutta'), The Buddha explains: 'And what, bhikkhus, is the proximate cause for knowledge and vision according to reality (*yathā-bhūta-nāṇa-dassanassa upanisā*)?' "Concentration (*samādhi*)" should be said.' See also 'The Concentrated One Knows and Sees According to Reality, p.57.

² Referred to at 'Knowledge and Vision', p.16.

³ In A.III.II.v.11 '*Nimitta-Suttaṃ*' ('The Nimitta Sutta'), The Buddha explains how the bhikkhu who practises higher consciousness (*adhi-citta*) (samatha and vipassanā) needs to know when to focus on the concentration nimitta (*samādhi-nimitta*) (AA: one-pointedness), when to focus on the exertion nimitta (*paggha-nimitta*) (AA: energy), and when to focus on the equanimity (*upekkhā-nimitta*) (AA: ever evenness). And He explains that when the bhikkhu knows how to do this, 'that mind is flexible (*mudu*), and wieldy (*kammaniya*), and radiant (*pabhassara*), and not brittle, rightly
(Please see further next page.)

is absorbed in objects that change moment by moment. That is why your concentration is then called momentary concentration (*khaṇika-samādhi*).¹

THE ULTIMATE REALITIES OF VIPASSANĀ

Now we have discussed the objects of vipassanā, and how to know them directly. The last thing we want to discuss is the ultimate realities that are the objects of vipassanā, that is, how they are explained in the Pali Texts, the Abhidhamma.

Abhidhamma is ‘abhi’ plus ‘dhamma’.² ‘Abhi’ is a prefix that means ‘exceeding (*atireka*)’ and ‘distinction (*visesa*)’. The Abhidhamma is the superior, higher, exceeding Dhamma, because it is ultimate truth described by a Fully Enlightened Buddha. The Abhidhamma is not aimed at certain listeners with certain inclinations, their faculties disposed in a certain way. The Abhidhamma comprises just matrixes (*mātikā*) that describe phenomena according to reality (*yathā-bhūta*): all material phenomena (*rūpa-dhamma*), and mental phenomena (*nāma-dhamma*), and their different combinations and relations, as they are discovered and explained only by a Fully Enlightened Buddha. The Abhidhamma is a complete analysis of ultimate truth.

THE ABHIDHAMMA ↔ THE SUTTAS

Now we shall ask you a question. What do you think: on the night of his enlightenment, what did the Bodhisatta know and see with vipassanā knowledge, conventional truth or ultimate truth?

As we explained earlier, vipassanā takes as its object ultimate truth. Thus, enlightenment involves direct and full knowledge of ultimate truth: nothing else. The object of the Bodhisatta’s vipassanā meditation was ultimate truth, and His vipassanā knowledge was knowledge of ultimate truth. And when he as a Buddha reviewed His enlightenment, and reflected on the Dhamma that He had re-discovered, His object was still ultimate truth. What he saw and analysed is what He as a Buddha describes in the Abhidhamma. And that knowledge was so profound that He at first did not want to teach. When He did decide to teach after all, the Abhidhamma was the foundation of His Teaching. How could it be anything else?

concentrated (*sammā samādhiyati*) for the destruction of the taints.’ See also quotation, footnote 2, p.12.

¹ VsM.xi.308 ‘*Catu-Dhātu Vavatthāna Bhāvanā*’ (‘Four-Elements Definition Meditation’) PP.xi.42 explains that as one develops four-elements meditation, there arises access-concentration: not absorption, because it has as object phenomena with natural characteristics (*sa-bhāva-dhamm-ārammaṇattā*). VsMT then explains that this it is called access-concentration only according to popular speech (*ruḥhī-vasena*). VsM.viii.177 ‘*Marāṇa-Ssati-Kathā*’ (‘Discussion of Death-Mindfulness’) PP.viii.40 explains, however, that because of the preceding practice leading up to the supramundane- and second- and fourth immaterial attainments, then even though their object is also a phenomenon with natural characteristics, their concentration is nonetheless absorption concentration, *jhāna*.

² Details of the following explanation have been taken from DhSA ‘*Nidāna-Kathā*’ (‘Introductory Discussion’).

Sutta teachings came later, beginning with the '*Dhamma-Cakka-Ppavattana*' sutta, two months after The Buddha's enlightenment, and then the '*An-Atta-Lakkhana*' sutta, two weeks later.¹

As we explained earlier, the suttas are outlines. In the suttas, The Buddha does not explain things in detail: that is not the purpose of an outline. The purpose of the Abhidhamma, however, is to give the details necessary for understanding ultimate materiality, ultimate mentality, and their causes.²

For example, in the suttas, The Buddha explains mentality-materiality as the five aggregates: materiality, feeling, perception, formations, and consciousness. That is very brief.

Materiality The Buddha explains as the four great essentials and materiality derived from the four great essentials (*cattāri mahā-bhūtāni, catunnañ-ca mahā-bhūtānaṃ upādāya-rūpaṃ*). And He explains that the four great essentials are the earth-, water-, fire-, and wind element. But where are you going to find an explanation of materiality derived from the four great essentials? If you do not know in practical detail what it refers to, then how can you know and see materiality with direct knowledge: as directly, clearly and distinctly as knowing the characteristics of a gem in your hand? You cannot. You need more information: The Buddha does not in any sutta explain what derived materiality is. It is in the Abhidhamma that He explains materiality in detail: as the four great essentials and twenty-four types of derived materiality.³ That is what needs to be known with direct knowledge for there to be any vipassanā.

In the suttas, The Buddha explains that the formations aggregate is six groups of volition (*etanā-kāya*): that is also very brief.⁴ He does not mention that the formations aggregate includes contact, one-pointedness, attention, application, sustainment, decision, greed, hatred, delusion, etc. That is not the sutta classification (*suttanta-bhājanīya*). It is in the Abhidhamma classification (*Abhidhamma-bhājanīya*)

¹ S.V.XII.ii.1 '*Dhamma-Cakka-Ppavattana-Suttaṃ*' ('The Dhamma-Wheel Setting-in-Motion Sutta') and S.III.I.vi.7 '*An-Atta-Lakkhana-Suttaṃ*' ('The Non-Self Characteristic Sutta'). In the intervening two weeks, The Buddha taught the five ascetics full-time. That teaching is recorded in no sutta: only the commentaries. And that teaching would necessarily involve Abhidhamma, since the five ascetics were developing samatha and vipassanā.

² DhSA '*Nidāna-Kathā*' ('Introductory Discussion') E.4-5 explains: 'In the *Suttanta*, the five aggregates are classified partially and not fully. In the Abhidhamma they are classified fully by the methods of *Suttanta*-classification, Abhidhamma-classification, and catechism. Similarly with the twelve bases, the eighteen elements, the Four Truths, the twenty-two faculties, and the twelve-factored cause&conditions... In the *Suttanta* the four foundations of mindfulness are partially classified, not fully. But in the Abhidhamma they are classified in detail under the three methods. And the same with the four Right Strivings, the four means to success, the seven enlightenment factors, the Noble Eightfold Path, the four jhānas, the four immeasurables, the five precepts, the four discriminations.... knowledge... the defilements... apprehension of the different planes.... Thus it is to be understood that the Abhidhamma exceeds and is distinguished from the Dhamma.'

³ DhSA.II.595-676 '*Upādā-Bhājanīya-Kathā*' ('Discussion of Derived Classification') E.II.i.3 (402-445) discusses derived materiality in detail.

⁴ In, for example, S.III.I.vi.4 '*Upādāna-Pari-Pavatta-Suttaṃ*' ('The Clinging Full-Process Sutta'), The Buddha explains: 'And what, bhikkhus, are formations (*saṅkhārā*)? There are these six volition groups (*etanā-kāyā*): sight volition, sound-, odour-, flavour-, tangible-, and dhamma volition. These, bhikkhus, are called formations. With the arising of contact, there is the arising of formations; with the cessation of contact, there is the cessation of formations.'

that The Buddha classifies the formations aggregate: five of the seven universals (*sabba-citta-sādhāraṇa*) (feeling and perception are the other two universals), the six occasionals (*paṭiṇṇaka*), the fourteen unwholesome mental factors (*akusala-cetasika*), and the twenty-five beautiful mental factors (*sobhana-cetasika*). These ultimate realities must be known and seen with direct knowledge for there to be any vipassanā meditation.

As we have now explained, the five aggregates are so called because they are each an aggregate of eleven categories: past, future, present, internal and external, gross and subtle, inferior and superior, far and near. Do you know what these terms mean? If you do not know in practical detail what they mean, then how can you know and see the five aggregates with direct knowledge: as directly, clearly and distinctly as knowing the characteristics of a gem in your hand? You cannot. You need more information. Where must you look? In the Abhidhamma.

In the suttas, The Buddha explains how we need to practise. He explains that we must practise morality (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*paññā*). He explains that we must know and see the five aggregates with direct knowledge (of past, future, present, internal and external, gross and subtle, inferior and superior, far and near), and the six internal and external bases, the twelve factors of dependent origination, etc. And we must develop samatha and vipassanā, etc. That is outlines of how we need to practise. But in the Abhidhamma, The Buddha explains in practical detail what we need to know and see with direct knowledge: the different types of materiality, the different types of consciousness, the different types of mental factor, the factors of dependent origination, and their interrelation, etc.¹

That is why one cannot properly understand the suttas without knowledge of the Abhidhamma: one confuses mentality and materiality, unwholesome and wholesome, kamma and non-kamma, etc.² Why? Because in the suttas, The

¹ This is not to say that the Abhidhamma *Piṭaka* as we know it is The Buddha's work. The Buddha taught spontaneously in accordance with the inclination of His listeners and His own Omniscient Knowledge (*Sabbāññuta-Ñāṇa*) <see M.II.i.8 'Abhaya-Rāja-Kumāra-Suttaṃ' ('The Abhaya King-Son Sutta')>. Thus, the Vinaya, suttas, and Abhidhamma were organized not by Him but by His disciples at the First Council. In this connection, DhSA 'Nidāna-Kathā' ('Introductory Discussion') E.19-21 explains that when The Buddha (over three months of continuous delivery) explained the Abhidhamma in the Tavatiṃsa deva-world (according to their time span only a short Dhamma talk), He every day descended to the human world to collect alms. At that time, Ven. Sāriputta met him, and was given a summary of what had that day been delivered. Ven. Sāriputta then organized and elaborated the brief teaching into the Abhidhamma as it has come down since then, and taught it to his students. Since he passed away before the First Council, he was not present.

² DhSA 'Nidāna-Kathā' ('Introductory Discussion') refers to an incident in M.I.iv.2 'Mahā-Gosiṅga-Suttaṃ' ('The Great Gosiṅga Sutta). There, the Venerable Sāriputta asks the Venerable Mahāmoggallāna what kind of bhikkhu could illuminate the Gosiṅga Sāla-tree Forest. And the Venerable Mahāmoggallāna answers: 'Here, friend Sāriputta, two bhikkhus engage in a discussion on the Abhidhamma, and they question each other, and each being questioned by the other answers without failure, and their discussion proceeds in accordance with the Dhamma. That kind of bhikkhu, friend Sāriputta, could illuminate this Gosiṅga Sāla-tree Forest.' When the Venerable Sāriputta reports this to The Buddha, The Buddha says: 'Sādhu, sādhu, Sāriputta! Moggallāna, speaking rightly, should speak just as he did, for Moggallāna is a Dhamma-teacher (*dhamma-kathiko*).' DhSA then explains: 'Those bhikkhus only who know Abhidhamma are true teachers of the (Please see further next page.)

Buddha teaches according to the inclination of His listeners, according to the disposition of their faculties. And since the great majority of the suttas are addressed to bhikkhus, there are a great many things The Buddha does not explain in the suttas. The bhikkhus are well familiar with the Dispensation's usage, and many of them have known and seen the profound Dhamma with their own direct knowledge.

Nowadays it is very different. What was very clear to people in The Buddha's time is nowadays very difficult for most people to accept and understand: there is much confusion and many views about the Teachings. That is why we have had to write this introduction about the Dispensation's usage.¹

KNOWING AND SEEING THE ABHIDHAMMA

Now you may begin to understand what The Buddha means when He says the Dhamma is:

profound, hard to see,² and hard to understand, peaceful, and sublime, unattainable by mere reasoning, subtle, to be experienced by the wise.

How is one to see and understand the profound Dhamma? We just explained it: with the help of the light of wisdom: it arises with access- or absorption concentration. With that light, one may indeed know and see the ultimate realities described in the Abhidhamma as directly, clearly and distinctly as a man with good eyesight may know and see the different characteristics of the gem in his hand.

Once you know and see those ultimate realities with your own vipassanā knowledge, then any views you may have about the Abhidhamma not being taught by The Buddha, not being recited at the First Council, etc., all such views disappear. There is no arguing with direct knowledge.

Dhamma: the rest, though they speak on the Dhamma, are not teachers thereof. And why? They, in speaking on the Dhamma, confuse the different kinds of kamma and its results, the distinction between mentality and materiality, and the different kinds of phenomenon (*dhamma*).¹ There is mentioned also the Buddha's analysis of *Pācittiya* rule No.72. It says: 'Should any bhikkhu when the Pātimokkha is recited say thus: "Why are these lesser and minor training-rules recited? They lead only to worry, bother, and confusion." In disparaging the training-rules, there is (a case entailing) expiation. In this rule's analysis (*vibhaṅga*), The Buddha says: 'If without any intention to disparage the Vinaya one were to instigate another, saying: "Study the Suttas or Verses or Abhidhamma first and afterwards you will learn the Vinaya": there is no offence in him.' Mentioned also is the rule laid down by The Buddha for bhikkhunīs: '[There is an offence] if she asks about Abhidhamma or Vinaya after getting permission [to ask] about the Suttanta, or on the Suttanta or Vinaya after getting permission [to ask] about the Abhidhamma, or on the Suttanta or Abhidhamma after getting permission [to ask] about the Vinaya.'

¹ For The Buddha's predicting how later generations would, for example, disparage and find fault with the Abhidhamma, see footnote 3, p.5.

² The Buddha says the Dhamma so hard to see and understand is 'infinitesimal': see quotation footnote 2, p.55.

SUMMARY

We could devote many hours to explaining the Dispensation's usage, but maybe this is enough for you to understand our explanation of the '*Mahā-Sati-Paṭṭhāna*' sutta. Let us then summarize what you need to do to attain Nibbāna.¹

- 1) You undertake morality: for laypeople it is the five- or eight precepts; for novices and nuns it is the ten precepts; for bhikkhus it is the *Pātimokkha* rule. This is what The Buddha calls the training in morality (*sīla*).
- 2) You develop samatha: either access concentration or absorption concentration (the four jhānas), until your light of wisdom is stable, bright, brilliant and radiant. This is what The Buddha calls the training in concentration (*samādhi*).
- 3) You direct your now purified consciousness towards knowledge and vision, which is vipassanā. You define mentality-materiality with direct knowledge: knowing and seeing the five aggregates of past, future, present, internal and external, gross and subtle, inferior and superior, far and near as directly, clearly and distinctly as clearly as a man with good eyesight may know and see the characteristics of a gem in his hand. In the same way, you define the six internal and external bases, and the twelve factors of dependent origination. Then you again discern these many phenomena, this time contemplating and carefully investigating them with regard to their impermanence, suffering and non-self characteristics. This is what The Buddha calls the training in wisdom (*paññā*).

You continue practising vipassanā in this way until your vipassanā knowledge matures, and your consciousness inclines towards the Unformed, and you attain Stream-Entry. Then you go on practising in this way until you attain Arahantship.

In the '*Mahā-Sati-Paṭṭhāna*' sutta, The Buddha calls this threefold training 'the only way' (*ekāyana*).

THE BUDDHA'S METHOD

Now that we have quoted and explained a number of suttas regarding samatha and vipassanā, we shall again ask you a question. What do you think: the summary we have given of the only way, is it a special Pa-Auk method? Or is it just according to the Pali Texts?²

It is better not to think that this is a special Pa-Auk method. In Pa-Auk we do not teach according to our own ideas, or our own special method: we teach according to the Pali Texts, nothing else. And the Pali Texts provide more than sufficient guidelines for us to understand that this is The Buddha's method: the only way. If you want to put an end to suffering, it is better for you to practise The Buddha's method, however difficult it may be. Another way will not give you the results you require.

¹ The procedure given here is according to the '*Samañña-Phala*' sutta as explained earlier.

² The teachings of the Most Venerable Pa-Auk Tawya Sayadaw are commonly referred to as 'the Pa-Auk method'. The Sayadaw himself never describes his teachings as such.

Now that you have become a little bit familiar with the Dispensation's usage, and The Buddha's method, we can begin to discuss the only way as it is explained in the '*Mahā-Sati-Paṭṭhāna*' sutta, its commentary, and other suttas and commentaries.