

**Dhamma Teachings provided by the Kalyāṇa-Mitta
Meditation Center: the first 32 Newsletters**
Ajahn Kumāro Bhikkhu



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July 2022 - The Practice of Metta (Loving-Kindness)

I. Preliminary Remarks

Be at peace by sitting at ease and keep the body as still as you can. A still and quiet body is conducive to a still and quiet mind. A still and quiet mind is a peaceful mind. To help in bringing the mind to stillness and quiet we use an object of meditation to focus on. The meditation object may be mindfulness of breathing, the sound of silence, a meditation word like 'buddho', or present moment awareness of being here and now that is free of thoughts of the past and future. Cultivating peace is healing, a pleasant occupation that opens the heart to take in the Dhamma.

The Buddha taught that the quality or state of mind is the primary cause for suffering and happiness. This teaching is found in the Dhammapada, a collection of sayings in verse form, and is part of the Khuddaka Nikaya, a division of the Pali Canon of Theravada Buddhism.

Dhammapada verses 1 - 2

Mind precedes experience, mind is foremost, [experience is] mind-made. If, with a corrupt mind one speaks or acts:

From this disappointment and suffering follow as the wheel, the foot of the ox.

Mind precedes experience, mind is foremost, [experience is] mind-made. If, with a clear mind one speaks or acts:

From this happiness and well-being follow like an inseparable shadow.

II. The Practice of Metta

We have free will to choose to listen to the Buddha or to the false self (the ego). These are the only two choices we have in who will be our teacher. We make this choice in each and every moment of our day. When we listen to the ego then mind will suffer from birth, sickness, aging and death; as well as the suffering inherent in conditional existence. When we listen to the Buddha, the Voice of Wisdom and Truth, then mind will stop wandering in the conditional realm and will realize Nibbāna.

- To listen to the Buddha means that we train the mind in the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path. The training liberates the mind of defilements (ignorance, hatred and greed) and thereby, allows clear sight into Pure Mind.¹ The Buddha called Pure Mind 'Nibbāna' and it is our reality and essence. Just like the vanishing of clouds reveals the brilliance of the sun, the removal of defilements reveals the Pure Mind, Nibbāna. Defilements arise through following the unwholesome thoughts of the false self.
 - Pure Mind that is Nibbāna experiences no suffering, no fear of harm, no separation from reality that is one unified whole, and no death. The mind does not arise or pass away; it is not born and does not die. It is beyond space and time; unconditioned; there is no duality of subject and object; its nature is knowing and pure awareness.
 - Pure Mind is impersonal, it is not my personal essence or your personal essence; it is universal, boundless and eternal. Pure Mind is the ground, reality and essence of life, the essence of sentient beings; it is the thread that joins all beings together and the foundation for the practice of loving-kindness.
 - Pure Mind has qualities of perfect peace, perfect love, and wisdom. The Buddha taught that perfect peace is the greatest happiness.
- Listening to the ego is to adhere to the thought system that our identity is associated with a mind in a body. A being is then misperceived to be a combination of a physical body and a non-physical mind.
 - The misperception of the ego perceives beings separated from each other because bodies are located in space and time. The misperceived separation of beings prevents the experience of intimacy, love and happiness.
 - The misperceived separation of beings produces fear, the dominant emotion of the ego. Fear that our fragile identity will be diminished when our self identity is challenged. Fear of the physical

body getting sick, growing old and death. Fear of being attacked and suffering pain and death. Fear of losing our material possessions from natural decay or from others that violently take them.

- The misperceived separation of beings is the cause of ruthless competition and hatred. Striving to be superior is the goal of the ego's thought system.

III. Perceptions to Cultivate

- Perceive the essence of the other as a Pure Mind and not as a body. Bodies are separated in space. Minds are formless and their essence are identical. Love and happiness is the experience of clear sight into the reality of all beings interconnected and joined as one whole. We are not separated or apart from each other but are grounded in Pure Mind.
- A mind cannot be hurt because it is formless; we are invulnerable. In freedom from fear and we can love the other regardless what their body does by way of speech or physical action.
- Radiate the light of loving-kindness to the mind of the other, purifying the other's mind as well as your own due to minds being inseparable.
- Accepting the other in essence as the same as oneself is not to judge the other as different, inferior or superior to oneself. All beings are equal and share the common interests to receive love and give love. All beings seek peace and security; this also we have in common.
- Recognize that the mind that is spinning with the self thought system (ego) generates fear of being attacked and its self concept is diminished. The ego defends itself by attacking others. The hate and attack thoughts causes the mind to worry that others will judge it as unworthy or inferior. Therefore, the mind projects the hate and attack thoughts onto the other. Then the mind forgets it has projected the hate and attack thoughts, and misperceives that the other hates and attacks us. We forgive the other for what they have not done.
- The other who is under the influence of the false self does not know how to receive or give love, even though love and peace is what the other truly wants more than anything else. The other is a puppet and the ego is the puppeteer. The other attacks as a defense due to the ego's fear of being attacked. Perceive that the other is really calling for love but is confused by the ego.

IV. Practices

- Cultivate awareness by watching the thoughts, emotions and views that flow within the mind. Are they wholesome or unwholesome?
 - Wholesome states of mind are completely peaceful and loving. There is acceptance of the other because he is in essence the same as oneself. A wise and understanding mind is tolerant and patient of the egoic minds' confused state.
 - Unwholesome states of mind are negative; they are not peaceful or loving. Unpleasant emotions such as sadness, depression and irritation are symptoms of the egoic mind. Ill will, attack thoughts, fear, judgmental and critical thoughts are habits and defilements of the false self. Doubt and restlessness are also unwholesome states generated by the ego.
 - Wholesome states arise from listening to the Buddha; those that are unwholesome arise from listening to the false self, the ego.
- Develop energy, mindfulness and concentration so that we can choose the Buddha as our teacher. Whenever we chose the Buddha and not the ego as our teacher then energy, mindfulness and concentration becomes stronger.
- The ego has deep roots in the subtle layers of mind that developed over hundreds of thousands of lifetimes. Patience and endurance is necessary to dethrone the ego as master over the mind.

- 7243 When our imperfect mindfulness causes us to listen to the ego and we act unskillfully, forgive ourselves for not being perfect, and once again reestablish right mindfulness by following the teachings of the Buddha. Sitting in judgment of ourselves as bad or hopeless or inferior is to allow the ego to gain control over the mind because the ego feeds on negativity.

V. Closing Remarks

The practice of loving-kindness purifies the mind of the false-self thought system and the accompanying defilements. The practice strengthens our energy, mindfulness and concentration so that we consistently chose the Buddha as our Teacher and thereby realize Nibbāna, the Pure Mind as our true home and refuge. May you be well, happy, and peaceful. Evaṃ.

VI. Footnotes

1. Luangta Mahā Boowa taught the nature of mind that is related in this discussion.

August 2022 - The Practice of Generosity (dāna)

Generosity is the foundation and cause for spiritual development, it serves as a basis and preparation for the training of mind to free itself from the defilements (ignorance, greed and ill will) and thereby realize Nibbāna.

Selfishness is caused by identification with the egoic personality. The practice of generosity helps to train the mind to let go of selfishness and to be liberated from the egoic personality. Liberation from the egoic personality purifies the mind of the defilements that realizes Nibbāna.

The practice of generosity may be initiated by contemplating the impermanence of material possessions and financial wealth.

- Material possessions lose their value with use, can be stolen or lost.
 - The enjoyment of material possessions declines after the initial pleasure becomes mundane.
 - Financial wealth is reduced due to theft or economic recession.
 - There is the burden of protecting material possessions and financial wealth from theft, natural and economic decline.
 - Material possessions and wealth are left behind when the physical body dies.
- There is therefore, wisdom in giving and sharing material possessions and financial wealth to others in order to accumulate merit and to free the mind from the burden of worrying over their loss and decline.

The Practice of Giving by Susan Elbaum Jootla

An article found in *Dāna - The Practice of Giving* by Bhikkhu Bodhi, Wheel Publication 367; p. 23

The Buddha said that the practice of giving will aid us in our efforts to purify the mind. Generous gifts accompanied by wholesome volition help to eradicate suffering in three ways.

- First, when we decide to give something of our own to someone else, we simultaneously reduce our attachment to the object; to make a habit of giving can thus gradually weaken the mental factor of craving, one of the main causes of unhappiness.
- Second, giving accompanied by wholesome volition will lead to happy future births in circumstances favourable to encountering and practising the pure Dhamma.
- Third, and most important, when giving is practised with the intention that the mind becomes pliant enough for attainment of Nibbāna, the act of generosity will help us develop virtue, concentration and wisdom (sīla, samādhi, paññā) right in the present. These three stages make up Buddha's Noble Eightfold Path, and perfecting the path leads to the extinction of suffering.

Generosity is found in various dhammas taught by Lord Buddha, as the:

1. first topic in the progressive instruction of the Dhamma (anupubbikathā),
 2. first of the three bases of meritorious actions (puññakiriyaṅga),
 3. first of the four bases of sympathy (sārahavattā),
 4. first of the ten perfections (pāramī),
 5. an essential attribute of the good or superior person (sappurisa), and
 6. weakens greed and ill will, and helps to train the mind for the eradication of ignorance.
1. In the Pāli suttas we find that "talk on giving" (dānakatha) was the first topic to be discussed by the Buddha in his "progressive instruction" of the Dhamma (anupubbikathā) as the following passages indicate.

Mahavagga

Translated from the Pāli by I. B. Horner, M.A.

Mv 1:7.5

Then Yasa, the young man of family, thinking: "It is said that this is not distress, that this is not affliction", exultant and uplifted, having taken off his golden sandals, approached the Lord; having approached, having greeted the Lord, he sat down at a respectful distance. As he was sitting down at a respectful distance, the Lord talked a progressive talk to Yasa, the young man of family, that is to say, talk on giving, talk on moral habit, talk on heaven, he explained the peril, the vanity, the depravity of pleasures of the senses, the advantage in renouncing them.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya

Translations from the Pāli by Bhikkhu Bodhi

Then the Blessed One gave the householder Upāli progressive instruction, that is, talk on giving, talk on virtue, talk on the heavens; he explained the danger, degradation, and defilement in sensual pleasures and the blessing of renunciation. When he knew that the householder Upāli's mind was ready, receptive, free from hindrances, elated, and confident, he expounded to him the teaching special to the Buddhas: suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path. Just as a clean cloth with all marks removed would take dye evenly, so too, while the householder [Upāli] sat there, the spotless immaculate vision of the Dhamma arose in him: "All that is subject to arising is subject to cessation." Then the householder Upāli saw the Dhamma, attained the Dhamma, understood the Dhamma, fathomed the Dhamma; he crossed beyond doubt, did away with perplexity, gained intrepidity, and became independent of others in the Teacher's Dispensation.

2. Meritorious Actions (puññakiriyāvatthu)

- dāna maya: generosity,
- sīla maya: moral virtue,
- bhāvanā maya: mental development/cultivation, meditation

Merit (puñña) is that which has a lasting effect on our existence.

3. The Four Bases of Sympathy or Assistance (sanghavatthu)

- dāna: generosity,
- piyavaca: speak kind words,
- atthacariya: render service for the benefit of others, and
- samanāttatā: treat everyone equally, impartiality and behave properly in all circumstances.

Sangaha-vatthu means qualities that bond people in unity or principles for helpful integration.

4. The Ten Perfections (pāramī),

- dāna pāramī: generosity,
- sīla pāramī: moral virtue,
- nekkhamma pāramī: renunciation,
- paññā pāramī: wisdom,
- viriya pāramī: energy,
- khanti pāramī: patience,
- saccā pāramī: truthfulness,
- adhiṭṭhāna pāramī: determination,
- mettā pāramī: loving-kindness, and
- upekkhā pāramī: equanimity.

The Ten Perfections are virtues to be cultivated for the realization of Nibbāna.

5. A Good or Superior Person (sappurisa)

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya

Translations from the Pāli by Bhikkhu Bodhi

5.147 (7) A Bad Person

“Bhikkhus, there are these five gifts of a bad person. What five? He gives casually; he gives without reverence; he does not give with his own hand; he gives what would be discarded; he gives without a view about the returns of giving. These are the five gifts of a bad person. “Bhikkhus, there are these five gifts of a good person. What five? He gives respectfully; he gives with reverence; he gives with his own hand; he gives what would not be discarded; he gives with a view about the returns of giving. These are the five gifts of a good person.”

5.148 (8) A Good Person

“Bhikkhus, there are these five gifts of a good person. What five? He gives a gift out of faith; he gives a gift respectfully; he gives a timely gift; he gives a gift unreservedly; he gives a gift without injuring himself or others.

“(1) Because he has given a gift out of faith, wherever the result of that gift is produced, he becomes rich, with great wealth and property, and he is handsome, attractive, graceful, possessing supreme beauty of complexion.

(2) Because he has given a gift respectfully, wherever the result of that gift is produced, he becomes rich, with great wealth and property, and his sons and wives, slaves, servants, and workers are obedient, lend an ear, and apply their minds to understand.

(3) Because he has given a timely gift, wherever the result of that gift is produced, he becomes rich, with great wealth and property, and timely benefits come to him in abundance.

(4) Because he has given a gift unreservedly, wherever the result of that gift is produced, he becomes rich, with great wealth and property, and his mind inclines to the enjoyment of the five kinds of fine sensual pleasures.

(5) Because he has given a gift without injuring himself or others, wherever the result of that gift is produced, he becomes rich, with great wealth and property, and no damage comes to his property from any source, whether from fire, floods, kings, thieves, or displeasing heirs.

These are the five gifts of a good person.”

6. Generosity weakens greed and ill will, and helps in the training of mind for the eradication of ignorance.

Identification with the selfish egoic personality produces the defilements of ignorance, greed and ill will. Ignorance is the state of mind that takes the five clinging aggregates (material form, thoughts, perceptions, feelings, and sense consciousness) to be I, me and myself. Greed is caused by ignorance and the perception that there is lack, not enough, and the thirst for more. Ill will is caused by ignorance and the fear of having material possessions or wealth stolen or reduced by another.

Giving and sharing material possessions and wealth to benefit another is a condition that cultivates loving-kindness (metta). The cultivation of metta acts to liberate the mind from the grip of the selfish egoic personality. As identification with the egoic personality is reduced, wisdom shines forth and the dark clouds that defile the mind scatter.

The practice of generosity arises from the motive of renunciation, the intention of reducing and eventually eliminating all attachments to material possessions, financial wealth and to the physical body; i.e., to eliminate the ignorance that values the egoic personality. By giving and sharing material possessions and financial wealth to others, attachment to them are reduced by letting them go and ignorance thereby is diminished. The practice of generosity helps to put an end to craving. The elimination of craving is the cause for the elimination of psychological suffering, as taught by the Buddha in the Four Noble Truths.

This Was Said by the Buddha: Itivuttaka

Translated from the Pāli by Ven. Kiribathgoda Gnanananda Thero

The Section of the Ones, 26 Dānasarṁvihāga Sutta: Giving and Sharing

This discourse was taught by the Blessed One, taught by the Arahant, the fully enlightened Supreme Buddha. This is as I heard:

“Monks, if people knew as I know the results of giving and sharing, they would not eat without having given nor would the stain of stinginess overcome their minds. Even if it were their last bite, their last mouthful, they would not eat without having shared, if there was someone to share it with. But, monks, because people do not know as I know the results of giving and sharing, they eat without having given. The stain of stinginess overcomes their minds.”

September 2022: Dhamma is Teacher, Spiritual Friends are Companions

The disciple of the Buddha needs to understand The Four Noble Truths. The Fourth Noble Truth is The Noble Eightfold Path. The Four Noble Truths and The Noble Eightfold Path are central and fundamental teachings in Dhamma that are to be studied, understood and practiced in order to stay on the Path that leads to the Noble Fruits: sotāpanna (streamwinner), sakadāgāmi (once returner), anāgāmi (non-returner), and arahat (the liberated one). Mastery of The Four Noble Truths and The Noble Eightfold Path are sufficient for liberation from suffering and the realization of Nibbāna.

The Buddha said that when his physical body is gone then the Dhamma will be your teacher. The Buddha did not assign any person to be the teacher or to lead the Saṅgha.

The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Dīgha Nikāya

a translation by Maurice O’C Walshe

Sutta 16 Mahāparinibbāna Sutta: The Great Passing - The Buddha’s Last Days

6.1. And the Lord said to Ānanda: ‘Ānanda, it may be that you will think: “The Teacher’s instruction has ceased, now we have no teacher!” It should not be seen like this, Ānanda, for what I have taught and explained to you as Dhamma and discipline will, at my passing, be your teacher.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya

a translation by Bhikkhu Bodhi

Sutta 108 Gopakamoggallāna Sutta: With Gopaka Moggallāna

7. “Is there, Master Ānanda, any single bhikkhu who was appointed by Master Gotama thus: ‘He will be your refuge when I am gone,’ and whom you now have recourse to?”

“There is no single bhikkhu, brahmin, who was appointed by the Blessed One who knows and sees, accomplished and fully enlightened, thus: ‘He will be your refuge when I am gone,’ and whom we now have recourse to.”

8. “But is there, Master Ānanda, any single bhikkhu who has been chosen by the Saṅgha and appointed by a number of elder bhikkhus thus: ‘He will be our refuge after the Blessed One has gone,’ and whom you now have recourse to?”

“There is no single bhikkhu, brahmin, who has been chosen by the Saṅgha and appointed by a number of elder bhikkhus thus: ‘He will be our refuge after the Blessed One has gone,’ and whom we now have recourse to.”

9. “But if you have no refuge, Master Ānanda, what is the cause for your concord?”

“We are not without a refuge, brahmin. We have a refuge; we have the Dhamma as our refuge.”

The Buddha also taught that spiritual friendships (kalyāṇamitta) are important to help reinforce our commitment and understanding of the Dhamma. Kalyāṇamitta means a good friend, i.e., a spiritual friend who gives advice, guidance, and encouragement.

The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Saṃyutta Nikāya

a translation by Bhikkhu Bodhi

Part V, Chapter 1, 45:2 Half the Holy Life

Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was dwelling among the Sakyans where there was a town of the Sakyans named Nagaraka. Then the Venerable Ānanda approached the Blessed One. Having approached, he paid homage to the Blessed One, sat down to one side, and said to him:

“Venerable sir, this is half of the holy life, that is, good friendship, good companionship, good comradeship.”

“Not so, Ānanda! Not so, Ānanda! This is the entire holy life, Ānanda, that is, good friendship, good companionship, good comradeship. When a bhikkhu has a good friend, a good companion, a good comrade, it is to be expected that he will develop and cultivate the Noble Eightfold Path.

“And how, Ānanda, does a bhikkhu who has a good friend, a good companion, a good comrade, develop and cultivate the Noble Eightfold Path? Here, Ānanda, a bhikkhu develops right view, which is based upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, maturing in release. He develops right intention ... right speech ... right action ... right livelihood ... right effort ... right mindfulness ... right concentration, which is based upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, maturing in release. It is in this way, Ānanda, that a bhikkhu who has a good friend, a good companion, a good comrade, develops and cultivates the Noble Eightfold Path.

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya

a translation by Bhikkhu Bodhi

The Book of Nines, 1 Enlightenment

Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was dwelling at Sāvattthī in Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s Park. There the Blessed One addressed the bhikkhus: “Bhikkhus!”

“Venerable sir!” those bhikkhus replied. The Blessed One said this:

“Bhikkhus, wanderers of other sects may ask you: ‘What, friends, is the proximate cause for the development of the aids to enlightenment?’ If you are asked thus, how would you answer them?”

“Bhante, our teachings are rooted in the Blessed One, guided by the Blessed One, take recourse in the Blessed One. It would be good if the Blessed One would clear up the meaning of this statement. Having heard it from him, the bhikkhus will retain it in mind.”

“Then listen, bhikkhus, and attend closely. I will speak.”

“Yes, Bhante,” those bhikkhus replied. The Blessed One said this:

“Bhikkhus, if wanderers of other sects should ask you: ‘What, friends, is the proximate cause for the development of the aids to enlightenment?’ you should answer them as follows.

(1) “Here, friends, a bhikkhu has good friends, good companions, good comrades. This is the first proximate cause for the development of the aids to enlightenment.

(2) “Again, friends, a bhikkhu is virtuous; he dwells restrained by the Pātimokkha, possessed of good conduct and resort, seeing danger in minute faults. Having undertaken the training rules, he trains in them. This is the second proximate cause....

(3) “Again, friends, a bhikkhu gets to hear at will, without trouble or difficulty, talk concerned with the austere life that is conducive to opening up the heart, that is, talk on fewness of desires, on contentment, on solitude, on not getting bound up [with others], on arousing energy, on virtuous behavior, on concentration, on wisdom, on liberation, on the knowledge and vision of liberation. This is the third proximate cause....

(4) “Again, friends, a bhikkhu has aroused energy for abandoning unwholesome qualities and acquiring wholesome qualities; he is strong, firm in exertion, not casting off the duty of cultivating wholesome qualities. This is the fourth proximate cause....

(5) “Again, friends, a bhikkhu is wise; he possesses the wisdom that discerns arising and passing away, which is noble and penetrative and leads to the complete destruction of suffering. This is the fifth proximate cause for the development of the aids to enlightenment.’ “

When, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu has good friends, good companions, good comrades, it can be expected of him that he will be virtuous, one who dwells restrained by the Pātimokkha ... will train in them.

“When a bhikkhu has good friends, good companions, good comrades, it can be expected of him that he will get to hear at will, without trouble or difficulty, talk concerned with the austere life that is conducive to opening up the heart, that is, talk on fewness of desires ... on the knowledge and vision of liberation.

“When a bhikkhu has good friends, good companions, good comrades, it can be expected of him that he will arouse energy for abandoning unwholesome qualities ... not casting off the duty of cultivating wholesome qualities.

“When a bhikkhu has good friends, good companions, good comrades, it can be expected of him that he will be wise, possessing the wisdom that discerns arising and passing away, which is noble and penetrative and leads to the complete destruction of suffering.

“Having based himself on these five things, the bhikkhu should develop further [another] four things. (6) [The perception of] unattractiveness should be developed to abandon lust. (7) Loving-

kindness should be developed to abandon ill will. (8) Mindfulness of breathing should be developed to cut off thoughts. (9) The perception of impermanence should be developed to eradicate the conceit 'I am.' When one perceives impermanence, the perception of non-self is stabilized. One who perceives non-self eradicates the conceit 'I am,' [which is] nibbāna in this very life.”

Do not be mistaken that a spiritual friend is your teacher. The teacher is the Dhamma and spiritual friends are companions that support each other in understanding and practicing the Dhamma.

Spiritual friends in most cases still have defilements (ignorance, greed and ill will) that distorts their understanding and practice of the Dhamma. Therefore, the behavior (speech and actions) of spiritual friends must be investigated to determine if they are in line with your understanding of the Dhamma. Sometimes the behavior of spiritual friends will be in line with the Dhamma and at other times they will not reflect the Dhamma. Cherish the behavior of spiritual friends that are in line with the Dhamma and ignore the behavior which is not true to the Dhamma.

The study and reflection on The Four Noble Truths and The Noble Eightfold Path will determine what behavior is in line with the Dhamma and the behavior which is not in line with the Dhamma. If after study and reflection of the Dhamma you are still confused about your own behavior or that of a spiritual friend then consult with numerous spiritual friends, compare what each has to say, and do your best to determine if the behavior in question is in line with the Dhamma or not.

October 2022 - Waking up from the Dream-Like Existence

The environment we live in is composed of impermanent things such as this body, material possessions, the weather, relationships, and the world. Our thoughts, feelings, emotions, and perceptions arise and pass away, they too are impermanent. The roles we are playing are also in flux and change: we play a young person then an old person; we play the part of being healthy then we play the part of being sick; the role of student changes to that of teacher; and so on. The environment and the life we act in are constantly changing and are unstable, like a rainbow or a mirage. It is in this sense that we live a dream-like existence.

This dream-like existence is suffering because the elements of the dream are unstable and constantly changing. The elements lose their integrity, are on the brink of falling apart, and energy must be supplied to maintain the forms. Bodies must be fed or they will become sick and die. Houses and mechanical and electrical devices require constant maintenance and repair. Much effort is required to protect our self-image and the roles we play. Living the dream requires work and that is suffering.

The dream-like existence can be relatively happy or it can be a nightmare. We create a happy dream by living an ethical lifestyle; i.e., we try not to cause harm to others or to ourselves; we practice meditation in order to bring peace and calm to the mind; and we investigate the nature of the dream and what lies beyond the dream.

In the course of creating a happy dream we cultivate skillful mental faculties, such as, mindfulness, concentration, patience, and loving-kindness. We study to understand and train in the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path. When we have proficiency with the skillful mental faculties, the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path then we will wake up from the dream.

The dream-like existence is a nightmare when we cause harm to others or to ourselves; i.e., the nightmare is a war in which we fight the world, others and ourselves. We live a nightmare when we are overwhelmed by the pursuit of sensual pleasures which are impermanent and cannot satisfy our longing for stability, refuge, home, love, and contentment. There is violence and destruction when we hunger for power and control over others and the world. Maintaining and protecting the illusion of a separate individual self; i.e., identifying with the body and mind, produces fear; the fear of sickness and death, the fear of being attacked by others, the fear of losing power and control over ones' body and mind, and so on.

By cultivating a happy dream we create the conditions and the means for waking up from the dream and to experience perfect happiness and freedom from suffering.

We cultivate a happy dream by being happy. Happiness is love and love is experienced when we dissolve the illusion of a separate self. The boundaries and defense mechanisms we utilize to protect the separate self, the individual self, prevents us from the love and happiness that is available to us now. Love is the feeling recognition of the other as not being separate from oneself; in reality there is no other.

Love and happiness is the experience we have when we identify with the field of experience and not with the contents of experience. The field or screen of experience is consciousness, that which is aware. Consciousness is not the contents of experience. The physical forms, objects, thoughts, feelings, emotions, and perceptions are the contents of experience. That which is aware of the contents of experience is consciousness. Just as space is the same in this room and outside this room even though the contents in this room are different from the contents outside this room, so is consciousness identical for all beings even though the beings are of different bodies and minds. The universality of consciousness is the thread that connects all beings in love.

We are more alive or real when we are with love. Love is our essence and our very being. Love is experienced when we connect with others. When we experience consciousness and know that consciousness is the same in all beings then we connect with others. The universality of consciousness is the pathway to love. The experience of love is the evidence that consciousness is our essence and the essence of all beings.

Every being is driven or propelled towards happiness, happiness is love, and love is experienced when we connect with others by identifying with consciousness. Our true nature shines

forth by acting with courage to dissolve our individual boundaries and defense mechanisms; simultaneously we strengthen our identification with consciousness. The intensity of the experience of love is in direct proportion to our ability to remove personal boundaries and defense mechanisms.

There is a practice that may help to cultivate the happy dream, to experience happiness and love now. The practice is to recognize and identify with consciousness in silence. Silence like space is all pervasive, and like consciousness it is boundless, eternal, and permanent. Silence is that which surrounds and holds spoken and written words, thoughts, feelings, emotions, and perceptions. Just as love is related to consciousness, silence is also related to consciousness; there is silence in consciousness. By being quiet with a silent and calm mind, consciousness is experienced profoundly when the clouds of mental activity dissipate.

The cultivation of internal silence is conditioned by external silence. Speaking little helps with reducing mental chatter. Withholding public and private expressions of ones' views, opinions, and judgments are helpful with the cultivation of internal silence and shines the light of understanding on the illusion of the separate individual self. Views, opinions, and judgments serve to support the insubstantial separate self and as they are reduced the separate self-view diminishes.

Our minds are limited in what they can know because our physical senses filter the data that impinge upon the sense organs and our minds massage the information to support underlying beliefs. We do not have complete information or see the big picture. Therefore, it is wise not to trust our perceptions, to withhold passing judgment on anyone, and not to rely on our views and opinions as trustworthy.

Try sitting with the other in silence, walking with the other in silence, and working with the other in silence. Perhaps a silent smile or the holding of the other's hand would help you to bound with the other. However, be sensitive that the other may have too much fear to receive your love, smile, or hand; such behavior may be perceived as a sexual advance or some other misperception. Experiment with silence and discover how it is a skillful means for developing the happy dream.

Of course, there are situations that require speech and the expression of ideas. I am suggesting that one turn towards silence as the norm.

My grandmother came from a small farming town in Austria-Hungary and came to this country during the great depression. She knew very little English and did not speak to me. Sometimes, I would sit with my grandmother in a quiet and dim room, holding her hand in silence for a long time. I felt connected and there was peace and love between us.

Another practice that is helpful in developing the happy dream is that of forgiveness.

What you perceive in the other is an indication of how you perceive yourself. The errors you perceive in the other is a reflection of the errors you perceive in yourself. If you cannot forgive the other's error then you will not be able to forgive yourself. We forgive others so that we can forgive ourselves and be at peace. This is why forgiveness is important.

To forgive is to remember only the loving thoughts you gave in the past, and those that were given you. All the rest must be forgotten. For the present is forgiveness.

To forgive the other is to join with the other, for there is nothing of value that stands between you and the other. Forgiveness is the healing or the correction to the perception of separation.

You suffer and are not at peace because you perceive and believe that you are separate from the other. Consciousness is the essence of being and is the link that joins you with the other. Consciousness cannot be harmed or changed in any way. Therefore, forgive what the other says and how the other acts because words and actions cannot harm you. Your suffering is not caused by the other but is caused by forgetting that your essence is consciousness. Peace is achieved by identifying with consciousness and forgiving the other.

If you were willing to forgive other people's misperceptions of you, they could not possibly affect you at all. Those misperceptions cannot affect your true nature, which is consciousness. When you forget your true nature and do not forgive other people, then their misperceptions can hurt you. What caused you to feel hurt was not the other's attack, but your own misperception of the other's attack. You failed to realize that beings attack out of habit and frustration due to their inability to experience love. All beings want love more than anything else. In truth, attack is a call for love.

Withhold forgiveness from the other, you then attack the other. Forgiveness is the answer to attack of any kind.

To forgive is to overlook. Look beyond error and do not let your perception rest upon it, because you will believe what your perception holds. Accept what the other is in truth, if you would know yourself.

Perceive what the other is not, and you cannot know what you are, because you see the other falsely. Your identity is shared, and that its sharing is its reality.

Those you do not forgive you fear, and no one experiences love where there is fear.

As long as we are caught in a dream we have roles to play that entail responsibilities. Kamma operates in the dream; there is cause and effect, where wholesome causes produce wholesome effects. Therefore, it is prudent for us to act out our roles in the drama we call life with skillful mental faculties and loving-kindness.

We live a happy dream with the attitude of loving-kindness towards all beings and oneself; by having patience and trust in the process that cultivates skillful mental faculties. The conditions of the happy dream will allow us to wake up from the dream.

When we cultivate silence and forgiveness, we will identify with consciousness and not with the body. As we mature in identifying with consciousness and not with the objects of consciousness or with the separate personal self, our ability to connect and grow closer to others will increase. As we become fearless in removing our boundaries and defenses, our ability to grow ever closer to others will result in greater experiences of love and happiness. By cultivating skillful mental faculties and training in the Four Noble Truths and Noble Eightfold Path we will experience happiness.

Perfect happiness and freedom from suffering will be realized upon waking up from the dream. We wake up when we learn how to love well; i.e., to be fully conscious.

November 2022 - Spiritual Friendship

This essay will describe the qualities and characteristics of a spiritual friend and why a spiritual friend is helpful and a necessary condition for the training of the mind for liberation from suffering, the realization of Nibbāna. I will refer to various suttas found in the Pali Canon to illustrate the points made in this essay.

The Upaḍḍha Sutta is number 45.2 in Saṃyutta Nikāya. The sutta relates a conversation between Lord Buddha and Venerable Ananda. Ananda was the Buddha's loyal and trusted disciple who served to assist the Buddha in numerous duties and also had an extremely keen memory who remembered the teachings of the Buddha for posterity. Ananda said to the Buddha in this sutta that spiritual friendship was half of the holy life. The Buddha corrected Ananda and said that spiritual friendship is the whole of the holy life. Spiritual friendship is a necessary condition to traverse the training path consisting of the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path, and thereby reach liberation from all suffering.

Spiritual friend is the translation of “kalyāṇa-mitta” in the Pali language. “Kalyāṇa” means lovely or beautiful and “mitta” means friend. The meaning of “kalyāṇa”, lovely and beautiful, does not refer to one's physical attractiveness, but to beautiful inner qualities; such as: faith, loving-kindness, compassion, virtue, generosity, and wisdom. In the English language kalyāṇa-mitta is also translated as “admirable friend”, “virtuous friend”, “good friend”, “benevolent friend”, “ideal friend” and “noble friend.”

The Dīghajāṇu Sutta is number 8.54 in Aṅguttara Nikāya and lists four qualities of a spiritual friend.

1. virtue,
2. faith,
3. generosity, and
4. wisdom.

The spiritual friend trains in virtue, ethical behavior, rooted in the training of Five Precepts. The Five precepts are as follows.

1. The first precept refrains from killing sentient beings: humans, animals, birds, reptiles, fish and insects. Causing injury to living beings also goes against the spirit of the precept. The precept is a training to respect the dignity of life, and to cultivate loving-kindness and compassion. Instead of causing harm, all sentient beings are protected so that their minds can be at peace and happy.
2. The second precept refrains from theft, taking that which does not belong to you. Deceitful dealings, fraud, cheating and forgery are also included in this precept.
3. The third precept refrains from sexual misconduct such as adultery and trains in sexual responsibility; i.e., respecting one's personal commitment and mutual agreement in a relationship.
4. The fourth precept refrains from falsehood, deliberately telling a lie. This precept may be extended in order to have greater usefulness and power in purifying the mind by avoiding other forms of wrong speech such as malicious speech, harsh speech and gossip. In Buddhist texts, this precept is considered second in importance to the first precept, because a lying person is regarded to have no shame, and therefore capable of performing and creating much unwholesome kamma. Lying is not only to be avoided because it harms others and oneself, lying also goes against the spiritual necessity of finding and knowing the truth.
5. The fifth precept refrains from intoxication through alcohol, recreational drugs or anything that clouds the mind of awareness and wisdom. This precept may also be extended in order to develop mindfulness and wisdom in regards to the consumption of food, preoccupation with work and the desire for keeping oneself constantly busy. Habitual busyness is an obstruction to the training of mind and is often used in order to avoid the practices of watching the contents of mind and the development of stillness and silence. Medieval Pāli commentator Buddhaghosa

have written that violating the first four precepts may be more or less blamable depending on the person or animal affected, the fifth precept is always "greatly blamable", as it hinders one from understanding the Buddha's teaching and may lead one to "madness".

The spiritual friend has great faith and is committed to the practice of the Buddha's teaching known as the Dhamma. There is trust in the Noble Saṅgha consisting of fully enlightened beings, Lord Buddha and Arahants, as well as in others who have also realized the Dhamma: Stream-enterer, Once-returner and Non-returner. The spiritual friend's faith in summary lies in the Triple Gem: the Buddha, Dhamma, and the Noble Saṅgha; and also have great faith in various concepts of Dhamma, such as in the efficacy of kamma and the possibility of liberation from mental suffering.

The spiritual friend practices generosity, gives what is worthwhile and gives with non-attachment. Giving without seeking anything in return is the soil for the arising of spiritual wealth, wholesome mental faculties that purifies the mind of unwholesome habits and conditions. Generosity reduces the impulses of greed and craving which are the causes of suffering. Generosity can be given in both material or immaterial ways. Spiritual giving is the immaterial gift of noble teachings, the Dhamma, and is said by the Buddha to surpass all other gifts.

The spiritual friend possess wisdom, penetrating insight into the Three Characteristics of Existence and the Four Noble Truths. The Three Characteristics of Existence describes the nature of the body-mind and the contents of the world, namely: impermanence, suffering, and no personal self. The majority of beings are deluded in that they don't recognize the Three Characteristics of Existence and this results in suffering. The removal of that delusion is the end of suffering. The Three Characteristics of Existence are the following.

1. The characteristic of impermanence refers to all things are composed of and conditioned by components are in a constant state of flux as the components themselves change. All physical and mental events arise, change and dissolve. Beings are in flux: they are born, become sick and die; and their physical form and environment change within the cycle of repeated rebirth and death. No-thing remains the same and everything decays. All beings whether they are reborn in heavenly realms or in hell realms are subject to impermanence. The impermanence of the conditional realms are in contrast to Nibbāna, the reality that has no birth, change, decay or death.
2. The characteristic called dukkha in Pali means unsatisfactoriness, suffering or pain. Dukkha includes the physical and mental sufferings that follows each rebirth, aging, illness, and death. Dukkha is dissatisfaction from associating with what a being dislikes and not getting what is desired. Dukkha is lack of satisfaction with all things because all things are conditioned by elements that are impermanent.
3. The characteristic of no personal self refers to the insight that there is no conditioned mind, personality or ego that is unchanging or permanent. Identification with the body-mind or with the ego results in suffering due to their impermanence. Only the realization or identification with Nibbāna will liberate one from suffering.

The Four Noble Truths are the following.

1. The first noble truth is that there is suffering inherent in the Three Characteristics of Existence.
2. The second noble truth is that the cause of suffering is craving. The desire, attachment or identification to any conditioned thing or content of experience is the cause for psychological suffering.
3. The third noble truth is the end of suffering and is achieved by letting go of the cause. The end of suffering is Nibbāna.
4. The fourth noble truth is the way or means to let go of the causes of suffering, namely, the Noble Eightfold Path.

The spiritual friend encourages others to train the mind in order to have liberating insight into the Three Characteristics of Existence and the Four Noble Truths in each and every moment, here and now; i.e., insight into suffering and freedom from suffering. Training of the mind requires energy directed at developing mindfulness and concentration. With adequate mindfulness and concentration the mind lets go of all conditioned states and impurities or defilements of the mind; whereby, there is the experience and knowing of the unconditioned, Nibbāna.

The Dīghajāṇu Sutta defines the spiritual friend as one who is training to perfect the qualities of virtue, faith, generosity, and wisdom for the benefit of all beings as well as for oneself.

The next sutta under consideration is the Mitta Sutta whose number is 7.35 in Aṅguttara Nikāya. The sutta list the following seven characteristics of a spiritual friend.

1. he gives what is hard to give;
2. he does what is hard to do;
3. he endures what is hard to endure;
4. he reveals his secrets to you;
5. he keeps your secrets;
6. he does not abandon you in misfortunes and
7. when you are down and out, he does not look down on you.

I was unable to locate a commentary that expands on the meaning of these seven characteristics; therefore, I offer the following elucidation. Please note that I refer to the spiritual friend with the pronoun 'he' even though the spiritual friend may be a female.

A spiritual friend gives what is hard to give.

- It is hard to give loving-kindness when feeling angry or fearful.
- It is hard to give peace and be at peace where there is conflict or disagreement in a relationship.
- It is hard to give ones' focused attention completely in the moment and in any situation or relationship.

A spiritual friend does what is hard to do.

- It is hard to do what is unpopular even when the action is believed to be beneficial and wise.
- It is hard to put forth energy when feeling tired or lazy.
- It is hard to walk the talk; i.e., it is hard to have integrity, to do what one says will be done and does not do what one says will not be done.
- It is hard to make time for the other and bring the other into your space.
- It is hard to act with loving-kindness, to be intimate with the other in order to connect, join and bond with the other; this is accomplished by knowing the other as the same in essence as oneself; i.e., pure consciousness.
- It is hard to dissolve boundaries and defenses that separate oneself from others, to become vulnerable and completely open.
- It is hard to stop playing roles, pretending and acting like a character in the drama of worldly life.
- It is hard to stop the mind spinning with opinions, judgements, fears and hatred.
- It is hard to be silent, to value internal and external silence, for silence is sacred. The spiritual friend will break the silence in order to speak the truth that will cause no harm and which is beneficial.

A spiritual friend endures what is hard to endure.

- It is hard to endure anxiety and restlessness and do nothing but wait with patience.
- It is hard to accept, understand and patiently endure the false self or ego in oneself and in the other.
- It is hard to discipline the egoic mind with the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path.
- It is hard to endure the defilements of the mind: ignorance, ill-will and greed; especially, during the process of training and purifying the mind.
- It is hard to endure the 'dark night of the soul'; the seemingly endless bardo when the mind is still very much conditioned with ignorance but has also experienced some light of liberation.

A spiritual friend reveals his secrets to you.

- He is willing to trust others.
- He is open handed, shares the Dhamma with everyone, and does not withhold teachings from anyone.
- He communicates what he is doing and why it is being done.
- He invites you into his life to participate in making plans and decisions.

A spiritual friend keeps your secrets.

- He can be trusted.
- He is reliable and dependable.
- He wants to participate and be present in your life.

A spiritual friend does not abandon you in misfortunes.

- He loves you and will not abandon you.
- When you are physically or mentally sick, he will help you get well.
- When you have lost your wealth, fame or reputation, he will be there for you and help you get back on your feet.
- He will not abandon you if you error in ethical behavior or you move from the true path of deliverance.

A spiritual friend does not look down on you when you are down and out.

- He will not judge or condemn you.
- He will accept your current wholesome and unwholesome qualities with the understanding that with proper training wholesome qualities will increase and unwholesome qualities will decrease.
- He respects your fundamental goodness and light.

The Mitta Sutta defines a spiritual friend with seven characteristics.

1. he gives what is hard to give;
2. he does what is hard to do;
3. he endures what is hard to endure;
4. he reveals his secrets to you;
5. he keeps your secrets;
6. he does not abandon you in misfortunes and
7. when you are down and out, he does not look down on you.

These characteristics of a spiritual friend may be considered as included within the two main characteristics: loving-kindness and wisdom.

Associating with and imitating the qualities and characteristics of a spiritual friend will enable one to match and possibly gain a higher degree of those qualities and characteristics. The following are additional functions of the spiritual friend.

- The spiritual friend is an example to emulate and is a role model.
- The spiritual friend is a guide and teacher.
- The spiritual friend is a source of encouragement and motivation to continue striving towards freedom or liberation from suffering.
- You may bounce ideas, perceptions, views, beliefs, and judgements off of the spiritual friend.
- The spiritual friend is someone to learn from: what works and what doesn't work; and is a source of experience, wisdom and knowledge.
- The spiritual friend is a source of love and emotional nutriment.
- The spiritual friend is a center of stability and a source of strength.
- The spiritual friend is patient and perseveres regardless of the obstacles.
- The spiritual friend is truthful and has integrity.
- The spiritual friend is fearless and courageous in practicing the Dhamma and protecting all beings. He knows himself to be pure consciousness and therefore invulnerable and cannot be harmed.
- The spiritual friend knows how to listen and hears what is not being said between the lines.

The spiritual friend respects all beings and treats everyone the same. This principle is mentioned in the Sangaha Sutta: The Bonds of Fellowship number 4.32 in Aṅguttara Nikāya. In this sutta we learn that a layman named Hatthako Alavako was always accompanied by five hundred lay disciples, and was one of seven laymen who had such a following. The Buddha asked Hatthako how he could command the allegiance of such a large company. "By the four bases of sympathy," he answered. The four bases of sympathy or sangaha-vatthu in Pali means qualities that bond people in unity or principles for helpful integration. The four principles are the following.

1. Giving gifts, sharing material possessions, time and energy. This principle enables one to connect with others by relaxing the habit of being preoccupied with oneself.
2. Friendly and kind speech. Speaking words that are truthful, polite and gentle, and speech that are helpful for connecting with others. Abstaining from harsh speech. The Buddha taught the importance of loving and true speech for producing harmony, friendship and happiness.
3. Helpful and kindly action, performing actions that are useful to sentient beings. Doing what is good by way of thought, speech and action.

4. Promoting equality of treatment by treating everyone equally and behaving consistently in a fair and impartial manner.

The spiritual friend practices these four bases of sympathy or principles in a consistent manner.

The spiritual friend is available for the other. By communicating the suffering to the spiritual friend, the suffering becomes bearable and may be reduced. The great Vietnamese Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh taught how a spiritual friend joins with the other with love and understanding by contemplating the Four Mantras of True Presence in thought, speech and action. The four mantras are the following.

1. Darling, I am here for you.
2. I know you are there, and I am very happy.
3. Darling, I know you suffer; that is why I am here for you.
4. Darling, I suffer. Please help.

Darling, I am here for you. The spiritual friend is present here and now. In true presence, this mantra will produce a miracle, the miracle of love. Love is the reality and when you become real, the other person becomes real, and life is real in that moment. Happiness is shared in the presence of love and understanding.

I know you are there, and I am very happy. The spiritual friend is happy to be with you knowing that you are in essence the same as the spiritual friend. To be really present and know that the other is also there is a miracle, the miracle of love. The spiritual friend is really here and now, and in that presence he is able to recognize and appreciate the presence of the other.

Darling, I know you suffer; that is why I am here for you. The spiritual friend is mindful and aware of your pain and wants to help. When we suffer and if the person we love is not aware of our suffering, we will suffer even more. The presence of the spiritual friend alone will relieve a lot of your suffering.

Darling, I suffer. Please help. The fourth mantra is the most difficult. It is practiced when the spiritual friend suffers and believes that the person he loves is the cause of the suffering. The spiritual friend can say the mantra, "Darling, I suffer. Please help." because the spiritual friend does not have the pride that prevents him from saying these five words. The spiritual friend also suffers because you suffer and the suffering is a boundary that separates. The spiritual friend is asking for your help with his suffering by revealing your suffering to him.

Please understand that the spiritual friend may be a male or a female, young or old in physical years, a lay-person or a monastic. The spiritual friend may have trained the mind over many life-times and have developed mindfulness, concentration and purity even though in this life-time the spiritual friend appears as a novice. One cannot judge a book by its cover; therefore, it is prudent to respect everyone as a wise spiritual friend until you know otherwise.

A person is known as an authentic spiritual friend only by associating with that person for a longtime. One need be careful before trusting someone as a spiritual friend.

The following two verses found in the Dhammapada are worth contemplating.

Verse 78: One should not associate with bad friends, nor with the vile. One should associate with good friends, and with those who are noble.

Verse 328: If one finds a sagacious friend, who is a virtuous and steadfast companion, one should live with him joyfully and mindfully, overcoming all dangers.

The spiritual friend is the nutriment, the sunshine for spiritual growth, purification of mind and liberation. Spiritual friends are rare in the world; therefore, please consider to make a determination to be a spiritual friend for the benefit of others and to help develop beautiful beings. The training of a spiritual friend benefits all beings and in so doing the mind is purified and realizes Nibbāna.

December 2022 - Viññāṇaṃ anidassanaṃ (consciousness without a surface or Pure Consciousness)

Gautama Buddha taught the Dhamma. The pali word Dhamma is translated as the 'doctrine' and includes the characteristics of reality, the causes of suffering and the path of training to experience the highest happiness, Nibbāna. The teachings of the Dhamma utilizes the pali language of ancient India and was used to record the teachings of the Buddha.

The death of the Buddha is estimated to be 543 BCE, 2565 years ago (543 + 2022). Soon after the passing away of the Buddha, 500 arahants met to recite the Dhamma and Vinaya.¹ The meeting gave birth to the Pali Canon. The Theravada tradition states that the Pali Canon was recited orally from the 5th century BCE to the first century BCE, when it was written down in Sri Lanka at the end of the first century BCE, about five hundred years after the death of the Buddha. The surviving record we know today as the Pali Canon began about 800 CE.

Commentaries have been written to clarify the meaning of the pali language in the Pali Canon for people living at a particular time, place and culture. Bhikkhu Bodhi and Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu are modern translators who have written commentaries to help clarify the meaning of the pali language. Commentaries may be helpful with ones' understanding and practice of the Dhamma and Vinaya, however, one is at liberty to accept them or not. This essay is but another commentary.

The pali word viññāṇa is translated as consciousness or awareness. Viññāṇa is tainted by the "allness of the all." "Allness of the all" is the translation of the pali phrase āatanasabba defined in Saṃyutta Nikāya 35.23 Sabba Sutta: The All, and is defined as sense media: sense faculties and sense objects. Sense faculties are eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind. Sense objects are forms, sounds, odors, flavors, tangibles, and mind-objects. Viññāṇa has been imagined by modern commentators as consciousness that is tangled with the sense media, and is metaphorically pictured as landing on the surface of sense media, therefore, viññāṇa has been translated as 'consciousness with a surface'. The western disciples of Ajahn Chah has translated viññāṇa as 'sense consciousness'.

Viññāṇa is the consciousness factor in dependent co-arising, the chain of causation that describes the causes of suffering.

Dependent Co-arising (paṭicca samuppāda)

1. ignorance (avijjā),
2. volitional formations (sankhārā),
3. consciousness (viññāṇa) at the six sense media (see "The Shape of Suffering" by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu p. 8 and MN 18 below),
4. mentality-materiality (nāmarūpa),
5. six sense bases (saḷāyatana),
6. contact (phassa),
7. feeling (vedanā),
8. craving (taṇhā),
9. clinging (upādāna),
10. becoming (bhava),
11. birth (jāti), and
12. suffering
 - a. aging and death (jarā maraṇaṃ),
 - b. sorrow (soka),
 - c. lamentation (parideva),
 - d. pain (dukkha),
 - e. grief (domanassa), and
 - f. despair (upāyāsa).

Viññāṇa is also the consciousness-aggregate in the five aggregates which constitute the person.

Aggregates (khandhā)

1. material form (rūpa khandha),

2. feeling (vedanā khandha),
3. perception (saññā khandha),
4. mental formations (saṅkhāra khandha), and
5. sense consciousness (viññāṇa khandha).

The consciousness of the arahant in the pali language is anidassana viññāṇa and is not defined in the Pali Canon. The pali word 'anidassana' is translated as something that is not being side by side or close together. Anidassana viññāṇa is consciousness that is not side by side or close together with sense media, that is, consciousness that is not tangled or conditioned by the sense media. Anidassana viññāṇa is metaphorically pictured as not landing on the surface of sense media, therefore, anidassana viññāṇa is translated as 'consciousness without a surface'. Consciousness without a surface, is directly known, free from any influence or dependence on conditions.

Majjhima Nikāya 49 Brahma-nimantanika Sutta: The Brahma Invitation

Translated by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu

"Consciousness without surface, endless, radiant all around, has not been experienced through the earthness of earth ... the liquidity of liquid ... the fieriness of fire ... the windiness of wind ... the allness of the all."

Dīgha Nikāya 11 Kevatta (Kevaddha) Sutta: To Kevatta

Translated by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu

"Where do water, earth, fire, & wind have no footing?

Where are long & short, coarse & fine, fair & foul, name & form brought to an end?

And the answer to that is:

Consciousness without feature, without end, luminous all around: here water, earth, fire, & wind have no footing. Here long & short coarse & fine, fair & foul, name & form are all brought to an end. With the cessation of [the activity of] consciousness each is here brought to an end."

The question in Kevatta Sutta may be stated as: Where is there independence from the sense media, elements of nature and from mind and matter? The answer is anidassana viññāṇa. The activity of mind is thinking, perceiving, sensing and feeling. Anidassana viññāṇa is primordial consciousness that is noticeable when the mind is at rest and experiences peace, and the consciousness is not tangled or obscured by the sense media or by thinking, perceiving, sensing and feeling. Anidassana viññāṇa is the motionless screen of Pure Consciousness on which the contents of consciousness appears. The contents of consciousness are the sense media and can also be described as thoughts, perceptions, physical sensations and feelings.

Anidassana viññāṇa is outside of time and space; in a dimension where there is no here, there, or in between (Udāna 1.10), no coming, no going, or staying (Udāna 8.1). Lying outside of time and space, it would not come under the consciousness-aggregate, which covers all consciousness near and far; past, present, and future.^{2,3}

The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya

Translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

Part III, Chapter 1, Division I, 48 (6) Aggregates

"Whatever kind of consciousness there is, whether past, future, or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near: this is called the consciousness aggregate."

And because anidassana viññāṇa is not involved with the six sense media, this consciousness is not a factor in dependent co-arising.^{2,3}

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya

Translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

18 Madhupiṇḍika Sutta: The Honeyball; paragraph 16

“Dependent on the eye and forms, eye-consciousness arises.”

The standard description of Nibbāna after death is, "All that is sensed, not being relished, will grow cold right here" (Majjhima Nikāya 140 An Analysis of the Properties and Itivuttaka 44 The Nibbāna-element). Anidassana viññāṇa does not ‘relish’ the sense media and therefore shares this property with Nibbāna.

The properties of anidassana viññāṇa and of Nibbāna are the same, in that both are: not tangled by the sense media, directly known, unconditioned, outside of time and space.

Ancient commentaries “have objected to the equivalence of anidassana viññāṇa with Nibbāna, on the grounds that Nibbāna is nowhere else in the Canon described as a form of consciousness. Thus they have proposed that consciousness without surface [anidassana viññāṇa] be regarded as an arahant’s consciousness of Nibbāna in meditative experience, and not Nibbāna itself [thereby, making Nibbāna an object of consciousness]. This argument, however, contains a flaw: If Nibbāna is an object of mental consciousness (as a dhamma), it would come under the all [“allness of the all”], as an object of the intellect [mind]. ... [There are passages in the Pali Canon that] describe Nibbāna as the ending of all dhammas. For instance, Sutta Nipata V.6 quotes the Buddha as calling the attainment of the goal the transcending of all dhammas. Sutta Nipata IV.6 and Sutta Nipata IV.10 state that the arahant has transcended dispassion, said to be the highest dhamma. Thus, for the arahant, Nibbāna is not an object of consciousness. Instead it [Nibbāna] is directly known without mediation. Because consciousness without feature [anidassana viññāṇa] is directly known without mediation, there seems good reason to equate the two [anidassana viññāṇa with Nibbāna.]”³

Anidassana viññāṇa is boundless Pure Consciousness that is not tangled with the activities of mind. Viññāṇa is consciousness tangled with the activities of mind: thinking, perceiving, sensing and feeling and also tangled with the sense media. Viññāṇa is the ordinary consciousness of most people and is in the foreground of experience. Anidassana viññāṇa is ever present here and now but is ordinarily in the background of experience; when the mind is brought to silence and stillness then anidassana viññāṇa will be made known. Pay attention to anidassana viññāṇa by withdrawing attention from the busy mind.

Enlightenment is a permanent shift of experience in which anidassana viññāṇa is in the foreground, mind and ordinary tangled consciousness is no longer the center of ones’ attention. The training that conditions this shift is to study and practice the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path as well as the other teachings of the Buddha.

Bringing the mind to silence and stillness is undertaken by using a meditation anchor such as sensing the breath and perceiving the sound of silence. While the mind is occupied with the meditation anchor, pay attention to the awareness that surrounds conceptual and sensual experience, this awareness is anidassana viññāṇa. The frequent redirection of attention to pure awareness forms the habit of being interested in pure awareness more so than with the activities of mind.

Anidassana viññāṇa is unbounded consciousness, eternal, infinite, unconditioned and the one reality, Nibbāna. Because this consciousness has no boundaries or limitations there must only be one common consciousness that all beings share. This ground of consciousness is the foundation of metta bhavana (loving-kindness meditation), the recognition that all beings are in essence identical and share the same primordial consciousness.

Ajahn Chah gave a dhamma talk called “Tuccho Pothila”. In this talk I believe Ajahn Chah was referring to anidassana viññāṇa when he taught “‘the one who knows’ in accordance with the truth – known as Buddho.”

“By having continuous sati [mindfulness] and sampajañña [clear comprehension] we will be able to know the mind. This one who knows is a step beyond the mind, it is that which knows the state of the mind. ... That which knows the mind as simply mind is the one who knows. It is above the mind. The one who knows is above the mind, and that is how it is able to look after the mind, to teach the mind to know what is right and what is wrong.” ... “cultivate the Buddho, the clear and radiant awareness; that which exists above and beyond the ordinary mind, and knows all that goes on within it.”

May this reflection help with your understanding and practice of the Dhamma so that Nibbāna will be experienced here and now.

Footnotes:

1. The Vinaya is the discipline for training the mind. Arahants are persons who have awakened to the nature of reality, the Dhamma, and purified the mind of defilements.
2. This observation was made by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu in note 1 of his translation of Dīgha Nikāya 11 Kevatta (Kevaddha) Sutta: To Kevatta.
3. This observation was made by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu in note 9 of his translation of Majjhima Nikāya 49 Brahma-nimantanika Sutta: The Brahma Invitation.

January 2023 - Egoic consciousness, the false self

This essay will shine light on the ignorance that mistakes the egoic consciousness for a self. This ignorance is a cause of suffering experienced by the individual, the violence towards and disintegration of society, humanity and the environment. Ego recognition, understanding its behavior and the harm it causes is the initial step to liberation from the control that the ego exerts over the mind and freedom from suffering.

The ego is a dynamic process and the mind itself. The function of the ego is to assure the survival of the physical and emotional body. The home of the ego is the body and the ego identifies with the body. In addition, the ego identifies with feelings, perceptions, thoughts, emotions and sense consciousness. The ego is thus composed of the five aggregates that constitute the individual personality:

1. material form,
2. feelings,
3. perceptions,
4. mental formations, and
5. sense consciousness.

The Buddha defines a self as that which does not change, is permanent and has constant consistent qualities. The five aggregates that constitute the individual personality or ego are in a constant state of flux, they arise based upon conditions and cease when those conditions cease, therefore the ego is not a real self even though the ignorant mind perceives the ego as a self. The ego is a false self.

The ego arises in a particular physical form and in a specific environment as a result of its craving for particular experiences associated with material forms, feelings, perceptions, mental formations, and sense consciousness. The personality and the environment in which the ego finds itself is related to the ego's cravings and attachments for particular aggregates. When the body disintegrates to fundamental elements, the ego creates another form to be its vehicle in a particular environment in accordance to the ego's predisposition for particular experiences and cravings. Kamma is the intention and cravings for particular experiences.

The ego suffers and causes the mind to suffer. Freedom from the suffering ego and how it makes the mind suffer requires examination and understanding of the behavior and symptoms of the ego. When the behavior of the ego is recognized and understood then there is an opportunity to not react to the whims of the ego but instead exercise wisdom in order to think, speak and act in wholesome and skillful ways. The following are some characteristics of the ego.

- An important part of the ego's identity is the physical body. The ego's home is the body. The body is born, grows old, gets sick and dies, it is impermanent and decays. The impermanent body causes the ego to experience continuous anxiety and fear: fear of sickness, death and fear of being diminished. The fear of death and sickness is suffering.
- Due to the fear of death and sickness, the ego fights for power and control over the physical body, the environment and others to prevent any form of diminishment. All egos desires power and control and are in competition with each other. The competition is ruthless and destructive. Striving and competing for power and control, and the resulting violence is suffering.
- The ego is the perpetuator of rebirth because it requires a vehicle to exist. The ego craves for existence and for a body so that it can live. The craving for rebirth is the cause of saṃsāra, the perpetual wandering and suffering in the round of rebirths; i.e. being reborn again and again in an unstable realm that is continuously changing and decaying. Saṃsāra is suffering and the ego that wanders in saṃsāra suffers.
- The ego is nurtured and gains a greater sense of self when it identifies with material possessions, personal relationships and concepts: beliefs, views, and ideas. The ego has an endless appetite, greed and unwholesome desires for ever more possessions, relationships and concepts to identify with. The things that the ego identifies with are impermanent and the ego's sense of self is therefore impermanent and suffers from instability. The unceasing hunger and nonfulfillment for a greater sense of self is suffering.

- The ego is always hungry for more things to identify with and thus, experiences a continuous sense of lack, it never has enough. The ego is never at peace nor can it ever be satisfied or happy. Insatiable hunger for more things to identify with is suffering.
- The ego's sense of self is nurtured by acting superior, putting others down with judgments and criticism. The ego projects self hatred and its own inferior qualities onto others in order to protect its self image from being seen as vicious and inadequate, the ego blames others for its own short comings. The ego's longing for respect and honor cannot be fulfilled when attacking others with judgment. The ego has no true friends and suffers.
- The ego acts the role of victim in order to redirect blame for causing harm from itself onto the other. The ego acts as if it is innocent and others deserve punishment. The ego cries false tears and suffers.
- The ego uses anger and hatred to raise destructive energy for combat, it feeds on this type of negative energy. Attack is perceived as justified for self defense and survival. The continuous state of war is suffering.
- The personality of the ego changes as new information is assimilated, new ideas and beliefs are accepted and as environmental conditions change, this causes the sense of self to change, to be unstable and uncertain. The ego craves a stable sense of self when its very nature and the world is unstable, this is suffering.

The Dhamma that the Buddha taught includes the nature of reality, the causes of suffering and the training that uproots the causes of suffering. When the mind is governed by the wisdom and truth of the Dhamma then the power and control of the ego over the mind will evaporate. The ego fears the Dhamma and uses its intelligence to prevent the mind from training in the Dhamma. The ego has great intelligence and cunning that were developed over hundreds and perhaps thousands of past lives. However, the ego does not have wisdom, it does not see the complete picture of reality but its own finite and limited entity.

The ego acts like a two year old child and tries to dominate the mind with incessant whining, crying and elaborate stories in order to get its way: to hold onto its power and control over the mind and to distract the mind from living in accordance to the Dhamma. Have loving-kindness for the ego, like you would have for an ignorant and misguided child, but do not necessarily follow its dictates. Exercise wisdom when considering and responding to the ego.

Egoic consciousness is better understood when it is contrasted with Pure Consciousness. Pure Consciousness is not personal, it is not my consciousness or your consciousness, and it is not egoic consciousness. Pure Consciousness is a characteristic of reality, is not born nor does it die, is permanent, eternal and boundless.

Pure Consciousness is distinct from the contents of experience which are composed of the five aggregates. Pure Consciousness is the screen on which the contents of consciousness appears.

Other characteristics of reality are wisdom, loving-kindness and happiness. Wisdom includes such knowledge as: the characteristics of the ego, the impermanent nature of the world and body, and the causes and escape from suffering. Loving-kindness is the felt understanding that Pure Consciousness is identical in all beings and therefore, all beings are in essence not separated from each other but are one with all of reality. Happiness is the experience of being free of the power and control of the suffering ego, it is the experience of great peace and contentment. Mindfulness and concentration are the mental faculties utilized to make the distinction between Pure Consciousness and the contents of consciousness that the ego identifies with.

Egoic consciousness is limited and localized Pure Consciousness. The ego's function is to survive and is always at war, fighting to control the environment and to manipulate others. The ego however, is necessary to protect the physical and emotional body that interacts in the world. The aim is not to eliminate the ego, which is impossible but to dethrone it from being lord and master over the mind. The skill that is to be cultivated is to live with the ego, not as our identity or master over the mind but as a servant and instrument of the Dhamma or the voice of wisdom. The current state of humanity, the vast majority of people, do identify with the ego and allows the ego to manipulate and control the mind, which causes suffering. An aspect of ignorance is lack of knowledge and understanding of the ego and its behavior.

The first step in becoming free of the ego is to understand the nature and behavior of the ego. When there is understanding of the characteristics and symptoms of the ego then there is awareness of the ego's control, power and presence. There is then an opportunity and ability to avoid reacting to the dictates of the ego, this is freedom. The practice is to train the mind to pause, create a nonreactive space in order to investigate the wisdom of responding to the ego's whims and instead act in accordance to the Dhamma, with wisdom.

There is a necessity to study and know the ego for what it is, a suffering false self and to dethrone the ego from its lordship over the mind and make it a servant of the Dhamma. Pure Consciousness, transcends the ego and is thus a refuge from suffering. The enlightened mind rests in Pure Consciousness, liberated from the ego, knows peace and happiness.

Lord Buddha taught the Dhamma in order to transcend the ego by training in the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path. As disciples of the Buddha, it is our duty to study and train in the Dhamma for the benefit and liberation of all sentient beings.

The ego fears the Dhamma because the Dhamma is the means that causes the ego to relax its hold over the mind. The ego plagues the mind with forgetfulness of the Dhamma in order to assure its own preservation and control over the mind. To counter forgetfulness of the Dhamma keep a spiritual diary of inspiring Dhamma teachings and return frequently to the stillness and silence of Pure Consciousness.

The ego serves only itself, therefore to be free from the ego it is necessary to serve others with generosity and kindness. Instead of viewing oneself as an isolated individual apart from others and the environment, view and perceive the interconnection of all of life. The suffering of others is our own suffering and giving to others is a gift to ourselves because we are all intimately connected physically, emotionally and spiritually. Freedom from suffering is the experience and understanding of the connection with life, this is love - another word for happiness.

When mistakes are made due to a lapse of mindfulness and concentration, and the mind forgets to act in accordance to the Dhamma, then as quickly as possible, the mind is to regain mindfulness and other wholesome mental faculties. This is the best that can be done and little by little mindfulness and concentration is strengthened through exercise of their use. Self judgment or self hatred are behavior characteristics of the ego and not the Dhamma. Forgiveness is crucial: forgive others for their ignorance, ill will and greed, forgive the mind that is under the power of the ego and most importantly of all, forgive oneself. We are all in the same boat, riding the turbulent waves of saṃsāra. Have compassion for all sentient beings that are suffering and have compassion for the suffering mind.

February 2023 - The Noble Truth of Suffering

The Buddha taught the Four Noble Truths during his first teaching two months after he realized enlightenment. The Four Noble Truths is a foundation teaching of the Buddha. This essay expounds on the First Noble Truth, the Noble Truth of Suffering; subsequent essays will expound on the Second, Third and Fourth Noble Truths.

“The Dhamma is an incontrovertible fact of life. Whether buddhas arise or not, these truths exist. A buddha reveals the Dhamma to the deluded world. These are called Noble Truths because they were discovered or realized by the ariyas or noble (enlightened) ones.”¹

The Four Noble Truths are:

1. The Noble Truth of Suffering (dukkha)
2. The Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering (samudaya)
3. The Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering (nirodha)
4. The Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering (magga)

The Buddha diagnosed that the world is dis-eased by suffering, the First Noble Truth. The cause of the dis-ease is craving, the Second Noble Truth. The cure for the dis-ease is nibbāna, the Third Noble Truth. The medicine or treatment for the dis-ease is the Noble Eightfold Path, the Fourth Noble Truth.

Dukkha is a Pāli term and means “suffering, pain, unsatisfactoriness, ill, sorrow, and misery ... also includes the deeper meaning of impermanence, imperfection, emptiness, and insubstantiality.”²

The Buddha taught dukkha as having three components: ordinary suffering, suffering due to change, and suffering due to conditioned states.

The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

Part IV.38.14 Suffering

“There are, friend, these three kinds of suffering: the suffering due to pain, the suffering due to formations, the suffering due to change. These are the three kinds of suffering.”

The first component of dukkha is ordinary suffering due to painful bodily and mental feelings. Ordinary suffering or pain has two components. The first component of ordinary suffering is composed of mental and material elements which constitute the person defined by the Buddha as five aggregates. The five aggregates are:

1. material form,
2. feeling,
3. perception,
4. mental formations, and
5. sense consciousness.

The second component of ordinary suffering is dis-ease. The five aggregates are experienced as suffering during birth, ageing, illness, death, union with what is displeasing, separation from what is pleasing, not to get what one wants, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair.

The second component of dukkha is the suffering due to change. Pleasant feelings naturally diminishes and ends, produce unpleasant feelings and is experienced as suffering. The world is composed of impermanent components that constantly change, disintegrates and ends, this results in unpleasant feelings and suffering. The Buddha taught that whatever is impermanent is dukkha.

The third component of dukkha is the suffering due to conditioned states. To be conditioned is to be dependent on or affected by something else. All phenomena are conditioned. The conditions that make up the world whether they be physical or mental, are themselves composed of or conditioned by subtler parts that are impermanent. All conditioned states or formations arise, change, disintegrate and die, this produces unpleasant feelings and suffering.

The Noble Truth of Suffering is dukkha that results from an unskillful relationship with the five aggregates, described in the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering. The five aggregates are not dukkha in themselves but when the mind identifies with the aggregates, attaches to and craves the aggregates, then dukkha is the result because the aggregates are impermanent and insubstantial. In addition, the

unskillful habits and conditions of the ignorant mind turns away from understanding dukkha for temporary relief by forming an unskillful relationship with other aggregates that result in more dukkha.

Each of the Four Noble Truths has three phases:

6. the knowledge of each truth, e.g., "This is the noble truth of suffering";
7. the knowledge of the task to be accomplished regarding each truth, e.g., "This noble truth of suffering is to be fully understood"; and
8. the knowledge of accomplishment regarding each truth, e.g., "This noble truth of suffering has been fully understood."

The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

Part V.56.11(1) Setting in Motion the Wheel of the Dhamma

“This is the noble truth of suffering’: thus, bhikkhus, in regard to things unheard before, there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, true knowledge, and light.

“This noble truth of suffering is to be fully understood’: thus, bhikkhus, in regard to things unheard before, there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, true knowledge, and light.

“This noble truth of suffering has been fully understood’: thus, bhikkhus, in regard to things unheard before, there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, true knowledge, and light.

“The first kind of knowledge recognizes that the Noble Truth is indeed true. The second kind of knowledge recognizes what is the appropriate action to take with regard to that particular Noble Truth. And the third kind of knowledge recognizes that the appropriate action has indeed been done with regard to that particular Noble Truth. When one has fully realized all twelve aspects of knowledge with regard to the Noble Truths, one has attained enlightenment.”³

When the Buddha mastered each phase of the Four Noble Truths he experienced the five aggregates and the sense bases in terms of the three characteristics of existence: impermanence, suffering and not-self.

- The six internal sense bases are the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind.
- The six external sense bases are visible forms, sounds, odors, flavors, touch and mental objects.
- Sense consciousness arises dependent on an internal and an external sense base.
- Contact is the meeting of an internal sense base, external sense base and sense consciousness.
- Feeling is dependent on contact.
- Craving is dependent on feeling.
- Suffering is the result of craving, the Second Noble Truth.

Therefore, when the Buddha realized the danger and escape from identifying and attaching to the five aggregates and sense bases:

- Vision arose: clear seeing of the five aggregates and sense bases as arising and passing away.
- Knowledge arose: that rooted out ignorance, ill will and greed in regards to the five aggregates and sense bases.
- Wisdom arose: understanding that the five aggregates and sense bases are impermanent, suffering and insubstantial (not self).
- True knowledge arose: penetrative insight into the ignorance that misconstrues the five aggregates and sense bases to be permanent, pleasurable and self.
- Light arose: illuminating all phenomena to have the three characteristics of existence.

Dukkha is to be acknowledged and investigated by not running away from the experience. The investigation of dukkha will uncover ones’ unskillful relationship with the five aggregates and sense bases, and with ones’ unskillful habits that respond to the unpleasant experience. A skillful relationship is to perceive the five aggregates and sense bases in terms of the three characteristics of existence. With understanding obtained from investigation there is an opportunity to form a skillful relationship with the aggregates and sense bases, described in the Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering and for liberation from dukkha, described in the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering.

Dukkha is hidden by postures. There is dukkha in the body and the pain is concealed by changing postures. Therefore, it is preferable to adopt a meditation posture that can be maintained without moving for the duration of the meditation in order to investigate and understand dukkha. When pain arises investigate the pain and observe how it changes in intensity and location. Observe your reaction to the pain and be the observer above and beyond the pain. There is the watcher, the

consciousness of the pain, that is separate from the pain. The intensity of the pain increases by identifying with it. By identifying with consciousness and not with the pain, the mind is liberated from suffering.

The following excerpts are from suttas in the Pāli Canon that will provide teachings in how the Buddha and his closest disciples explained the First Noble Truth.

Definition of The First Noble Truth.

The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

Part V.56.11(1) Setting in Motion the Wheel of the Dhamma

“Now this, bhikkhus, is the noble truth of suffering: birth is suffering, aging is suffering, illness is suffering, death is suffering, union with what is displeasing is suffering, separation from what is pleasing is suffering, not to get what one wants is suffering, in brief, the five aggregates subject to clinging are suffering.

Elaboration of The First Noble Truth.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

141 Saccavibhanga Sutta: The Exposition of the Truths

7. Then, soon after the Blessed One had gone, the venerable Sāriputta addressed the bhikkhus thus: “Friends, bhikkhus.” — “Friend,” the bhikkhus replied to the venerable Sāriputta. The venerable Sāriputta said this:

8. “At Benares, friends, in the Deer Park at Isipatana the Tathāgata, accomplished and fully enlightened, set rolling the matchless Wheel of the Dhamma... and exhibiting of the Four Noble Truths. Of what four?

9. “The announcing... and exhibiting of the noble truth of suffering... of the noble truth of the origin of suffering... of the noble truth of the cessation of suffering... of the noble truth of the way leading to the cessation of suffering.

10. “And what, friends, is the noble truth of suffering? Birth is suffering, ageing is suffering, death is suffering, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair are suffering, not to obtain what one wants is suffering, in short, the five aggregates affected by clinging are suffering.

11. “And what, friends, is birth? The birth of beings into the various orders of beings, their coming to birth, precipitation [in a womb], generation, the manifestation of the aggregates, obtaining the bases for contact — this is called birth.

12. “And what, friends, is ageing? The ageing of beings in the various orders of beings, their old age, brokenness of teeth, greyness of hair, wrinkling of skin, decline of life, weakness of faculties — this is called ageing.

13. “And what, friends, is death? The passing of beings out of the various orders of beings, their passing away, dissolution, disappearance, dying, completion of time, dissolution of aggregates, laying down of the body — this is called death.

14. “And what, friends, is sorrow? The sorrow, sorrowing, sorrowfulness, inner sorrow, inner sorriiness, of one who has encountered some misfortune or is affected by some painful state — this is called sorrow.

15. “And what, friends, is lamentation? The wail and lament, wailing and lamenting, bewailing and lamentation, of one who has encountered some misfortune or is affected by some painful state — this is called lamentation.

16. “And what, friends, is pain? Bodily pain, bodily discomfort, painful, uncomfortable feeling born of bodily contact — this is called pain.

17. “And what, friends, is grief? Mental pain, mental discomfort, painful, uncomfortable feeling born of mental contact — this is called grief.

18. “And what, friends, is despair? The trouble and despair, the tribulation and desperation, of one who has encountered some misfortune or is affected by some painful state — this is called despair.

19. “And what, friends, is ‘not to obtain what one wants is suffering’? To beings subject to birth there comes the wish: ‘Oh, that we were not subject to birth! That birth would not come to us!’ But this is not to be obtained by wishing, and not to obtain what one wants is suffering. To beings subject to ageing...

subject to sickness... subject to death... subject to sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair, there comes the wish: 'Oh, that we were not subject to sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair! That sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair would not come to us!' But this is not to be obtained by wishing, and not to obtain what one wants is suffering.

20. "And what, friends, are the five aggregates affected by clinging that, in short, are suffering? They are: the material form aggregate affected by clinging, the feeling aggregate affected by clinging, the perception aggregate affected by clinging, the formations aggregate affected by clinging, and the consciousness aggregate affected by clinging. These are the five aggregates affected by clinging that, in short, are suffering. This is called the noble truth of suffering.

Definition of The First Noble Truth in terms of the internal sense bases.

The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

Part V.56.14(4) Internal Sense Bases

"And what, bhikkhus, is the noble truth of suffering? It should be said: the six internal sense bases. What six? The eye base, ear base, nose base, tongue base, body base, and the mind base. This is called the noble truth of suffering."

Definition of dukkha in terms of a burning fire.

The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

Part IV.35.28(6) Burning

"Bhikkhus, all is burning. And what, bhikkhus, is the all that is burning? The eye is burning, forms are burning, eye-consciousness is burning, eye-contact is burning, and whatever feeling arises with eye-contact as condition—whether pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant—that too is burning. Burning with what? Burning with the fire of lust, with the fire of hatred, with the fire of delusion; burning with birth, aging, and death; with sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure, and despair, I say.

"The ear is burning ... The nose is burning ... The tongue is burning ... The body is burning ... The mind is burning ... and whatever feeling arises with mind-contact as condition—whether pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant—that too is burning. Burning with what? Burning with the fire of lust, with the fire of hatred, with the fire of delusion; burning with birth, aging, and death; with sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure, and despair, I say.

Dukkha is to be understood.

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

6.63(9) Penetrative

(6) "Suffering should be understood; the source and origin of suffering should be understood; the diversity of suffering should be understood; the result of suffering should be understood; the cessation of suffering should be understood; the way leading to the cessation of suffering should be understood.

"Birth is suffering; old age is suffering; illness is suffering; death is suffering; sorrow, lamentation, pain, dejection, and anguish are suffering; not to get what one wants is suffering; in brief, the five aggregates subject to clinging are suffering.

"And what is the diversity of suffering? There is extreme suffering; there is slight suffering; there is suffering that fades away slowly; there is suffering that fades away quickly. This is called the diversity of suffering.

"And what is the result of suffering? Here, someone overcome by suffering, with a mind obsessed by it, sorrows, languishes, and laments; he weeps beating his breast and becomes confused. Or else, overcome by suffering, with a mind obsessed by it, he embarks upon a search outside, saying: 'Who knows one or two words for putting an end to this suffering?' Suffering, I say, results either in confusion or in a search. This is called the result of suffering.

Notes:

1. The First Discourse of the Buddha: Turning the Wheel of Dhamma by Dr. Rewata Dhamma; 1997; p. 55

2. The First Discourse of the Buddha: Turning the Wheel of Dhamma by Dr. Rewata Dhamma; 1997;
p. 56
3. The First Discourse of the Buddha: Turning the Wheel of Dhamma by Dr. Rewata Dhamma; 1997;
p. 83

March 2023 - The Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering

The First Noble Truth, the Noble Truth of Suffering (dukkha) was discussed in the February 2023 Newsletter. This essay will discuss the Second Noble Truth, the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering (samudaya); subsequent newsletters will expound on the Third and Fourth Noble Truths.

The Four Noble Truths are a principal teaching of the Buddha.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

28 Mahāhatthipadopama Sutta: The Greater Discourse on the Simile of the Elephant's Footprint

2. "Friends, just as the footprints of all other animals of the jungle can fit into the footprint of an elephant, which is declared chief with respect to size, so whatever wholesome teachings there are can all fit into the four noble truths. In what four? In the noble truth of suffering, in the noble truth of the origin of suffering, in the noble truth of the cessation of suffering, and in the noble truth of the way leading to the cessation of suffering.

The Buddha defined noble individuals as those who are on a direct and true path towards liberation from suffering while individuals caught up in the world, worldlings, are not on such a path. The penetration of the Four Noble Truths "propels the disciple from the domain and lineage of the worldling to the domain and lineage of the noble ones ... The eye of Dhamma has been opened, the vision of truth stands revealed ... One who has comprehended the truths has changed lineage, crossed over from the domain of the worldlings to the domain of the noble ones."¹ At the first noble stage of stream enterer (sotāpanna) the eye of Dhamma has been opened because there is the realization that whatever arises will cease (impermanence) and the stream enterer's view and faith in the Buddha-Dhamma is free of any doubt, that the Dhamma is true and consistent.

The four tasks of the Four Noble Truths are:

1. full understanding of dukkha,
2. abandonment of craving (taṇhā), the cause of dukkha,
3. realization of Nibbāna, the cessation of dukkha, and
4. development of the Noble Eightfold Path that culminates in Nibbāna.

The Buddha taught that the cause of dukkha is taṇhā. Taṇhā is a Pāli term, literally means "thirst" and synonyms are: desire, longing, yearning, greed, lust, affection and attachment. Taṇhā is normally translated as craving. Taṇhā is identification, another synonym, with the five aggregates and the six sense bases. The five aggregates are: material forms, feelings, perceptions, mental formations, and sense consciousness. The six sense bases are: eye and forms, ear and sounds, nose and odors, tongue and flavors, body and tangibles, and mind and mental-objects. Freedom from suffering is realized by uprooting taṇhā from the mind.

The Dhammapada: The Buddha's Path of Wisdom translated by Acharya Buddhārakkhita

216. From craving springs grief, from craving springs fear. For one who is wholly free from craving there is no grief, whence then fear?

Taṇhā is the proximate cause for dukkha, it is not the principal cause. The Buddha taught Dependent Origination (paṭicca samuppāda) to explain the causes and conditions that lead to dukkha.

1. ignorance (avijjā) is the condition for the arising of
2. volitional formations (sankhārā) is the condition for the arising of
3. (rebirth) consciousness (viññāna) is the condition for the arising of
4. name and form, mentality-materiality (nāmarūpa) is the condition for the arising of
5. six sense bases (saḷāyatana) is the condition for the arising of
6. contact (phassa) is the condition for the arising of
7. feeling (vedanā) is the condition for the arising of
8. craving (taṇhā) is the condition for the arising of
9. clinging (upādāna) is the condition for the arising of
10. existence (bhava) is the condition for the arising of
11. birth (jāti) is the condition for the arising of and

12. suffering (dukkha)

Ignorance is the principal or root cause for the arising of conditions that lead to dukkha. Therefore, to uproot taṇhā from the mind it is necessary to uproot ignorance. Ignorance is defined as a lack of understanding and penetration of the four noble truths.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

Sutta 9 Sammādiṭṭhi Sutta: Right View

66. “And what is ignorance, what is the origin of ignorance, what is the cessation of ignorance, what is the way leading to the cessation of ignorance? Not knowing about suffering, not knowing about the origin of suffering, not knowing about the cessation of suffering, not knowing about the way leading to the cessation of suffering — this is called ignorance. With the arising of the taints there is the arising of ignorance. With the cessation of the taints there is the cessation of ignorance. The way leading to the cessation of ignorance is just this Noble Eightfold Path; that is, right view... right concentration.

The three phases of the Second Noble Truth.

The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

Part V.56.11(1) Setting in Motion the Wheel of the Dhamma

“This is the noble truth of the origin of suffering’: thus, bhikkhus, in regard to things unheard before, there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, true knowledge, and light.

“This noble truth of the origin of suffering is to be abandoned’: thus, bhikkhus, in regard to things unheard before, there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, true knowledge, and light.

“This noble truth of the origin of suffering has been abandoned’: thus, bhikkhus, in regard to things unheard before, there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, true knowledge, and light.

The first phase is knowledge of the origin of dukkha. This is the knowledge that taṇhā is the origin of suffering. There are three types of taṇhā.

1. kāma-taṇhā: craving for sensual pleasures,
2. bhava-taṇhā: craving for existence or becoming, and
3. vibhava-taṇhā: craving for non-existence or annihilation.

Kāma-taṇhā is craving for or attachment to sense objects, pleasant feelings and sensory pleasures. Taṇhā may be directed to wealth and power, property, rites and rituals, philosophy, ideas and ideals, views, religion, opinions, theories, conceptions and beliefs. The mind consumed with taṇhā reacts to the objects of the six senses with like or dislike, wanting or not wanting. Liking results in taṇhā and disliking also results in taṇhā because the mind turns to something else to like. Dukkha arises when the object of taṇhā changes or is lost.

Bhava-taṇhā is craving to be something, to unite or identify with an experience. The ego-consciousness naturally craves to exist forever and to have an unchanging self. This type of craving is influenced by the wrong view of eternalism: the desire to continue existing, to be reborn forever as a consistent identity. Eternalism is misguided because the ego consciousness, the “self,” is constantly in flux and is not the same from one moment to the next. The “self” or personality cannot avoid changing and dies in each passing moment and is reborn again in the following moment. The craving to become results in dukkha because the nature of experience is transitory and the “self” is constantly changing and disintegrating. The ego is forever craving to become something as prior identifications falls apart, the constant sense of not being enough or having enough is dukkha.

Vibhava-taṇhā is craving to not experience or identify with unpleasant sense objects in the current or future life. This type of craving is associated with the view of nihilism, the belief in self-annihilation, the craving for nonexistence. This is the belief that the escape from unpleasant experiences and dukkha will be found upon death. However, suicide - attempts at self-annihilation, does result in another rebirth and probably into a worse realm of existence. This type of craving is the result of the misguided view that there is no rebirth. To be reborn is to experience dukkha.

The second phase is knowledge that the origin of dukkha is to be abandoned. This is the knowledge that taṇhā, the cause of dukkha, must be abandoned in order to be free of suffering. To be free of suffering the three kinds of taṇhā, described in terms of its influence on the mind, must be uprooted.

1. taṇhā that initiates physical and verbal actions,

2. taṇhā that overwhelms the mind with imagination and fantasy, and
3. taṇhā that exist latent in the mind.

The taṇhā that defiles physical actions and speech causes unwholesome kamma, due to the transgression of ethical conduct. This type of taṇhā is removed through the practice of the five moral precepts:

1. abstain from killing,
2. abstain from stealing,
3. abstain from sexual misconduct,
4. abstain from wrong speech, and
5. abstain from the use of intoxicating substances that cause lapse of mindfulness.

The taṇhā that infiltrates the mind with imagination and fantasy consumes energy, and weakens the mental faculties of mindfulness and concentration. The mind with depleted energy is prone to depression. This type of taṇhā is removed through the practice of meditation (samādhi). The practice of tranquility meditation cultivates mindfulness and concentration; allows thoughts, desires, imaginations and fantasies to settle. The mind that is calm, content and settled experiences stillness, silence and energy, resulting in joy.

The taṇhā that exist latent in the mind are of two types. Taṇhā arises in the first type when the mind makes contact with any of the six sense objects - this type of taṇhā is removed by contemplating the three characteristics inherent in the sense objects: impermanence (anicca), suffering (dukkha), and not-self (anatta). In the second type, taṇhā exists in the subtle levels of mind and is removed by training in and perfecting the Noble Eightfold Path (the Fourth Noble Truth).

The third phase is knowledge that the origin of dukkha has been abandoned.

Knowledge of the abandonment of taṇhā results in a noble stage of enlightenment.

The First Discourse of the Buddha: Turning the Wheel of Dhamma by Dr. Rewata Dhamma
p. 89

“At the first stage of enlightenment, the stage of stream winner (sotāpanna), craving which leads to rebirth in the lower realms of existence is eliminated. At the second stage of enlightenment (sakadāgāmi), the grosser forms of craving for sensuous pleasures (kāma-taṇhā) are abolished. At the third stage of enlightenment (anāgāmi), the subtle forms of craving for sensuous pleasures are eradicated. At the fourth stage of enlightenment (arahant), all kinds of remaining cravings are completely uprooted.”

As Ajahn Chah said, “If you let go a little, you’ll have a little happiness. If you let go a lot, you’ll have a lot of happiness. If you let go completely . . . you’ll be completely happy.”

The following excerpts are from suttas in the Pāli Canon that will illustrate how the Buddha taught the Second Noble Truth.

Definition of The Second Noble Truth.

The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

Part V.56.11(1) Setting in Motion the Wheel of the Dhamma

“Now this, bhikkhus, is the noble truth of the origin of suffering: it is this craving which leads to renewed existence, accompanied by delight and lust, seeking delight here and there; that is, craving for sensual pleasures, craving for existence, craving for extermination.

Craving causes dukkha.

The Dhammapada: The Buddha’s Path of Wisdom translated by Acharya Buddhārakkhita
Chapter 24

334. The craving of a person given to heedless living grows like a creeper. Like the monkey seeking fruits in the forest, he leaps from life to life (tasting the fruit of his kamma).
335. Whoever is overcome by this wretched and sticky craving, his sorrows grow like bīraṇa grass after the rains.
336. But whoever overcomes this wretched craving, so difficult to overcome, from him sorrows fall away like water from a lotus leaf.
337. This I say to you: Good luck to you all assembled here! Dig up the root of craving, like one in search of the fragrant roots of bīraṇa grass. Do not let Māra crush you again and again, as a flood crushes a reed.

338. Just as a tree, though cut down, sprouts up again if its roots remain uncut and firm, even so, until the craving that lies dormant is rooted out, this suffering springs up again and again.
339. The misguided person, in whom the thirty-six currents of craving* rush strongly toward pleasurable objects, is swept away by the flood of passionate thoughts.
- * The thirty-six currents of craving: the three cravings – for sensual pleasure, for continued existence, and for annihilation – in relation to each of the twelve sense bases: the six sense organs, including mind, and corresponding objects.
340. Everywhere these currents flow, and the creeper (of craving) sprouts and grows. Seeing that the creeper has sprung up, cut off its root with wisdom.
341. Flowing in (from all objects) and watered by craving, feelings of pleasure arise in beings. Bent on pleasure and seeking enjoyment, these people fall prey to birth and decay.
342. Beset by craving, people run about like an entrapped hare. Held fast by mental fetters, they come to suffering again and again for a long time.
343. Beset by craving, people run about like an entrapped hare. Therefore one who yearns to be passion-free should destroy his own craving.
344. There is one who had turned away from the forest (of desire), intent on the life of the forest (as a monk). But after being freed from the forest (of desire), he runs back to that same forest. Come, behold that man! Though freed, he runs back to that very bondage.
- 345-346. That is not a strong fetter, the wise say, which is made of iron, wood, or hemp. But the infatuation and longing for jewels and ornaments, for children and wives – that, the wise say, is a far stronger fetter, which pulls one downward and, though seemingly loose, hard to remove. This too the wise cut off. Giving up sensual pleasure, and without any longing, they renounce the world.
347. Those are lust-infatuated fall back to the swirling current (of saṃsāra) like a spider on its self-spun web. This too the wise cut off. Without any longing, they abandon all suffering and renounce the world.
348. Let go of the past, let go of the future, let go of the present, and cross over to the farther shore of existence. With mind wholly liberated, you shall come no more to birth and decay.
349. For a person tormented by evil thoughts, who is passion-dominated and given to the pursuit of pleasure, his craving steadily grows. He makes the fetter strong indeed.
350. He who delights in subduing evil thoughts, who meditates on the impurities and is ever mindful – it is he who will make an end of craving and rend asunder Māra's fetter.
351. He who has reached the goal, fearless, free from craving, stainless, having plucked out the thorns of existence – for him this is the last body.
352. He who is free from craving and attachment, perfect in uncovering the true meaning of the Teaching, and who knows the arrangement of the sacred texts in correct sequence – he, indeed, is the bearer of his final body. He is truly called a profoundly wise one, a great man.
353. A victor am I over all, all have I known, yet unattached am I to all that is conquered and known. Abandoning all, I am freed through the destruction of craving. Having thus directly comprehended all by myself, whom shall I call my teacher?
354. The gift of the Dhamma excels all gifts; the taste of the Dhamma excels all tastes; the delight in the Dhamma excels all delights; the craving-freed vanquishes all suffering.
355. Riches ruin the foolish, but not those in quest of the Beyond. By craving for riches the witless man ruins himself as well as others.
356. Weeds are the bane of fields, lust the bane of humankind. Therefore what is offered to those free of lust yields abundant fruit.
357. Weeds are the bane of fields, hatred the bane of humankind. Therefore what is offered to those free of hatred yields abundant fruit.
358. Weeds are the bane of fields, delusion the bane of humankind. Therefore what is offered to those free of delusion yields abundant fruit.

356. Weeds are the bane of fields, desire the bane of humankind. Therefore what is offered to those free of desire yields abundant fruit.

Elimination of craving leads to knowledge of liberation.

The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

Part VI.27.8 Craving

“Bhikkhus, desire and lust for craving for forms ... craving for sounds ... craving for odors ... craving for flavors ... craving for touch ... for craving for mental phenomena is a corruption of the mind. When a bhikkhu has abandoned the mental corruption in these six cases ... [his mind] becomes wieldy in regard to those things that are to be realized by direct knowledge.”

Notes:

1. The Nobility of the Truths by Bhikkhu Bodhi, 1998

April 2023 - The Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering

The First Noble Truth, the Noble Truth of Suffering (dukkha) was discussed in the February 2023 Newsletter and the Second Noble Truth, the Noble Truth of the Origination of Suffering (samudaya) was discussed in the March 2023 Newsletter. This essay will discuss the Third Noble Truth, the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering (nirodha); the next newsletter will expound on the Fourth Noble Truth, The Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering (magga).

The Buddha is similar to a doctor who examines the dis-ease, suffering, and prescribes the medicine, the Dhamma, that cures the disease.

The Itivuttaka: The Buddha's Sayings translated from the Pāli by John D. Ireland

100 The Dhamma-offering (Brāhmanadhammayāga Sutta)

Bhikkhus, I am a brahmin, ever accessible to entreaties, open-handed, one bearing his last body, an unsurpassed physician and surgeon. You are my own legitimate sons, born from my mouth, born of Dhamma, fashioned by Dhamma, heirs of Dhamma, not heirs of material things.

Note: The Buddha is called “the great physician” as he offers the treatment to cure the suffering inherent in the round of birth and death. And he is a surgeon (sallakatta) who has the method for excising the poisoned arrows (salla) of lust, hate, and delusion embedded in the minds of beings.

The Path of Purification: Visuddhimagga by Bhadantacariya Buddhaghosa, translated from the Pāli by Bhikkhu Nanamoli

XVI.87.11

The truth of suffering is like a disease, the truth of origin is like the cause of the disease, the truth of cessation is like the cure of the disease, and the truth of the path is like the medicine.

In the Pāli language, suffering is called ‘dukkha’, the cessation of suffering is called ‘nirodha’ and the realization of nirodha is called ‘nibbāna’. Nirodha is the process of uprooting craving from the mind and nibbāna is the experience of freedom from craving and suffering. As mentioned in the last newsletter, ignorance is the root cause for the arising of craving and craving is the proximate cause for the arising of dukkha. Therefore, to remove craving and dukkha from the mind it is necessary to remove ignorance from the mind. The process of removing ignorance is accomplished by training in and perfecting the Noble Eightfold Path, the Fourth Noble Truth.

Nibbāna is the goal of training the mind within the dispensation (Dhamma) of Lord Buddha, it is ultimate reality and cannot be understood intellectually but only known as an experience. Nibbāna is not a content of mind but the experience of pure consciousness, the “screen” on which contents of mind are known. “Screen” is a metaphor for the watcher or observer that is void of any substance, gross or subtle but is simply aware. Pure consciousness is a synonym for nibbāna.

Pure consciousness is not personal, it is not my consciousness or your consciousness; is not born nor does it die; is permanent, eternal and boundless. The contents of consciousness includes gross and subtle experiences: the five clinging aggregates which constitute the empirical being (forms, thoughts, perceptions, feelings, and sense consciousness), and the six sense bases (eye and forms, ear and sounds, nose and odors, tongue and tastes, body and tangibles, mind and mind-objects). Contents of consciousness have three characteristics: they are impermanent (anicca), they contribute to suffering (dukkha) and they are not-self (anatta). Pure consciousness/nibbāna is empty of the three characteristics.

The Buddha illustrated the characteristics of nibbāna with the following synonyms. “In positive terms, nibbāna means peace, sublimity, purity, release, security, excellent happiness, and so forth; while in negative terms it is defined as deathless, unconditioned, extinction of craving, extinction of hatred, extension of delusion, cessation of dukkha, extinction of thirst, and so on.”¹

Nibbāna is realized by uprooting from the mind fundamental impurities, defilements: ignorance, greed, craving, hatred, and the false sense of self. Nibbāna is not nothingness but a transcendental reality, transcending the egoic consciousness or the false self and saṃsāra: the round of perpetual wandering and suffering through an endless cycle of birth, death and rebirth. “Nibbana literally means the extinguishing of a flame. The word ‘Nibbāna’ used by the Buddha means the extinguishing of the

flame of craving, the extinguishing of the fires of greed, hatred and delusion. ... Nibbāna is not only the destruction of defilements and the end of saṃsāra but a reality transcendent to the entire world of mundane experience, a reality transcendent to all the realms of phenomenal existence. ... Nibbāna is an actual reality and not the mere destruction of defilements or the cessation of existence. Nibbāna is unconditioned, without any origination and is timeless.”²

The three phases of the Third Noble Truth.

The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

Part V.56.11(1) Setting in Motion the Wheel of the Dhamma

“This is the noble truth of the cessation of suffering’: thus, bhikkhus, in regard to things unheard before, there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, true knowledge, and light.

“This noble truth of the cessation of suffering is to be realized’: thus, bhikkhus, in regard to things unheard before, there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, true knowledge, and light.

“This noble truth of the cessation of suffering has been realized’: thus, bhikkhus, in regard to things unheard before, there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, true knowledge, and light.

The first phase is knowledge of the cessation of dukkha. This is the knowledge and experience of the complete cessation of dukkha, nibbāna.

The second phase is knowledge that the cessation of dukkha is to be realized. This is the knowledge and experience of equanimity towards all formations, physical and mental, the realization of nibbāna.

The third phase is knowledge that the cessation of dukkha has been realized. This is the observation in retrospect that the defilements have been uprooted, the fires of dukkha have been cooled, and the mind is perfectly at peace, content and happy.

The following excerpts are from suttas in the Pāli Canon that will illustrate how the Buddha explained the Third Noble Truth.

Definition of The Third Noble Truth.

The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

Part V.56.11(1) Setting in Motion the Wheel of the Dhamma

“Now this, bhikkhus, is the noble truth of the cessation of suffering: it is the remainderless fading away and cessation of that same craving, the giving up and relinquishing of it, freedom from it, nonreliance on it.

Definition of nibbāna.

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

3.32 (2) Ānanda

“Bhante, could a bhikkhu obtain such a state of concentration that (1) he would have no I-making, mine-making, and underlying tendency to conceit in regard to this conscious body; (2) he would have no I-making, mine-making, and underlying tendency to conceit in regard to all external objects; and (3) he would enter and dwell in that liberation of mind, liberation by wisdom, through which there is no more I-making, mine-making, and underlying tendency to conceit for one who enters and dwells in it?”

“He could, Ānanda.”

“But how, Bhante, could he obtain such a state of concentration?”

“Here, Ānanda, a bhikkhu thinks thus: ‘This is peaceful, this is sublime, that is, the stilling of all activities, the relinquishing of all acquisitions, the destruction of craving, dispassion, cessation, nibbāna.’

‘I-making’ refers to views, ‘mine-making’ to craving, and ‘all external objects’ to the five sense objects.

The Dhammapada: The Buddha’s Path of Wisdom translated by Acharya Buddhārakkhita

23. The wise ones, ever mediative and steadfastly persevering, experience Nibbāna, the incomparable freedom from bondage.

...

126. Some are born in the womb; the wicked are born in hell; the devout go to heaven; the canker-free attain Nibbāna.

Cankers are mental defilements of sensual pleasures, craving for existence, and ignorance.

...

202. There is no fire like lust, no crime like hatred. There is no ill like the aggregates, no bliss higher than the peace (of Nibbāna).

Aggregates: the five groups into which the Buddha analyzes the living being – material form, feeling, perception, mental formations, and [sense] consciousness.

203. Hunger is the worst disease, conditioned things the worst suffering. Knowing this as it really is, the wise realize Nibbāna, the highest bliss.

204. Health is the highest gain, contentment the greatest wealth. A trustworthy person is the best kinsman, Nibbāna the highest bliss.

205. Having savoured the taste of solitude and of peace, pain-free and stainless he becomes, drinking deep the taste of the bliss of the Dhamma.

Udana: Inspired Utterances of the Buddha translated from the Pali by John D. Ireland

1.10 Bāhiya (Bhāiyya Sutta)

Where neither water nor yet earth

Nor fire nor air gain a foothold,

There gleam no stars, no sun sheds light,

There shines no moon, yet there no darkness reigns.

When a sage, a brahmin, has come to know this

For himself through his own wisdom,

Then he is freed from form and formless.

Freed from pleasure and from pain.

This is the experience of the arahant: “the moment of illumination that outshines even the sun and moon.” The arahant is liberated from the form and formless planes of existence, and from the sense-sphere planes.

...

8.1 Parinibbāna (1) (Paphmaparinibbāna Sutta)

There is, bhikkhus, that base where there is no earth, no water, no fire, no air; no base consisting of the infinity of space, no base consisting of the infinity of consciousness, no base consisting of nothingness, no base consisting of neither-perception-nor-non-perception; neither this world nor another world nor both; neither sun nor moon. Here, bhikkhus, I say there is no coming, no going, no staying, no deceasing, no uprising. Not fixed, not movable, it has no support. Just this is the end of suffering.

‘Base’ refers to nibbāna and ‘no support’ refers to the unconditioned.

8.2 Parinibbāna (2) (Dutiya-parinibbāna Sutta)

The uninclined is hard to see,

The truth is not easy to see;

Craving is penetrated by one who knows,

For one who sees there is nothing.

‘Uninclined’ refers to the elimination of, not inclined to, craving for sense objects and becoming.

8.3 Parinibbāna (3) (Tatiya-parinibbāna Sutta)

There is, bhikkhus, a not-born, a not-brought-to-being, a not-made, a not-conditioned. If, bhikkhus, there were no not-born, not-brought-to-being, not-made, not-conditioned, no escape would be discerned from what is born, brought-to-being, made, conditioned. But since there is a not-born, a not-brought-to-being, a not-made, a not-conditioned, therefore an escape is discerned from what is born, brought-to-being, made, conditioned.

8.4 Parinibbāna (4) (Catutthaparinibbāna Sutta)

For the supported there is instability, for the unsupported there is no instability; when there is no instability there is serenity; when there is serenity there is no inclination: when there is no inclination there is no coming-and-going; when there is no coming-and-going there is no decease-and-uprising; when there is no decease-and-uprising there is neither “here” nor “beyond” nor “in between the two.” Just this is the end of suffering.

‘Supported’ and ‘inclination’ refers to individuals who are defiled by craving and views. ‘Coming-and-going’ and ‘decease-and-uprising’ refers to rebirth into mundane existence.

The mind that is detached or dispassionate realizes nibbāna.

Itivuttaka: The Buddha's Sayings translated from the Pali by John D. Ireland

90. Foremost Faith

“Whatever states there are, whether conditioned or unconditioned, of these detachment is reckoned foremost, that is, the subduing of vanity, the elimination of thirst, the removal of reliance, the termination of the round (of rebirths), the destruction of craving, detachment, cessation, Nibbāna. Those who have faith in the Dhamma of detachment have faith in the foremost, and for those with faith in the foremost the result will be foremost.

The Five Aggregates are suffering and their stilling is nibbāna.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

64 Mahāmālunkya Sutta: The Greater Discourse to Mālunkyāputta

“Whatever exists therein of material form, feeling, perception, formations, and consciousness, he sees those states as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as a tumour, as a barb, as a calamity, as an affliction, as alien, as disintegrating, as void, as not self. He turns his mind away from those states and directs it towards the deathless element thus: ‘This is the peaceful, this is the sublime, that is, the stilling of all formations, the relinquishing of all attachments, the destruction of craving, dispassion, cessation, Nibbāna.’

The causes and conditions for the destruction of the taints: sensual desire, attachment to existence, wrong views, and ignorance.

The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

12.23 (3) Proximate Cause

At Śvatthī. “Bhikkhus, I say that the destruction of the taints is for one who knows and sees, not for one who does not know and does not see. For one who knows what, for one who sees what, does the destruction of the taints come about? ‘Such is form, such its origin, such its passing away; such is feeling ... such is perception ... such are volitional formations ... such is consciousness, such its origin, such its passing away’: it is for one who knows thus, for one who sees thus, that the destruction of the taints comes about.

“I say, bhikkhus, that the knowledge of destruction in regard to destruction has a proximate cause; it does not lack a proximate cause. And what is the proximate cause for the knowledge of destruction? It should be said: liberation.

“I say, bhikkhus, that liberation too has a proximate cause; it does not lack a proximate cause. And what is the proximate cause for liberation? It should be said: dispassion.

“I say, bhikkhus, that dispassion too has a proximate cause; it does not lack a proximate cause. And what is the proximate cause for dispassion? It should be said: revulsion.

“I say, bhikkhus, that revulsion too has a proximate cause; it does not lack a proximate cause. And what is the proximate cause for revulsion? It should be said: the knowledge and vision of things as they really are.

“I say, bhikkhus, that the knowledge and vision of things as they really are too has a proximate cause; it does not lack a proximate cause. And what is the proximate cause for the knowledge and vision of things as they really are? It should be said: concentration.

“I say, bhikkhus, that concentration too has a proximate cause; it does not lack a proximate cause. And what is the proximate cause for concentration? It should be said: happiness.

“I say, bhikkhus, that happiness too has a proximate cause; it does not lack a proximate cause. And what is the proximate cause for happiness? It should be said: tranquillity.

“I say, bhikkhus, that tranquillity too has a proximate cause; it does not lack a proximate cause. And what is the proximate cause for tranquillity? It should be said: rapture.

“I say, bhikkhus, that rapture too has a proximate cause; it does not lack a proximate cause. And what is the proximate cause for rapture? It should be said: gladness.

“I say, bhikkhus, that gladness too has a proximate cause; it does not lack a proximate cause. And what is the proximate cause for gladness? It should be said: faith.

“I say, bhikkhus, that faith too has a proximate cause; it does not lack a proximate cause. And what is the proximate cause for faith? It should be said: suffering.

"I say, bhikkhus, that suffering too has a proximate cause; it does not lack a proximate cause. And what is the proximate cause for suffering? It should be said: birth.

"I say, bhikkhus, that birth too has a proximate cause; it does not lack a proximate cause. And what is the proximate cause for birth? It should be said: existence.

"I say, bhikkhus, that existence too has a proximate cause; it does not lack a proximate cause. And what is the proximate cause for existence? It should be said: clinging.

"I say, bhikkhus, that clinging too has a proximate cause; it does not lack a proximate cause. And what is the proximate cause for clinging? It should be said: craving.

"I say, bhikkhus, that craving too has a proximate cause; it does not lack a proximate cause. And what is the proximate cause for craving? It should be said: feeling.

"For feeling, it should be said: contact. For contact: the six sense bases. For the six sense bases: name-and-form. For name-and-form: consciousness. For consciousness: volitional formations.

"I say, bhikkhus, that volitional formations too have a proximate cause; they do not lack a proximate cause. And what is the proximate cause for volitional formations? It should be said: ignorance.

"Thus, bhikkhus, with ignorance as proximate cause, volitional formations [come to be]; with volitional formations as proximate cause, consciousness; with consciousness as proximate cause, name-and-form; with name-and-form as proximate cause, the six sense bases; with the six sense bases as proximate cause, contact; with contact as proximate cause, feeling; with feeling as proximate cause, craving; with craving as proximate cause, clinging; with clinging as proximate cause, existence; with existence as proximate cause, birth; with birth as proximate cause, suffering; with suffering as proximate cause, faith; with faith as proximate cause, gladness; with gladness as proximate cause, rapture; with rapture as proximate cause, tranquillity; with tranquillity as proximate cause, happiness; with happiness as proximate cause, concentration; with concentration as proximate cause, the knowledge and vision of things as they really are; [32] with the knowledge and vision of things as they really are as proximate cause, revulsion; with revulsion as proximate cause, dispassion; with dispassion as proximate cause, liberation; with liberation as proximate cause, the knowledge of destruction.

Notes:

1. The First Discourse of the Buddha: Turning the Wheel of Dhamma by Dr. Rewata Dhamma; 1997; p. 64-65
2. Nibbana an essay by Bhikkhu Bodhi

May 2023 - The Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering

The First Noble Truth, the Noble Truth of Suffering (dukkha) was discussed in the February 2023 Newsletter; the Second Noble Truth, the Noble Truth of the Origination of Suffering (samudaya) was discussed in the March 2023 Newsletter; and the Third Noble Truth, the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering (nirodha) was discussed in the April 2023 Newsletter. This essay will discuss the Fourth Noble Truth, the Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering (magga).

The following is a recap of the Noble Truths discussed in previous newsletters.

I. The Noble Truth of Suffering is summarized in eight kinds of suffering (dukkha).

physiological suffering:

3. birth,
4. old age,
5. sickness, and
6. death.

psychological suffering:

5. union with the unpleasant,
6. separation from the pleasant, and
7. not getting what one wants.

existential suffering:

8. five clinging-aggregates: material form, feeling, perception, mental formations, and sense consciousness.

Every experience within the world is potentially dukkha when the experiencer identifies with and have passion or craving for impermanent material or immaterial objects and conditions.

- II. The Noble Truth of the Origination of Suffering is craving (taṇhā). The thirst for pleasure, existence, and annihilation is the proximate cause of dukkha. The impossibility of permanently satisfying desires produces frustration, disappointment, and discontent. Taṇhā, the craving for becoming and existence, is the cause of repeated birth and death and the subsequent suffering that is experienced within the cycle.
- III. The Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering is nibbāna and is realized by uprooting taṇhā from the subtle levels of mind. Nibbāna, the goal of practicing the Dhamma, is perfect peace, contentment and liberation from dukkha.

The Fourth Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering (magga) is the Noble Eightfold Path also known as the Middle Way. The following excerpts are definitions and insights of the Noble Eightfold Path - the Middle Way.

The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

Part V.56.11(1) Setting in Motion the Wheel of the Dhamma

“Bhikkhus, these two extremes should not be followed by one who has gone forth into homelessness. What two? The pursuit of sensual happiness in sensual pleasures, which is low, vulgar, the way of worldlings, ignoble, unbeneficial; and the pursuit of self-mortification, which is painful, ignoble, unbeneficial. Without veering towards either of these extremes, the Tathāgata has awakened to the middle way, which gives rise to vision, which gives rise to knowledge, which leads to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbāna.

“And what, bhikkhus, is that middle way awakened to by the Tathāgata, which gives rise to vision ... which leads to Nibbāna? It is this Noble Eightfold Path; that is, right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.

The Dhammapada: The Buddha's Path of Wisdom translated by Acharya Buddhārakkhita
Chapter 20

273. Of all paths the Eightfold Path is the best; of all truths the Four Noble Truths are the best; of all things passionlessness is the best; of humans, the Seeing One (the Buddha) is the best.

The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Digha Nikaya translated by Maurice Walshe

22 Mahāsatiṭṭhāna Sutta: The Greater Discourse on the Foundations of Mindfulness

'And what, monks, is Right View? It is, monks, the knowledge of suffering, the knowledge of the origin of suffering, the knowledge of the cessation of suffering, and the knowledge of the way of practice leading to the cessation of suffering. This is called Right View.

'And what, monks, is Right Thought? The thought of renunciation, the thought of non-ill-will, the thought of harmlessness. This, monks, is called Right Thought.

'And what, monks, is Right Speech? Refraining from lying, refraining from slander, refraining from harsh speech, refraining from frivolous speech. This is called Right Speech.

'And what, monks, is Right Action? Refraining from taking life, refraining from taking what is not given, refraining from sexual misconduct. This is called Right Action.

'And what, monks, is Right Livelihood? Here, monks, the Ariyan disciple, having given up wrong livelihood, keeps himself by right livelihood.

'And what, monks, is Right Effort? Here, monks, a monk rouses his will, makes an effort, stirs up energy, exerts his mind and strives to prevent the arising of unarisen evil unwholesome mental states. He rouses his will . . . and strives to overcome evil unwholesome mental states that have arisen. He rouses his will . . . and strives to produce unarisen wholesome mental states. He rouses his will, makes an effort, stirs up energy, exerts his mind and strives to maintain wholesome mental states that have arisen, not to let them fade away, to bring them to greater growth, to the full perfection of development. This is called Right Effort.

'And what, monks, is Right Mindfulness? Here, monks, a monk abides contemplating body as body, ardent, clearly aware and mindful, having put aside hankering and fretting for the world; he abides contemplating feelings as feelings . . .; he abides contemplating mind as mind . . .; he abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects, ardent, clearly aware and mindful, having put aside hankering and fretting for the world. This is called Right Mindfulness.

'And what, monks, is Right Concentration? Here, a monk, detached from sense-desires, detached from unwholesome mental states, enters and remains in the first jhāna, which is with thinking and pondering, born of detachment, filled with delight and joy. And with the subsiding of thinking and pondering, by gaining inner tranquillity and oneness of mind, he enters and remains in the second jhāna, which is without thinking and pondering, born of concentration, filled with delight and joy. And with the fading away of delight, remaining imperturbable, mindful and clearly aware, he experiences in himself the joy of which the Noble Ones say: "Happy is he who dwells with equanimity and mindfulness", he enters the third jhāna. And, having given up pleasure and pain, and with the disappearance of former gladness and sadness, he enters and remains in the fourth jhāna, which is beyond pleasure and pain, and purified by equanimity and mindfulness. This is called Right Concentration. And that, monks, is called the way of practice leading to the cessation of suffering.'

The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

12:65 Nagarasutta: The City

"So too, bhikkhus, I saw the ancient path, the ancient road travelled by the Perfectly Enlightened Ones of the past. And what is that ancient path, that ancient road? It is just this Noble Eightfold Path; that is, right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration. I followed that path and by doing so I have directly known aging-and-death, its origin, its cessation, and the way leading to its cessation. I have directly known birth ... existence ... clinging ... craving ... feeling ... contact ... the six sense bases name-and-form ... consciousness ... volitional formations, their origin, their cessation, and the way leading to their cessation.

Finding the Middle Way by Jack Kornfield

The middle way describes the middle ground between attachment and aversion, between being and non-being, between form and emptiness, between free will and determinism. The more we delve into the middle way the more deeply we come to rest between the play of opposites. Sometimes Ajahn Chah described it like a koan, where "there is neither going forward, nor going backward, nor standing still." To discover the middle way, he went on, "Try to be mindful, and let things take their natural course. Then your mind will become still in any surroundings, like a clear forest pool. All kinds of wonderful, rare animals will come to drink at the pool, and you will clearly see the nature of all things.

You will see many strange and wonderful things come and go, but you will be still. This is the happiness of the Buddha.”

The Noble Eightfold Path (ariya aṭṭhaṅgika magga) is composed of eight factors.

1. Right View (sammā-ditṭhi),
2. Right Intention (sammā-saṅkappa),
3. Right Speech (sammā-vācā),
4. Right Action (sammā-kammanta),
5. Right Livelihood (sammā-ājīva),
6. Right Effort (sammā-vāyāma),
7. Right Mindfulness (sammā-sati), and
8. Right Concentration (sammā-samādhi).

The Noble Eightfold Path is also described in terms of three aspects:

1. Moral Conduct (sīla). The morality division includes path factors right speech, right action and right livelihood.
2. Meditation (samādhi). The meditation division includes path factors right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration.
3. Wisdom (paññā). The wisdom division includes path factors right view and right intention.

“These three aspects are the conditions for eradicating the three kinds of defilements, or kilesa: (1) mental defilements that arise by transgression of ethical precepts; (2) mental obsessions that arise due to conditions; and (3) latent tendencies or dispositions.”¹

The above path factors are not listed in a specific order to be accomplished, not as successive stages of practice. All eight path factors are practiced and developed together. Each path factor is interconnected with and mutually support each other. All eight path factors comprise a whole unit and are practiced simultaneously.

Right View, also translated as Right Understanding, is of two kinds: mundane right view and supramundane right view. Note that conceptual understanding of the Four Noble Truths is included under mundane right view, while the direct penetration and realization of the Four Noble Truths is accomplished under supramundane right view.

Mundane Right View

- A. One is the owner of the kamma one makes; i.e. moral causation. Wholesome volitions-intentions (cetanā) and the resulting actions produce happiness while unwholesome intentions and the resulting actions produce dukkha. Wholesome kamma are meritorious and lead to happiness in this life and in future rebirths. Unwholesome kamma are demeritorious and produce misery in this life and in future rebirths.

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya
translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

63 (9) Penetrative, paragraph 5

“It is volition, bhikkhus, that I call kamma. For having willed, one acts by body, speech, or mind.

The ten kammically wholesome actions (kusala kamma or kusala kammapatha) are:

1. generosity (dāna maya),
2. morality (sīla maya),
3. meditation (bhāvanā maya),
4. respectfulness (apacāyana),
5. service (veyyāvacca),
6. sharing of merit (patti dāna),
7. rejoicing in the merit of others (pattānumodana),
8. listening to the Dhamma (dhamma savana),
9. teaching the Dhamma (dhamma desanā), and
10. straightening of views (ditṭhi’jju kamma).

The ten kammically unwholesome actions (akusala kamma or akusala kammapatha) are:

1. killing (pāṇātipātā),
2. stealing (adinnādānā),
3. sexual misconduct and wrong conduct in regard to sense pleasures (kāmesu micchācārā),
4. lying (musāvādā),

5. slanderous speech (pisuṇāya vacāya),
 6. harsh speech (pharusāya vācāya),
 7. idle chatter (samphappalāpā),
 8. covetousness (anabhijjhā),
 9. ill will (abyāpāda), and
 10. wrong views (adiṭṭhi).
- B. There is moral significance in:
1. giving alms,
 2. large offerings,
 3. small gifts,
 4. well-done and ill-done kammās, and the result thereof,
 5. the behavior towards one's mother,
 6. the behavior towards one's father,
 7. the possibility that some beings arise from instantaneous rebirth,
 8. the [mundane] reality of this world,
 9. the possibility of another world, and
 10. acknowledging recluses (samaṇas) who have realized the truth regarding this world and other worlds.

C. Conceptual understanding of The Four Noble Truths.

Supramundane Right View is accomplished through the elimination of the fetters that result in the penetration and realization of The Four Noble Truths and the Noble Four Paths.

Fetters (samyojana) that tie beings to mundane existence (saṃsāra):

1. personality belief (sakkāya diṭṭhi),
2. doubt (vicikicchā),
3. clinging to rites and rituals (sīlabbata parāmāsa),
4. sensual desire (kāma rāga),
5. ill will (vyāpāda),
6. craving for existence in the Form World, fine material existence (rūpa rāga),
7. craving for existence in the Formless World, immaterial existence (arūpa rāga),
8. conceit (māna),
9. restlessness (uddhacca), and
10. ignorance (avijjā).

The Noble Four Paths:

11. Streamwinner (sotāpanna) is free from fetters 1-3.
12. Once Returner (sakadāgāmi) is free from fetters 1-3 and has overcome 4 and 5 in their grosser form.
13. Non-Returner (anāgāmi) is free from fetters 1-5.
14. Perfect Holy One (arahat) is free from all 10 fetters.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

117 Mahācattārīsaka Sutta: The Great Forty

6. "And what, bhikkhus, is right view? Right view, I say, is twofold: there is right view that is affected by taints, partaking of merit, ripening in the acquisitions; and there is right view that is noble, taintless, supramundane, a factor of the path.

7. "And what, bhikkhus, is right view that is affected by the taints, partaking of merit, ripening in the acquisitions? 'There is what is given and what is offered and what is sacrificed; there is fruit and result of good and bad actions; there is this world and the other world; there is mother and father; there are beings who are reborn spontaneously; there are in the world good and virtuous recluses and brahmins who have realised for themselves by direct knowledge and declare this world and the other world.' This is right view affected by taints, partaking of merit, ripening in the acquisitions.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

141 Saccavibhanga Sutta: The Exposition of the Truths

24. “And what, friends, is right view? Knowledge of suffering, knowledge of the origin of suffering, knowledge of the cessation of suffering, and knowledge of the way leading to the cessation of suffering — this is called right view.

Right Intention are wholesome thoughts that promote Right Speech and Right Action.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

141 Saccavibhanga Sutta: The Exposition of the Truths

25. “And what, friends, is right intention? Intention of renunciation, intention of non-ill will, and intention of non-cruelty — this is called right intention.

Defined in negative terms:

15. thoughts of renunciation and detachments to sense pleasures (nekkhamma vitakka),
16. thoughts of non-ill will (abyāpāda vitakka), and
17. thoughts of non-cruelty (avihiṃsā vitakka).

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

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Avihiṃsā which is a synonym for compassion (karuna) is the root of all virtues, especially the root-cause of morality.

Defined in positive terms:

18. thoughts of generosity (dāna vitakka),
19. thoughts of loving-kindness (metta vitakka), wishing others well and
20. thoughts of providing protection to living beings and radiating compassion (karunā vitakka).

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

19 Dvedhāvitakka Sutta

6. “Bhikkhus, whatever a bhikkhu frequently thinks and ponders upon, that will become the inclination of his mind. If he frequently thinks and ponders upon thoughts of sensual desire, he has abandoned the thought of renunciation to cultivate the thought of sensual desire, and then his mind inclines to thoughts of sensual desire. If he frequently thinks and ponders upon thoughts of ill will... upon thoughts of cruelty, he has abandoned the thought of non-cruelty to cultivate the thought of cruelty, and then his mind inclines to thoughts of cruelty.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

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Calling to mind the unworthiness of evil thoughts produces hiri, a sense of shame; calling to mind their dangerous consequences produces ottappa, fear of wrongdoing.

Right Speech is wholesome speech that is truthful, gentle, beneficial and encourages harmony.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

141 Saccavibhanga Sutta: The Exposition of the Truths

26. “And what, friends, is right speech? Abstaining from false speech, abstaining from malicious speech, abstaining from harsh speech, and abstaining from idle chatter — this is called right speech.

1. abstaining from false speech, lying (musāvāda veramaṇī),
2. abstaining from malicious speech, slanderous speech, divisive tale-bearing speech that incites one against another (pisuṇāya vācāya veramaṇī),
3. abstaining from harsh speech and rude talk (pharusāya vācāya veramaṇī), and
4. abstaining from idle speech, useless chatter, foolish babble, vain talk and gossip (samphappalāpā veramaṇī).

“As one progressively attains the stages of sainthood, one gradually uproots mental defilements which are the cause of wrong speech. It is said that the first stage of sainthood (sotāpanna) dispels false speech or telling lies; the third stage of sainthood (anāgāmi) dispels slandering and abusive language; the fourth and final stage of sainthood (arahant) dispels frivolous talk or useless chatter.”²

Right Action is wholesome physical conduct that causes no harm to others or to oneself.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

141 Saccavibhanga Sutta: The Exposition of the Truths

27. “And what, friends, is right action? Abstaining from killing living beings, abstaining from taking what is not given, and abstaining from misconduct in sensual pleasures — this is called right action.

1. abstaining from killing (pāṇātipātā veramaṇī),
2. abstaining from stealing (adinnādānā veramaṇī), and
3. abstaining from wrong conduct in regard to sensual objects and not to engage in sexual misconduct (kāmesu micchācārā veramaṇī).

Right Livelihood is an occupation that abstains from wrong conduct: the fourfold unwholesome verbal actions and the threefold unwholesome bodily actions; i.e., Right Livelihood does not transgress Right Speech and Right Action. This is the path factor that encourages compassionate work which does not cause harm.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

141 Saccavibhanga Sutta: The Exposition of the Truths

28. “And what, friends, is right livelihood? Here a noble disciple, having abandoned wrong livelihood, earns his living by right livelihood — this is called right livelihood.

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

Book 5, 177 (7) Trades

“Bhikkhus, a lay follower should not engage in these five trades. What five? Trading in weapons, trading in living beings, trading in meat, trading in intoxicants, and trading in poisons. A lay follower should not engage in these five trades.”

Right Livelihood does not employ the following five occupations:

1. trading in weapons (satthavaṇijjā),
2. trading in living beings (sattavaṇijjā),
3. trading in meat (maṃsavaṇijjā),
4. trading in intoxicants (majjavaṇijjā), and
5. trading in poisons (visavaṇijjā).

The following sutta excerpt teaches how to live a balanced and wholesome life.

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

Book of Eights, 54 (4) Dīghajāṇu

(4) “And what is balanced living? Here, a clansman knows his income and expenditures and leads a balanced life, neither too extravagant nor too frugal, [aware]: ‘In this way my income will exceed my expenditures rather than the reverse.’ ...

“The wealth thus amassed has four sources of dissipation: womanizing, drunkenness, gambling, and bad friendship, bad companionship, bad comradeship. ...

“The wealth thus amassed has four sources of accretion: one avoids womanizing, drunkenness, and gambling, and cultivates good friendship, good companionship, good comradeship.

Right Effort diminishes and eliminates unwholesome contents of mind and to encourage the emergence and maintenance of wholesome contents of mind. This is the arousal of energy to purify the mind of defilements: ignorance, ill will and greed.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

141 Saccavibhanga Sutta: The Exposition of the Truths

29. “And what, friends, is right effort? Here a bhikkhu awakens zeal for the non-arising [anuppādāya] of unarisen evil unwholesome states, and he makes effort, arouses energy, exerts his mind, and strives. He awakens zeal for the abandoning [pahānāya] of arisen evil unwholesome states, and he makes effort, arouses energy, exerts his mind, and strives. He awakens zeal for the arising [uppādāya] of unarisen wholesome states, and he makes effort, arouses energy, exerts his mind, and strives. He awakens zeal for the continuance [ṭhitiyā], non-disappearance, strengthening, increase, and fulfillment

by development of arisen wholesome states, and he makes effort, arouses energy, exerts his mind, and strives. This is called right effort.

Right Effort consists of generating four states of mind:

1. the effort to avoid unwholesome states of mind from arising (saṃvara-padhāna),
2. the effort to overcome unwholesome states of mind that have arisen (pahāna-padhāna),
3. the effort to cultivate wholesome states of mind (bhāvanā-padhāna), and
4. the effort to maintain wholesome states of mind that have arisen (anurakkhaṇa-padhāna).

The following sutta teaches the importance of cultivating a ‘balance of energy’ and an ‘evenness of the spiritual faculties’. The Five Spiritual Faculties (indriya) are:

1. faith (saddhā),
2. energy (viriya),
3. mindfulness (sati),
4. concentration (samādhi), and
5. wisdom (paññā).

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

Book Six, 55 (1) Soṇa

“Soṇa, when you were alone in seclusion, didn’t the following course of thought arise in your mind: ‘I am one of the Blessed One’s most energetic disciples, yet my mind has not been liberated from the taints by non-clinging. Now there is wealth in my family, and it is possible for me to enjoy my wealth and do meritorious deeds. Let me then give up the training and return to the lower life, so that I can enjoy my wealth and do meritorious deeds?’”

“Yes, Bhante.”

“Tell me, Soṇa, in the past, when you lived at home, weren’t you skilled at the lute?”

“Yes, Bhante.”

“What do you think, Soṇa? When its strings were too tight, was your lute well tuned and easy to play?”

“No, Bhante.”

“When its strings were too loose, was your lute well tuned and easy to play?”

“No, Bhante.”

“But, Soṇa, when its strings were neither too tight nor too loose but adjusted to a balanced pitch, was your lute well tuned and easy to play?”

“Yes, Bhante.”

“So too, Soṇa, if energy is aroused too forcefully this leads to restlessness, and if energy is too lax this leads to laziness. Therefore, Soṇa, resolve on a balance of energy, achieve evenness of the spiritual faculties, and take up the object there.” “Yes, Bhante,” the Venerable Soṇa replied.

When the Blessed One had finished giving the Venerable Soṇa this exhortation, just as a strong man might extend his drawn-in arm or draw in his extended arm, he disappeared in the Cool Grove and reappeared on Mount Vulture Peak. Then, some time later, the Venerable Soṇa resolved on a balance of energy, achieved evenness of the spiritual faculties, and took up the object there. Then, dwelling alone, withdrawn, heedful, ardent, and resolute, in no long time the Venerable Soṇa realized for himself with direct knowledge, in this very life, that unsurpassed consummation of the spiritual life for the sake of which clansmen rightly go forth from the household life into homelessness, and having entered upon it, he dwelled in it. He directly knew: “Destroyed is birth, the spiritual life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more coming back to any state of being.” And the Venerable Soṇa became one of the arahants.

Right Mindfulness is careful attention and recollection of the Dhamma. This is the faculty of mind that constantly watches sensory experience in order to prevent the arising of craving which would condition future rebirths, watches for unwholesome states of mind in order to let them go, and watches for wholesome states that are to be encouraged. Right Mindfulness also remembers to concentrate the mind on the meditation anchor during the practice of meditation.

Mindfulness (sati) has the characteristic of remembering, its function is not to forget, and it is manifested as guarding.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

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“... sati, mindfulness, by reference to its original meaning of memory. The relationship between the two senses of sati – memory and attentiveness – may be formulated thus: keen attentiveness to the present forms the basis for an accurate memory of the past.”

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

141 Saccavibhanga Sutta: The Exposition of the Truths

30. “And what, friends, is right mindfulness? Here a bhikkhu abides contemplating the body as a body, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world. He abides contemplating feelings as feelings, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world. He abides contemplating mind as mind, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world. He abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world. This is called right mindfulness.

Right Mindfulness may be developed in the following four contemplations:

- I. mindful contemplation of the body (kāyānupassanā),
 - II. mindful contemplation of feelings (vedanā sañña),
 - III. mindful contemplation of the mind (citta sañña), and
 - IV. mindful contemplation of mind-objects or dhammas (dammā sañña).
- I. Mindful Contemplation of the Body may be practiced in the following six ways:
1. mindfulness of the sensations of breathing (ānāpānasati),
 2. mindfulness of the four postures: walking, standing, sitting, and lying down (iriyāpatha-sañña),
 3. full awareness or clear comprehension of arising and vanishing with regard to the body (sampajañña),
 4. foulness of the body: the 32 bodily parts (asubha: dvattiṃs-ākāra),
 5. elements of the body: earth, water, fire, and air (dhātu: mahābhūta), and
 6. the nine charnel ground contemplations: reflection on corpses in different stages of decomposition (āmakasusān-sañña).
- II. Mindful Contemplation of Feeling is practised by remaining focussed on feelings in themselves, or clear comprehension of arising and vanishing with regard to feelings, or sustained mindfulness of the presence of feelings.
1. pleasant bodily and mental, worldly and unworldly feelings,
 2. painful bodily and mental, worldly and unworldly feelings, and
 3. neither-painful-nor-pleasant (neutral) bodily and mental, worldly and unworldly feelings.
- III. Contemplation of Mind refers to the states of mind that are wholesome or unwholesome and developed or undeveloped. There is focus on the mind itself, clear comprehension of arising and vanishing with regard to the states of mind, and sustained mindfulness on the presence of mind. There is the awareness that the mind is with any of the following seven states:
1. affected or unaffected by lust, hate and delusion,
 2. contracted - due to sloth and torpor,
 3. distracted - due to restlessness and remorse,
 4. exalted due to jhānas or unexalted due to sense consciousness,
 5. surpassed or unsurpassed,
 6. concentrated or unconcentrated, and
 7. liberated due to the absence of defilements or unliberated due to the presence of defilements.
- IV. Mindful Contemplation of Mind-Objects or dhammas
- Awareness of the presence or absence, arising and abandoning, and no future arising of the the Five Hindrances (nīvaraṇā):
 8. sensual desires (kāmacchanda),
 9. ill will (vyāpāda),
 10. sloth and torpor (thīna-middha),
 11. restlessness and remorse (uddhaccakukkucca), and

- 12. doubt (vicikicchā).
- Awareness of the existence, the origination, and the disappearance of the Five Clinging Aggregates (pañcupādānakkhandhā):
 1. material form (rūpa khandha),
 2. feeling (vedanā khandha:),
 3. perception (saññā khandha),
 4. mental formations (saṅkhāra khandha), and
 5. sense consciousness (viññāṇa khandha).
- Awareness of the existence, the origination, and the disappearance of the Six Sense Bases (saḷāyatana):
 1. eye & forms,
 2. ear & sounds,
 3. nose & odors,
 4. tongue & flavors,
 5. body & tangibles, and
 6. mind & mind-objects.
- Awareness of the presence or absence of the Seven Enlightenment Factors (bojjhanga):
 1. mindfulness (sati),
 2. investigation of dhammas (dhamma-vicaya),
 3. energy (virīya),
 4. joy (pīti),
 5. tranquility (passaddhi),
 6. concentration (sāmādhi), and
 7. equanimity (upekkhā).
- Contemplation of the Four Noble Truths:
 1. the Noble Truth of Suffering (dukkha),
 2. the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering (dukkha samudaya),
 3. the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering (dukkha nirodha), and
 4. the Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering (dukkha nirodhagāminī paṭipadā).

The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Dīgha Nikāya translated by Maurice Walshe
22 Mahāsatipatthāna Sutta: The Greater Discourse on the Foundations of Mindfulness

22. ‘Whoever, monks, should practise these four foundations of mindfulness for just seven years may expect one of two results: either Arahantship in this life or, if there should be some substrate left, the state of a Non-Returner. Let alone seven years – whoever should practise them for just six years . . . , five years . . . , four years . . . , three years . . . , two years . . . , one year may expect one of two results . . . ; let alone one year – whoever should practise them for just seven months . . . , six months . . . , five months . . . , four months . . . , three months . . . , two months . . . , one month . . . , half a month may expect one of two results . . . ; let alone half a month – whoever should practise these four foundations of mindfulness for just one week may expect one of two results: either Arahantship in this life or, if there should be some substrate left, the state of a Non-Returner.

‘It was said: “There is, monks, this one way to the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow and distress, for the disappearance of pain and sadness, for the gaining of the right path, for the realisation of Nibbāna: – that is to say the four foundations of mindfulness”, and it is for this reason that it was said.’

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

117 Mahācattārīsaka Sutta: The Great Forty

9. “... Mindfully one abandons wrong view, mindfully one enters upon and abides in right view: this is one’s right mindfulness.

15. “... Mindfully one abandons wrong intention, mindfully one enters upon and abides in right intention: this is one’s right mindfulness.

21. “... Mindfully one abandons wrong speech, mindfully one enters upon and abides in right speech: this is one’s right mindfulness.

27. "... Mindfully one abandons wrong action, mindfully one enters upon and dwells in right action: this is one's right mindfulness.

33. "... Mindfully one abandons wrong livelihood, mindfully one enters upon and dwells in right livelihood: this is one's right mindfulness.

The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

47.20 (10) The Most Beautiful Girl of the Land

"Bhikkhus, suppose that on hearing, 'The most beautiful girl of the land! The most beautiful girl of the land!' a great crowd of people would assemble. Now that most beautiful girl of the land would dance exquisitely and sing exquisitely. On hearing, 'The most beautiful girl of the land is dancing! The most beautiful girl of the land is singing!' an even larger crowd of people would assemble. Then a man would come along, wishing to live, not wishing to die, wishing for happiness, averse to suffering. Someone would say to him: 'Good man, you must carry around this bowl of oil filled to the brim between the crowd and the most beautiful girl of the land. A man with a drawn sword will be following right behind you, and wherever you spill even a little of it, right there he will fell your head.'

"What do you think, bhikkhus, would that man stop attending to that bowl of oil and out of negligence turn his attention outwards?"

"No, venerable sir."

"I have made up this simile, bhikkhus, in order to convey a meaning. This here is the meaning: 'The bowl of oil filled to the brim': this is a designation for mindfulness directed to the body. Therefore, bhikkhus, you should train yourselves thus: 'We will develop and cultivate mindfulness directed to the body, make it our vehicle, make it our basis, stabilize it, exercise ourselves in it, and fully perfect it.' Thus, bhikkhus, should you train yourselves."

Right Concentration is a state of focus and unification of mind, and the development of a luminous mind which is equanimous and mindful. In the early Buddhist texts, concentration is associated with the term calm abiding (samatha). The commentaries define concentration as one-pointedness of mind (ekaggata).

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

141 Saccavibhanga Sutta: The Exposition of the Truths

31. "And what, friends, is right concentration? Here, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, a bhikkhu enters upon and abides in the first jhāna, which is accompanied by applied and sustained thought, with rapture and pleasure born of seclusion. With the stilling of applied and sustained thought, he enters upon and abides in the second jhāna, which has self-confidence and singleness of mind without applied and sustained thought, with rapture and pleasure born of concentration. With the fading away as well of rapture, he abides in equanimity, and mindful and fully aware, still feeling pleasure with the body, he enters upon and abides in the third jhāna, on account of which noble ones announce: 'He has a pleasant abiding who has equanimity and is mindful.' With the abandoning of pleasure and pain, and with the previous disappearance of joy and grief, he enters upon and abides in the fourth jhāna, which has neither-pain-nor-pleasure and purity of mindfulness due to equanimity. This is called right concentration.

Theravada Pali texts mention four kinds of samadhi:

1. Momentary Concentration (khaṇika samādhi) is directed mindfulness and focus on the changing states of mind and body. The mind observes the three characteristics of phenomena that are characteristics of the contents of consciousness: impermanence, suffering and not-self. The mind grows still for momentary periods.
2. Preliminary Concentration (parikamma samādhi) or Preparatory Concentration pertains to the initial focus on the meditation anchor. The Pāli Canon have recorded forty meditation objects that may be used to anchor the mind in stillness and silence.
3. Access Concentration (upacāra samādhi) or Neighborhood Concentration approaches but does not yet attain absorption (jhāna). Arises when the five hindrances (nīvaraṇā) are absent from the gross level of mind.
4. Absorption Concentration (appanā samādhi) or Attainment Concentration is present during the absorptions (jhāna). Concentration is stable and fixed on the meditation anchor. There may arise

the appearance of the counter-image (paṭibhāga nimitta) or counterpart sign. The nimitta is an image on which the mind focuses attention.

There are four stages of rupa jhāna. Rupa refers to the material realm, as different from the kama realm (lust, desire) and the arupa-realm (non-material realm). Each jhāna is characterized by a set of qualities which are present in that jhāna.

1. First jhāna has five factors: applied thought (vitakka), sustained thought (vicāra), joy (pīti), pleasure (sukha), and one-pointedness of mind (ekaggata). There is seclusion from sensuality and unwholesome states of mind.
2. Second jhāna is detached from applied and sustained thoughts. There are three factors: joy, pleasure, and one-pointedness of mind.
3. Third jhāna is without applied and sustained thoughts, and joy. There are two factors: pleasure and one-pointedness of mind.
4. Fourth jhāna is without applied and sustained thoughts, joy and pleasure. There are two factors: equanimity (upekkhā) and one-pointedness of mind.

The three phases of the Fourth Noble Truth.

The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

Part V.56.11(1) Setting in Motion the Wheel of the Dhamma

“This is the noble truth of the way leading to the cessation of suffering’: thus, bhikkhus, in regard to things unheard before, there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, true knowledge, and light.

“This noble truth of the way leading to the cessation of suffering is to be developed’: thus, bhikkhus, in regard to things unheard before, there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, true knowledge, and light.

“This noble truth of the way leading to the cessation of suffering has been developed’: thus, bhikkhus, in regard to things unheard before, there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, true knowledge, and light.

The first phase is knowledge of the Truth of the Eightfold Path.

The Noble Truth of the path leading to the cessation of suffering, nibbāna, is the Noble Eightfold Path. There is the understanding that the Noble Eightfold Path is a direct path for finding freedom from suffering.

The second phase is knowledge of the Truth of the Eightfold Path is to be developed.

The Eightfold Path is developed, perfected and known with direct experience. The degree of freedom from suffering is in direct proportion to the degree that the Noble Eightfold Path is perfected within oneself.

The third phase is knowledge of the Truth of the Eightfold Path has been developed.

This is the recollection that the Noble Eightfold Path has been perfected within oneself and nibbāna has been realized.

Notes:

1. The First Discourse of the Buddha: Turning the Wheel of Dhamma by Dr. Rewata Dhamma; 1997; p. 67
2. The First Discourse of the Buddha: Turning the Wheel of Dhamma by Dr. Rewata Dhamma; 1997; p. 35

June 2023 - Progressive Instruction and Gradual Training

Progressive Instruction (anupubbi-katha) and Gradual Training (anupubbi-sikkha) are teachings by the Buddha to guide beings (people and deities) towards liberation from suffering (dukkha). The Instruction and Training are based on the three-fold division of morality (sīla), meditation (samadhi) and wisdom (paññā).

Progressive Instruction (anupubbi-katha)

Anupubbi-kathā or ānupubbi-kathā is translated as "gradual discourse," "gradual instruction," "progressive instruction," and "step-by-step talk"; is a method by which the Buddha taught the Dhamma to lay people. The teaching is a progression of ever more valued and sublime subjects:

- I. talk on generosity (dāna kathā),
 - II. talk on morality (sīla kathā),
 - III. talk on heavenly pleasures (sagga kathā),
 - IV. talk on the disadvantages of sensual pleasures (kāṃādinava kathā), and
 - V. talk on the benefits of renouncing sensual pleasures (nekkhammānisaṃsa kathā).
- I. Generosity is giving freely without expecting anything in return which results in wholesome mental states such as loving-kindness, non-attachment and a diminishment of selfishness. These states condition the mind to be happy. Generosity purifies by softening the heart. There are three kinds of giving:
3. giving of material aid,
 4. giving of protection from fear; i.e., the giving of loving-kindness, and
 5. giving of Dhamma.
- II. The training in morality by not causing harm to others or towards oneself is accomplished by training in precepts. The training results in the development of such mental faculties as energy, mindfulness and concentration. By not causing harm to others the gift of fearlessness is offered; i.e., people will not be afraid of you, will be your friend and may even want to help you in various ways. Moral discipline is the foundation for cultivating concentration and wisdom, and culminates in enlightenment, the liberation from suffering. The basic five moral precepts are:
1. abstain from destroying living beings (pāṇātipātā veramaṇī),
 2. abstain from stealing or taking that which is not freely given (adinnādānā veramaṇī),
 3. abstain from sexual misconduct (kamesu micchacara veramaṇī),
 4. abstain from false speech (musāvāda veramaṇī),
 5. abstain from intoxicants that cause carelessness and cloud the mind (surā-meraya-majja-pamādatthāna veramaṇī).
- III. Heavenly Pleasures are experienced in one of the six planes of celestial beings (deva loka). Straightening out the mind of unwholesome states (various forms of greed and ill will) through the practice of generosity and keeping moral precepts, the mind will then be reborn in the Celestial Planes (deva and brahma realms) and enjoy heavenly pleasures. Heaven is a realm or state that is primarily pleasant and where the lifespan is very long. There are six planes of heavenly beings, in which rebirth takes place due to highly meritorious, skillful, and wholesome volitional actions performed during one's previous existence:
1. Cātumahārājika (four divine kings) heaven,
 2. Tāvatiṃsa devas heaven,
 3. Yāma devas heaven,
 4. Tusita devas heaven,
 5. Nimmānaratā (devas who delight in creation) heaven, and
 6. Paranimmita Vasavatti (devas who control what is created by others) heaven.
- Brahmā heavens are located above the six planes of heavenly beings and inhabitants enjoy even more refined sensual pleasures.

People who have developed to a high degree wholesome states of mind but not necessarily wise, tend to be reborn in the heaven realms. The heaven realms are inferior to the human realm because the experience in the heaven realms is very pleasurable, beings in the heaven realms have neither the opportunity nor the encouragement to develop virtue or understanding, when their lifespan comes to an end (like all states, heaven is impermanent) they will be reborn yet again.

- IV. The disadvantages (ādīnava) of craving for sensual pleasures (kāma-taṇhā) are due to the impermanence sensual objects. Sensual objects are continuously decomposing or the objects are lost or stolen. The fear associated with sensual objects becoming less or vanishing is painful; fear conditions anger, anger conditions ill will and violence. The mind driven for sensual objects have ill will towards others who threaten to take or diminish ones' belongings of sensual objects and violence is not only used to protect ones' belongings but is also used to take sensual objects from others. The unwholesome mind consumed with greed for ever more sensual objects and greater excitable feelings is maddening. The greedy mind never has enough, can not be satisfied with sensual pleasures, and ever craves for more, this is suffering. Sensual desire is the first of the five hindrances (nīvaraṇā) to enlightenment. Grasping for sensual pleasures is only a temporary distraction from suffering. The five hindrances are:
1. sensual desire (kāmacchanda),
 2. ill will (vyāpāda),
 3. sloth and torpor (thīna-middha),
 4. restlessness and remorse (uddhaccakukkucca), and
 5. doubt (vicikicchā).

The Dhammapada: The Buddha's Path of Wisdom translated by Acharya Buddharakkhita 186-187. There is no satisfying sensual desires even with a rain of gold coins, for some sensual pleasures give little satisfaction and entail much pain. Having understood this, the wise man finds no delight even in heavenly pleasures. The disciple of the Supreme Buddha delights in the destruction of craving.

- V. The benefits of renouncing (nekkhamma) sensual pleasures is to be free from unwholesome mind states of fear, greed, and ill will; experience sanity; attain subtle mind states of meditation; and realize various stages of the Noble Ones (ariya). The Noble Ones are:
1. Streamwinner (sotāpanna),
 2. Once returner (sakadāgāmi),
 3. Non-returner (anāgāmi), and
 4. Perfected One (arahant).

The Dhammapada: The Buddha's Path of Wisdom translated by Acharya Buddharakkhita 290. If by renouncing a lesser happiness one may realize a greater happiness, let the wise man renounce the lesser, having regard for the greater happiness.

After the Buddha taught the above five subjects and perceived that the listener's mind was ready, he would then teach the Four Noble Truths (cattāri ariyasaccāni):

1. The First Noble Truth - Suffering (dukkha),
2. The Second Noble Truth - The Cause of Suffering (dukkha samudaya),
3. The Third Noble Truth - The Cessation of Suffering (dukkha nirodha), and
4. The Fourth Noble Truth - The Path to the Cessation of Suffering (dukkha nirodhagāminī paṭipadā).

The following sutta describe the Progressive Instruction.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

Sutta 56 Upāli Sutta: To Upāli

18. Then the Blessed One gave the householder Upāli progressive instruction, that is, talk on giving, talk on virtue, talk on the heavens; he explained the danger, degradation, and defilement in sensual pleasures and the blessing of renunciation. When he knew that the householder Upāli's mind was ready, receptive, free from hindrances, elated, and confident, he expounded to him the teaching special to the Buddhas: suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path. Just as a clean cloth with all marks removed would take dye evenly, so too, while the householder Upāli sat there, the spotless immaculate vision of the Dhamma arose in him: "All that is subject to arising is subject

to cessation.”⁵⁸⁸ Then the householder Upāli saw the Dhamma, attained the Dhamma, understood the Dhamma, fathomed the Dhamma; he crossed beyond doubt, did away with perplexity, gained intrepidity, and became independent of others in the Teacher’s Dispensation.⁵⁸⁹

Note 588: Commentary “Majjhima Nikāya Aṭṭhakathā”: Vision of the Dhamma (dhammacakkhu) is the path of stream-entry. The phrase “All that is subject to arising is subject to cessation” shows the mode in which the path arises. The path takes cessation (Nibbāna) as its object, but its function is to penetrate all conditioned states as subject to arising and cessation.

Note 589 The “Dhamma” referred to here is the Four Noble Truths. Having seen these truths for himself, he has cut off the fetter of doubt and now possesses the “view that is noble and emancipating and (which) leads the one who practises in accordance with it to the complete destruction of suffering”.

Gradual Training (anupubbi-sikkha)

The Gradual Training was taught by the Buddha to monastics. A male monastic is called a bhikkhu and a female monastic a bhikkhuni. Typically, a bhikkhu and bhikkhuni are those who left the householders’ way of life and became homeless. Dhammapada-aṭṭhakathā by Buddhaghosa is a commentary in which a bhikkhu & bhikkhuni is defined as “the person who sees danger (in saṃsāra or cycle of rebirth)”.

The Dhammapada: The Buddha’s Path of Wisdom translated by Acharya Buddharakkhita

266. He is not a monk just because he lives on others’ alms. Not by adopting outward form does one become a true monk.

267. One here who lives the holy life and walks with understanding in this world, transcending both merit and demerit — he is truly called a monk.

Therefore, a bhikkhu & bhikkhuni is anyone who are intent on purifying their minds in order to realize nibbāna.

The preliminary condition for the teaching of the Gradual Training is that a Buddha appears in the world and teaches. The following are the details of the training.

- I. Householder hears the Dhamma from the Buddha, acquires faith and ordains in the Buddha’s monastic community.
- II. Monastics are restrained by the pātimokkha (training precepts, rules of discipline).
 - A. trainings in basic moral principals:
 1. abstain from destroying living beings (pāṇātipātā veramaṇī),
 2. abstain from stealing or taking that which is not freely given (adinnādānā veramaṇī),
 3. abstain from sexual activity (abrahmacariya veramaṇī),
 4. abstain from false speech (musāvāda veramaṇī),
 5. abstain from malicious speech (pisuṇāya vācāya veramaṇī),
 6. abstain from harsh speech (pharusāya vācāya veramaṇī),
 7. abstain from gossip speech (samphappalāpā veramaṇī),
 8. abstain from intoxicants that cause carelessness and cloud the mind (surā-meraya-majja-pamādatthāna veramaṇī).
 - B. trainings that purify livelihood:
 1. abstain from injuring seeds and plants,
 2. abstain from eating outside the proper time,
 3. abstain from dancing, singing, music, and theatrical shows,
 4. abstain from wearing garlands, smartening her/himself with scent, and embellishing her/himself with unguents,
 5. abstain from high and large couches,
 6. abstain from accepting gold and silver,
 7. abstain from accepting raw grain and raw meat,
 8. abstain from accepting women and girls,
 9. abstain from accepting men and women slaves,
 10. abstain from accepting goats, sheep, fowl, pigs, elephants, cattle, horses, and mares,
 11. abstain from accepting fields and land,
 12. abstain from going on errands and running messages,

13. abstain from buying and selling,
 14. abstain from false weights, false metals, and false measures,
 15. abstain from accepting bribes, deceiving, defrauding, and trickery,
 16. abstain from wounding, murdering, binding, brigandage, plunder, and violence.
- C. training of proper resort (gocara).
The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi
 note 76
 Resort” (gocara) implies a proper resort for alms, though it may also signify the proper deportment of a monk, his serene and self-possessed bearing.
- D. training to be content with the four requisites (parikkhāra):
1. robes (cīvara),
 2. alms-bowl (piṇḍapāta),
 3. lodging (senāsana),
 4. medicine (bhesajja).
- They also train to be content with whatever almsfood (pindapata) that is received.
- III. Bhikkhu & bhikkhuni train to purify their conduct (caraṇa). Blameless conduct are cultivated by the following fifteen practices.
1. restraint with regard to moral discipline (sīla-saṃvara),
 2. restraint of the senses (indriya-saṃvara),
 The restraint of the sense faculties are practiced in order to avoid grasping at the signs and features of sense objects. Clinging to sense objects result in unwholesome states of greed and ill will.
 3. moderation in eating (bhojane mattaññutā),
 4. watchfulness - wakefulness (jāgariyanuyoga),
 5. faith (saddhā),
 Seeing fear in the slightest fault include the following two practices:
 6. moral shame (hiri),
 7. moral dread, fear of wrongdoing (ottappa),
 8. knowledge based on learning (suta-mayā paññā),
 9. effort (viriya),
 10. mindfulness (sati),
 11. wisdom (paññā),
 12. first jhāna,
 13. second jhāna,
 14. third jhāna, and
 15. fourth jhāna
- IV. Bhikkhu & bhikkhuni possess mindfulness and clear comprehension (sati-sampajañña). Full awareness is practiced:
1. going forward and returning,
 2. looking ahead and looking away,
 3. flexing and extending her/his limbs,
 4. wearing her/his robes and carrying her/his outer robe and bowl,
 5. eating, drinking, consuming food, and tasting,
 6. defecating and urinating,
 7. walking, standing, sitting, falling asleep, waking up, talking, and keeping silent.
- V. Bhikkhu & bhikkhuni resort to a secluded resting place, establish mindfulness in meditation and abandon the five hindrances (nīvaraṇā):
1. sensual desire (kāmacchanda),
 2. ill will (vyāpāda),
 3. sloth and torpor (thīna-middha),
 4. restlessness and remorse (uddhaccakukkucca), and
 5. doubt (vicikicchā).
- The meditator enters upon the four jhānas:

1. First jhāna has five factors: applied thought (vitakka), sustained thought (vicāra), joy (pīti), pleasure (sukha), and one-pointedness of mind (ekaggata). There is seclusion from sensuality and unwholesome states of mind.
2. Second jhāna is detached from applied and sustained thoughts. There are three factors: joy, pleasure, and one-pointedness of mind.
3. Third jhāna is without applied and sustained thoughts, and joy. There are two factors: pleasure and one-pointedness of mind.
4. Fourth jhāna is without applied and sustained thoughts, joy and pleasure. There are two factors: equanimity (upekkhā) and one-pointedness of mind.

The mental concentration of the fourth jhāna may produce five of the six kinds of higher knowledges (chaḷabhiññā):

1. supernormal powers - such as walking on water and through walls (iddhi-vidhā),
2. divine ear - clairaudience (dibba-sota),
3. ability to read the minds of others - telepathy (ceto-pariya-ñāṇa),
4. recollection of one's own past lives (pubbe-nivāsanussati),
5. divine eye - knowing others' kammic destinations (dibba-cakkhu), and
6. knowledge of the destruction of the taints (āsavakkhaya) - upon which arahantship follows.

The higher knowledges one through five are mundane and may be produced by the fourth jhāna. The sixth higher knowledge is supramundane and cannot be produced by the fourth jhāna. The jhānas suppress the defilements but cannot eradicate them.

The attainment of jhānas is not required for the next stage in developing insight (vipassanā) and the resulting enlightenment.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

Introduction

“... in the Theravāda tradition the jhānas are not regarded as indispensable to the attainment of enlightenment ...”

- VI. Bhikkhu & bhikkhuni develops insight (vipassanā) by contemplating all things as they actually are. The experience of insight into the nature of existence results in enlightenment, the liberation from the defilements. To see all things as they actually are is to contemplate existence in terms of the three characteristics (ti-lakkhaṇa):
 1. anicca: impermanence. Instability and inconstancy; the condition of arising, deteriorating and disintegrating.
 2. dukkha: state of suffering or being oppressed. The condition of oppression by birth and decay; the tension, stress and conflict within an object due to alteration of its determinant factors, preventing it from remaining as it is; the internal imperfection of things, which prevents true satisfaction for someone whose desires are influenced by craving (taṇhā), and causes suffering for a person who clings (upādāna).
An example of “determinant factors” are the Four Great Elements (mahābhūta). The four great elements are symbolic representations for the primary qualities and behavioral patterns of matter.
 - i. paṭhavi dhātu - earth (solid) element: hardness, extension;
 - ii. āpo dhātu – water element: cohesion, fluidity;
 - iii. tejo dhātu – fire (heat) element: heating, radiation; and
 - iv. vāyo dhātu – air (wind, motion) element: distention, strengthening, supporting.
 3. anatta: not-self. The condition of things being empty of a permanent self.
- VII. Bhikkhu & bhikkhuni acquire the knowledge that the taints (āsava) have been destroyed. The taints or defilements are:
 1. kāma: sense-desire, craving for sensual pleasures, attachment to the sense sphere; arises by grasping to the sensual pleasures of the five sense objects.
 2. bhava: desiring eternal existence, craving for being, becoming, and existence; attachment to the realms of form and the formless.
 3. avijjā: ignorance; arises by attending to any mundane things through the four perversions (vipallāsa). The four perversions are:

1. perceiving the impermanent as permanent,
2. perceiving the painful as pleasurable,
3. perceiving what is not self as self, and
4. perceiving what is foul or impure as beautiful or pure.

The Four Noble Truths have been realized.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

Sutta 51 Kandaraka Sutta: To Kandaraka

26. ... He understands as it actually is: 'This is suffering'; he understands as it actually is: 'This is the origin of suffering'; he understands as it actually is: 'This is the cessation of suffering'; he understands as it actually is: 'This is the way leading to the cessation of suffering.' He understands as it actually is: 'These are the taints'; he understands as it actually is: 'This is the origin of the taints'; he understands as it actually is: 'This is the cessation of the taints'; he understands as it actually is: 'This is the way leading to the cessation of the taints.'

27. "When he knows and sees thus, his mind is liberated from the taint of sensual desire, from the taint of being, and from the taint of ignorance. When it is liberated there comes the knowledge: 'It is liberated.' He understands: 'Birth is destroyed, the holy life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more coming to any state of being.'

This is the end of the training, arahantship has been attained.

The following two suttas describe the Progressive Training. Sutta 107 contains two additional steps, moderation in eating and devotion to wakefulness, not found in sutta 27.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

Sutta 27 Cūḷahatthipadopama Sutta: The Shorter Discourse on the Simile of the Elephant's Footprint

11. "So too, brahmin, here a Tathāgata appears in the world, accomplished, fully enlightened, perfect in true knowledge and conduct, sublime, knower of worlds, incomparable leader of persons to be tamed, teacher of gods and humans, enlightened, blessed. He declares this world with its gods, its Māras, and its Brahmās, this generation with its recluses and brahmins, its princes and its people, which he has himself realised with direct knowledge. He teaches the Dhamma good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, with the right meaning and phrasing, and he reveals a holy life that is utterly perfect and pure.

12. "A householder or householder's son or one born in some other clan hears that Dhamma. On hearing the Dhamma he acquires faith in the Tathāgata. Possessing that faith, he considers thus: 'Household life is crowded and dusty; life gone forth is wide open. It is not easy, while living in a home, to lead the holy life utterly perfect and pure as a polished shell. Suppose I shave off my hair and beard, put on the yellow robe, and go forth from the home life into homelessness.' On a later occasion, abandoning a small or a large fortune, abandoning a small or a large circle of relatives, he shaves off his hair and beard, puts on the yellow robe, and goes forth from the home life into homelessness.

13. "Having thus gone forth and possessing the bhikkhu's training and way of life, abandoning the killing of living beings, he abstains from killing living beings; with rod and weapon laid aside, conscientious, merciful, he abides compassionate to all living beings. Abandoning the taking of what is not given, he abstains from taking what is not given; taking only what is given, expecting only what is given, by not stealing he abides in purity. Abandoning incelibacy, he observes celibacy, living apart, abstaining from the vulgar practice of sexual intercourse.

"Abandoning false speech, he abstains from false speech; he speaks truth, adheres to truth, is trustworthy and reliable, one who is no deceiver of the world. Abandoning malicious speech, he abstains from malicious speech; he does not repeat elsewhere what he has heard here in order to divide [those people] from these, nor does he repeat to these people what he has heard elsewhere in order to divide [these people] from those; thus he is one who reunites those who are divided, a promoter of friendships, who enjoys concord, rejoices in concord, delights in concord, a speaker of words that promote concord. Abandoning harsh speech, he abstains from harsh speech; he speaks such words as are gentle, pleasing to the ear, and loveable, as go to the heart, are courteous,

desired by many and agreeable to many. Abandoning gossip, he abstains from gossip; he speaks at the right time, speaks what is fact, speaks on what is good, speaks on the Dhamma and the Discipline; at the right time he speaks such words as are worth recording, reasonable, moderate, and beneficial.

“He abstains from injuring seeds and plants. He practises eating only one meal a day, abstaining from eating at night and outside the proper time. He abstains from dancing, singing, music, and theatrical shows. He abstains from wearing garlands, smartening himself with scent, and embellishing himself with unguents. He abstains from high and large couches. He abstains from accepting gold and silver. He abstains from accepting raw grain. He abstains from accepting raw meat. He abstains from accepting women and girls. He abstains from accepting men and women slaves. He abstains from accepting goats and sheep. He abstains from accepting fowl and pigs. He abstains from accepting elephants, cattle, horses, and mares. He abstains from accepting fields and land. He abstains from going on errands and running messages. He abstains from buying and selling. He abstains from false weights, false metals, and false measures. He abstains from accepting bribes, deceiving, defrauding, and trickery. He abstains from wounding, murdering, binding, brigandage, plunder, and violence.

14. “He becomes content with robes to protect his body and with almsfood to maintain his stomach, and wherever he goes, he sets out taking only these with him. Just as a bird, wherever it goes, flies with its wings as its only burden, so too the bhikkhu becomes content with robes to protect his body and with almsfood to maintain his stomach, and wherever he goes, he sets out taking only these with him. Possessing this aggregate of noble virtue, he experiences within himself a bliss that is blameless.

15. “On seeing a form with the eye, he does not grasp at its signs and features. Since, if he left the eye faculty unguarded, evil unwholesome states of covetousness and grief might invade him, he practises the way of its restraint, he guards the eye faculty, he undertakes the restraint of the eye faculty. On hearing a sound with the ear... On smelling an odour with the nose... On tasting a flavour with the tongue... On touching a tangible with the body... On cognizing a mind-object with the mind, he does not grasp at its signs and features. Since, if he left the mind faculty unguarded, evil unwholesome states of covetousness and grief might invade him, he practises the way of its restraint, he guards the mind faculty, he undertakes the restraint of the mind faculty. Possessing this noble restraint of the faculties, he experiences within himself a bliss that is unsullied.

16. “He becomes one who acts in full awareness when going forward and returning; who acts in full awareness when looking ahead and looking away; who acts in full awareness when flexing and extending his limbs; who acts in full awareness when wearing his robes and carrying his outer robe and bowl; who acts in full awareness when eating, drinking, consuming food, and tasting; who acts in full awareness when defecating and urinating; who acts in full awareness when walking, standing, sitting, falling asleep, waking up, talking, and keeping silent.

17. “Possessing this aggregate of noble virtue, and this noble restraint of the faculties, and possessing this noble mindfulness and full awareness, he resorts to a secluded resting place: the forest, the root of a tree, a mountain, a ravine, a hillside cave, a charnel ground, a jungle thicket, an open space, a heap of straw.

18. “On returning from his almsround, after his meal he sits down, folding his legs crosswise, setting his body erect, and establishing mindfulness before him. Abandoning covetousness for the world, he abides with a mind free from covetousness; he purifies his mind from covetousness. Abandoning ill will and hatred, he abides with a mind free from ill will, compassionate for the welfare of all living beings; he purifies his mind from ill will and hatred. Abandoning sloth and torpor, he abides free from sloth and torpor, percipient of light, mindful and fully aware; he purifies his mind from sloth and torpor. Abandoning restlessness and remorse, he abides unagitated with a mind inwardly peaceful; he purifies his mind from restlessness and remorse. Abandoning doubt, he abides having gone beyond doubt, unperplexed about wholesome states; he purifies his mind from doubt.

19. “Having thus abandoned these five hindrances, imperfections of the mind that weaken wisdom, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, he enters upon and abides in the first jhāna, which is accompanied by applied and sustained thought, with rapture and

pleasure born of seclusion. This, brahmin, is called a footprint of the Tathāgata, something scraped by the Tathāgata, something marked by the Tathāgata, but a noble disciple does not yet come to the conclusion: ‘The Blessed One is fully enlightened, the Dhamma is well proclaimed by the Blessed One, the Sangha is practising the good way.’

20. “Again, with the stilling of applied and sustained thought, a bhikkhu enters upon and abides in the second jhāna, which has self-confidence and singleness of mind without applied and sustained thought, with rapture and pleasure born of concentration. This too, brahmin, is called a footprint of the Tathāgata... but a noble disciple does not yet come to the conclusion: ‘The Blessed One is fully enlightened...’

21. “Again, with the fading away as well of rapture, a bhikkhu abides in equanimity, and mindful and fully aware, still feeling pleasure with the body, he enters upon and abides in the third jhāna, on account of which noble ones announce: ‘He has a pleasant abiding who has equanimity and is mindful.’ This too, brahmin, is called a footprint of the Tathāgata... but a noble disciple does not yet come to the conclusion: ‘The Blessed One is fully enlightened...’

22. “Again, with the abandoning of pleasure and pain, and with the previous disappearance of joy and grief, a bhikkhu enters upon and abides in the fourth jhāna, which has neither-pain-nor-pleasure and purity of mindfulness due to equanimity. This too, brahmin, is called a footprint of the Tathāgata... but a noble disciple does not yet come to the conclusion: ‘The Blessed One is fully enlightened...’

23. “When his concentrated mind is thus purified, bright, unblemished, rid of imperfection, malleable, wieldy, steady, and attained to imperturbability, he directs it to knowledge of the recollection of past lives. He recollects his manifold past lives, that is, one birth, two births, three births, four births, five births, ten births, twenty births, thirty births, forty births, fifty births, a hundred births, a thousand births, a hundred thousand births, many aeons of world-contraction, many aeons of world-expansion, many aeons of world-contraction and expansion: ... Thus with their aspects and particulars he recollects his manifold past lives. This too, brahmin, is called a footprint of the Tathāgata... but a noble disciple does not yet come to the conclusion: ‘The Blessed One is fully enlightened...’

24. “When his concentrated mind is thus purified, bright, unblemished, rid of imperfection, malleable, wieldy, steady, and attained to imperturbability, he directs it to knowledge of the passing away and reappearance of beings. With the divine eye, which is purified and surpasses the human, he sees beings passing away and reappearing, inferior and superior, fair and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate. He understands how beings pass on according to their actions thus:... Thus with the divine eye, which is purified and surpasses the human, he sees beings passing away and reappearing, inferior and superior, fair and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate, and he understands how beings pass on according to their actions. This too, brahmin, is called a footprint of the Tathāgata... but a noble disciple does not yet come to the conclusion: ‘The Blessed One is fully enlightened...’

25. “When his concentrated mind is thus purified, bright, unblemished, rid of imperfection, malleable, wieldy, steady, and attained to imperturbability, he directs it to knowledge of the destruction of the taints. He understands as it actually is: ‘This is suffering’;... ‘This is the origin of suffering’;... ‘This is the cessation of suffering’;... ‘This is the way leading to the cessation of suffering’;... ‘These are the taints’;... ‘This is the origin of the taints’;... ‘This is the cessation of the taints’;... ‘This is the way leading to the cessation of the taints.’

“This too, brahmin, is called a footprint of the Tathāgata, something scraped by the Tathāgata, something marked by the Tathāgata, but a noble disciple still has not yet come to the conclusion: ‘The Blessed One is fully enlightened, the Dhamma is well proclaimed by the Blessed One, the Sangha is practising the good way.’ Rather, he is in the process of coming to this conclusion.

26. “When he knows and sees thus, his mind is liberated from the taint of sensual desire, from the taint of being, and from the taint of ignorance. When it is liberated there comes the knowledge: ‘It is liberated.’ He understands: ‘Birth is destroyed, the holy life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more coming to any state of being.’

“This too, brahmin, is called a footprint of the Tathāgata, something scraped by the Tathāgata, something marked by the Tathāgata. It is at this point that a noble disciple has come to the conclusion: ‘The Blessed One is fully enlightened, the Dhamma is well proclaimed by the Blessed

One, the Sangha is practising the good way.’ And it is at this point, brahmin, that the simile of the elephant’s footprint has been completed in detail.”

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

Sutta 107 Gaṇakamoggallāna Sutta: To Gaṇaka Moggallāna

3. “It is possible, brahmin, to describe gradual training, gradual practice, and gradual progress in this Dhamma and Discipline. Just as, brahmin, when a clever horse-trainer obtains a fine thoroughbred colt, he first makes him get used to wearing the bit, and afterwards trains him further, so when the Tathāgata obtains a person to be tamed he first disciplines him thus: ‘Come, bhikkhu, be virtuous, restrained with the restraint of the Pātimokkha, be perfect in conduct and resort, and seeing fear in the slightest fault, train by undertaking the training precepts.’
4. “When, brahmin, the bhikkhu is virtuous... and seeing fear in the slightest fault, trains by undertaking the training precepts, then the Tathāgata disciplines him further: ‘Come, bhikkhu, guard the doors of your sense faculties. On seeing a form with the eye, do not grasp at its signs and features. Since, if you were to leave the eye faculty unguarded, evil unwholesome states of covetousness and grief might invade you, practise the way of its restraint, guard the eye faculty, undertake the restraint of the eye faculty. On hearing a sound with the ear... On smelling an odour with the nose... On tasting a flavour with the tongue... On touching a tangible with the body... On cognizing a mind-object with the mind, do not grasp at its signs and features. Since, if you were to leave the mind faculty unguarded, evil unwholesome states might invade you, practise the way of its restraint, guard the mind faculty, undertake the restraint of the mind faculty.’
5. “When, brahmin, the bhikkhu guards the doors of his sense faculties, then the Tathāgata disciplines him further: ‘Come, bhikkhu, be moderate in eating. Reflecting wisely, you should take food neither for amusement nor for intoxication nor for the sake of physical beauty and attractiveness, but only for the endurance and continuance of this body, for ending discomfort, and for assisting the holy life, considering: “Thus I shall terminate old feelings without arousing new feelings and I shall be healthy and blameless and shall live in comfort.”’
6. “When, brahmin, the bhikkhu is moderate in eating, then the Tathāgata disciplines him further: ‘Come, bhikkhu, be devoted to wakefulness. During the day, while walking back and forth and sitting, purify your mind of obstructive states. In the first watch of the night, while walking back and forth and sitting, purify your mind of obstructive states. In the middle watch of the night you should lie down on the right side in the lion’s pose with one foot overlapping the other, mindful and fully aware, after noting in your mind the time for rising. After rising, in the third watch of the night, while walking back and forth and sitting, purify your mind of obstructive states.’
7. “When, brahmin, the bhikkhu is devoted to wakefulness, then the Tathāgata disciplines him further: ‘Come, bhikkhu, be possessed of mindfulness and full awareness. Act in full awareness when going forward and returning; act in full awareness when looking ahead and looking away; act in full awareness when flexing and extending your limbs; act in full awareness when wearing your robes and carrying your outer robe and bowl; act in full awareness when eating, drinking, consuming food, and tasting; act in full awareness when defecating and urinating; act in full awareness when walking, standing, sitting, falling asleep, waking up, talking, and keeping silent.’
8. “When, brahmin, the bhikkhu possesses mindfulness and full awareness, then the Tathāgata disciplines him further: ‘Come, bhikkhu, resort to a secluded resting place: the forest, the root of a tree, a mountain, a ravine, a hillside cave, a charnel ground, a jungle thicket, an open space, a heap of straw.’
9. “He resorts to a secluded resting place: the forest... a heap of straw. On returning from his almsround, after his meal he sits down, folding his legs crosswise, setting his body erect, and establishing mindfulness before him. Abandoning covetousness for the world, he abides with a mind free from covetousness; he purifies his mind from covetousness. Abandoning ill will and hatred, he abides with a mind free from ill will, compassionate for the welfare of all living beings; he purifies his mind from ill will and hatred. Abandoning sloth and torpor, he abides free from sloth and torpor, percipient of light, mindful and fully aware; he purifies his mind from sloth and torpor. Abandoning restlessness and remorse, he abides unagitated with a mind inwardly peaceful; he purifies his mind

from restlessness and remorse. Abandoning doubt, he abides having gone beyond doubt, unperplexed about wholesome states; he purifies his mind from doubt.

10. "Having thus abandoned these five hindrances, imperfections of the mind that weaken wisdom, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, he enters upon and abides in the first jhāna, which is accompanied by applied and sustained thought, with rapture and pleasure born of seclusion. With the stilling of applied and sustained thought, he enters upon and abides in the second jhāna, which has self-confidence and singleness of mind without applied and sustained thought, with rapture and pleasure born of concentration. With the fading away as well of rapture, he abides in equanimity, and mindful and fully aware, still feeling pleasure with the body, he enters upon and abides in the third jhāna, on account of which noble ones announce: 'He has a pleasant abiding who has equanimity and is mindful.' With the abandoning of pleasure and pain, and with the previous disappearance of joy and grief, he enters upon and abides in the fourth jhāna, which has neither-pain-nor-pleasure and purity of mindfulness due to equanimity.

11. "This is my instruction, brahmin, to those bhikkhus who are in the higher training, whose minds have not yet attained the goal, who abide aspiring to the supreme security from bondage. But these things conduce both to a pleasant abiding here and now and to mindfulness and full awareness for those bhikkhus who are arahants with taints destroyed, who have lived the holy life, done what had to be done, laid down the burden, reached their own goal, destroyed the fetters of being, and are completely liberated through final knowledge."¹⁰²⁷

Note 1027 While the preceding steps of practice are necessary measures for bhikkhus in training to attain arahantship, they are also beneficial to arahants in that they conduce to "a pleasant abiding here and now." Commentary "Majjhima Nikāya Aṭṭhakathā" identifies this "abiding" with the attainment of the fruit of arahantship, and explains that some arahants can enter fruition easily at any time while others must apply themselves diligently to the steps of practice to enter fruition.

July 2023 - Dependent Origination (paṭicca samuppāda)

The Third and Fourth Noble Truths, the Origin and Cessation of Suffering, is represented by the teaching of Dependent Origination. Dependent Origination explores the causes and conditions leading to suffering and the possibility of liberation. Venerable Sāriputta reported the importance of the teaching in the sutta below.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

28 Mahāhatthipadopama Sutta: The Greater Discourse on the Simile of the Elephant's Footprint
28. ... Now this has been said by the Blessed One: "One who sees dependent origination sees the Dhamma; one who sees the Dhamma sees dependent origination."

The world and the things of the world arise through multiple causes and are not due to a single cause; conditions are in dependence upon other conditions, therefore all conditions and the world are interconnected. Sentient beings experience the results or effects of causes and each effect becomes a cause that effects itself and other sentient beings, these relationships continue on ad infinitum as long as ignorance and craving are present within the individual's mind.

The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

12:21 (1) The Ten Powers (1)

... when this exists, that comes to be; with the arising of this, that arises. When this does not exist, that does not come to be; with the cessation of this, that ceases.

Vinaya Mahavagga translated by Thānissaro Bhikkhu

I.23.5 Upatissa-pasine: Upatissa's (Sāriputta's) Question

Then Ven. Assaji gave this Dhamma exposition to Sāriputta the Wanderer:

Whatever phenomena arise from cause:
their cause
and their cessation.

Such is the teaching of the Tathagata,
the Great Contemplative.

Dependent Origination is a teaching to be studied and applied for practical benefit. It is a complex teaching that requires careful consideration.

The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Digha Nikaya translated by Maurice Walshe

15 Sutta: The Great Discourse on Origination

1. ... Venerable Ānanda came to the Lord, saluted him, sat down to one side, and said: 'It is wonderful, Lord, it is marvellous how profound this dependent origination is, and how profound it appears! And yet it appears to me as clear as clear!'

'Do not say that, Ānanda, do not say that! This dependent origination is profound and appears profound. It is through not understanding, not penetrating this doctrine that this generation has become like a tangled ball of string, covered as with a blight, tangled like coarse grass, unable to pass beyond states of woe, the ill destiny, ruin and the round of birth-and-death.'

The teaching of Dependent Origination is composed of a sequence of twelve factors. Each factor arises in dependence on the preceding factor and ceases when that preceding factor is no longer active. Dependent Origination was taught by the Buddha in two formulations:

1. forward sequence (anulōma) formulates the origination of suffering (dukkha), and

2. reverse sequence (paṭilōma) formulates the cessation of suffering (dukkha).

The twelve factors of the forward sequence of Dependent Origination (anulōma paṭicca samuppāda) are as follows:

1. ignorance (avijjā) give rise to (paccayā)¹
2. volitional formations (saṅkhārā), volitional formations give rise to (paccayā)
3. consciousness (viññāṇa), consciousness give rise to (paccayā)
4. mentality-materiality (nāmarūpa), mentality-materiality give rise to (paccayā)
5. six sense bases (saḷāyatana), six sense bases give rise to (paccayā)
6. contact (phassa), contact give rise to (paccayā)
7. feeling (vedanā), feeling give rise to (paccayā)
8. craving (taṇhā), craving give rise to (paccayā)
9. clinging (upādāna), clinging give rise to (paccayā)
10. becoming-existence (bhava), becoming-existence give rise to (paccayā)
11. birth (jāti), birth give rise to (paccayā)
12. suffering (dukkha)
 - a. aging (jarā) and death (maraṇa),
 - b. sorrow (soka),
 - c. lamentation (parideva),
 - d. pain (dukkha),
 - e. grief, displeasure (domanassa), and
 - f. despair (upāyāsa).

Note 1: The pāli word paccayā means ‘condition’, a significant influence that determine something, and may be expressed as “give rise to”.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

28 Mahāhatthipadopama Sutta: The Greater Discourse on the Simile of the Elephant’s Footprint

17. “So, bhikkhus, with ignorance as condition, formations [come to be]; with formations as condition, consciousness; with consciousness as condition, mentality-materiality; with mentality-materiality as condition, the sixfold base; with the sixfold base as condition, contact; with contact as condition, feeling; with feeling as condition, craving; with craving as condition, clinging; with clinging as condition, being; with being as condition, birth; with birth as condition, ageing and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair come to be. Such is the origin of this whole mass of suffering.

The factors of Dependent Origination do not occur in a linear progression of one factor giving birth to another factor. Instead, there is usually an interplay of multiple factors. For example, the presence of ignorance (avijjā) usually implies that craving (taṇhā) and clinging (upādāna) are present as well, and the presence of craving and clinging usually indicate ignorance. The relationship between factors is one of complex conditionality rather than linear causation. Numerous suttas in the pāli canon demonstrate the complexity and variations of relationships between the factors.

The Buddha did not make known a first cause to the cosmos and stated that it is impossible to conceive of a first cause. The cause becomes the effect and the effect becomes the cause. In the circle of cause and effect, a first cause is incomprehensible.

The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

15.1 (1) Grass and Wood

... The Blessed One said this: “Bhikkhus, this saṃsāra is without discoverable beginning. A first point is not discerned of beings roaming and wandering on hindered by ignorance and fettered by craving. Suppose, bhikkhus, a man would cut up whatever grass, sticks, branches, and foliage there are in this Jambudīpa and collect them together into a single heap. Having done so, he would put them down, saying [for each one]: ‘This is my mother, this my mother’s mother.’ The sequence of that man’s mothers and grandmothers would not come to an end, yet the grass, wood, branches, and foliage in this Jambudīpa would be used up and exhausted. For what reason? Because,

bhikkhus, this saṃsāra is without discoverable beginning. A first point is not discerned of beings roaming and wandering on hindered by ignorance and fettered by craving. For such a long time, bhikkhus, you have experienced suffering, anguish, and disaster, and swelled the cemetery. It is enough to experience revulsion towards all formations, enough to become dispassionate towards them, enough to be liberated from them.”

Note: saṃsāra is the uninterrupted occurring succession of birth, death and rebirth.

Jambudīpa is literally the “Rose-Apple Land,” the Indian subcontinent.

Ignorance (avijjā) is the primary cause for saṃsāra, the endless round of birth, death and rebirth. Ignorance is also the primary cause of suffering (dukkha) inherent in saṃsāra. The Second Noble Truth states that craving (taṇhā) is the proximate cause for dukkha, however ignorance is the fundamental cause. Ignorance is defined as not knowing the Four Noble Truths (cattāri ariyasaccāni) and may also be understood as not knowing the Three Characteristics of Existence (ti-lakkhaṇa) as well as not understanding Dependent Origination (paṭicca samuppāda). The Four Noble Truths are:

1. First Noble Truth - The Existence of Suffering (dukkha).
2. Second Noble Truth - The Cause of Suffering (dukkha samudaya) is Craving (taṇhā).
3. Third Noble Truth - The Cessation of Suffering (dukkha nirodha) is nibbāna.
4. Fourth Noble Truth - The Noble Eightfold Path (ariya aṭṭhaṅgika magga) culminates in the Cessation of Suffering (dukkha nirodhagāminī paṭipadā).

The Three Characteristics of Existence is the understanding that the contents of experience; i.e., the five aggregates (khandā), have the following characteristics:

1. impermanence (anicca),
2. suffering (dukkha), and
3. not-self (anatta).

The contents of experience are one or more of the five aggregates (khandā):

1. material form (rūpa khandha),
2. mental formations (saṅkhāra khandha),
3. perceptions (saññā khandha),
4. feelings (vedanā khandha), and
5. sense consciousness (viññāṇa khandha).

Ignorance (avijjā) conditions volitional formations (saṅkhārā) which are intentional, willed actions. The volitional formations may be wholesome or unwholesome and performed by three courses of action:

1. bodily (kāyasaṅkhāra),
2. verbal (vacīsaṅkhāra) and
3. mental (cittasaṅkhāra).

Volitional formations are kamma formations, patterns of behaviour that are due to past ignorance. Volitional formations (saṅkhārā), ignorance (avijjā) and craving (taṇhā) are the factors that result in rebirth and saṃsāra from one life to the next.

The ripening of volitional formations (saṅkhārā) - kamma, and craving (taṇhā) for becoming-existence (bhava) in the past life result in consciousness (viññāṇa) in the present life that enters the fertilized ovum at conception to produce a new sentient being.

The new sentient being is composed of mental and bodily phenomena, mentality-materiality (nāmarūpa). Mentality (nāma) is the collection of five mental factors involved in cognition:

1. feeling (vedanā),
2. perception (saññā),
3. volition (cetanā),
4. contact (phassa), and
5. attention (manasikāra).

Materiality (rūpa) is the physical form composed of the four great elements (mahābhūta):

1. earth, solid element (paṭhavi dhātu),
2. water element (āpo dhātu),
3. fire, heat element (tejo dhātu), and
4. air, motion element: (vāyo dhātu).

Mentality-materiality (nāmarūpa) possess the six sense bases (saḷāyatana), six internal and six external sense bases.

- Six internal (ajjhattika) sense bases, sense faculties (indriya):
 6. eye (cakkhu),
 7. ear (sota),
 8. nose (ghāna),
 9. tongue (jivhā),
 10. body (kāya), and
 11. mind (mano).
- Six external (bāhira) sense bases, sense objects:
 1. visible forms (rūpā āyatana),
 2. sounds (sotā āyatana),
 3. odors (ghānā āyatana),
 4. flavors (rasā āyatana),
 5. tangibles (kāyā āyatana), and
 6. mental objects (dhammā āyatana).

Contact (phassa) is the coming together of an internal sense base, external sense base and consciousness. Sense consciousness arises dependent on an internal and an external sense base.

There are six types of sense consciousness:

1. eye consciousness (cakkhu viññāṇa)
2. ear consciousness (sotā viññāṇa)
3. nose consciousness (ghāna viññāṇa)
4. tongue consciousness (jivhā viññāṇa)
5. body consciousness (kāya viññāṇa)
6. mind consciousness (mano viññāṇa)

Ajahn Sāriputta teaches that suffering (dukkha) associated with sense faculties and sense objects is not inherent to these sense bases but is due to the fetters (samyojana) that arise when there is contact between a sense faculty and sense object. The following sutta is the teaching by Ajahn Sāriputta on the relationship between contact (phassa), the sense bases (saḷāyatana) and suffering (dukkha).

The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

35.232 (5) Koṭṭhita

... Friend Koṭṭhita, the eye is not the fetter of forms nor are forms the fetter of the eye, but rather the desire and lust that arise there in dependence on both: that is the fetter there. The ear is not the fetter of sounds nor are sounds the fetter of the ear, but rather the desire and lust that arise there in dependence on both: that is the fetter there.... The mind is not the fetter of mental phenomena nor are mental phenomena the fetter of the mind, but rather the desire and lust that arise there in dependence on both: that is the fetter there.

... In this way too, friend, it may be understood how that is so: There exists in the Blessed One the eye, the Blessed One sees a form with the eye, yet there is no desire and lust in the Blessed One; the Blessed One is well liberated in mind. There exists in the Blessed One the ear, the Blessed One hears a sound with the ear ... There exists in the Blessed One the nose, the Blessed One smells an odour with the nose ... There exists in the Blessed One the tongue, the Blessed One savours a taste with the tongue ... There exists in the Blessed One the body, the Blessed One feels a tactile object with the body ... There exists in the Blessed One the mind, the Blessed One cognizes a mental phenomenon with the mind, yet there is no desire and lust in the Blessed One; the Blessed One is well liberated in mind.

In this way, friend, it can be understood how the eye is not the fetter of forms nor forms the fetter of the eye, but rather the desire and lust that arise there in dependence on both is the fetter there; how the ear is not the fetter of sounds nor sounds the fetter of the ear...; how the mind is not the fetter of mental phenomena nor mental phenomena the fetter of the mind, but rather the desire and lust that arise there in dependence on both is the fetter there.”

The ten fetters (samyojana) that cause sentient beings to remain in mundane existence (saṃsāra) are:

1. personality belief (sakkāya diṭṭhi),
2. doubt (vicikicchā),
3. clinging to rites and rituals (sīlabbata parāmāsa),
4. sensual desire (kāma rāga),
5. ill will (vyāpāda),
6. craving for existence in the Form Realm, fine material existence (rūpa rāga),
7. craving for existence in the Formless Realm, immaterial existence (arūpa rāga),
8. conceit (māna),
9. restlessness (uddhacca), and
10. ignorance (avijjā).

Feelings (vedanā) result from contact at the six sense bases (saḷāyatana) and is experienced as:

1. pleasant (sukhā vedanā),
2. unpleasant (dukkhā vedanā), or
3. neutral (upekkhā vedanā).

Liberation from the fetters (samyojana) is accomplished when the mind is trained to perceive the sense bases (saḷāyatana) without defilement. Fetters are abandoned from the mind "when one knows and sees ... as impermanent" the sense faculties, sense objects, sense consciousness, contact and feelings. Similarly, the fetters are uprooted from the mind "when one knows and sees ... as nonself" the sense faculties, sense objects, sense consciousness, contact and feelings.

The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

35.54 (2) Abandoning the Fetters

... Venerable sir, how should one know, how should one see, for the fetters to be abandoned?

Bhikkhu, when one knows and sees the eye as impermanent, fetters is abandoned and true knowledge arises. When one knows and sees forms as impermanent ... When one knows and sees as impermanent whatever feeling arises with mind-contact as condition—whether pleasant or painful or neither-painful-norpleasant— fetters is abandoned and true knowledge arises. When one knows and sees thus, bhikkhu, fetters is abandoned and true knowledge arises.

35, 55 (3) Uprooting the Fetters

... Venerable sir, how should one know, how should one see, for the fetters to be uprooted?

Bhikkhu, when one knows and sees the eye as nonself, the fetters are uprooted. When one knows and sees forms as nonself ... (all as above) ... When one knows and sees thus, bhikkhu, the fetters are uprooted.

Craving (taṇhā) for pleasant experiences is the result of feelings (vedanā). The untrained mind allows feelings to condition craving: the desire for comfortable and pleasant physical objects and mental formations, and to avoid uncomfortable and painful situations. Craving is the proximate cause of suffering (dukkha). The removal of craving and suffering requires the training of mind in restraint of and insight into the sense bases (saḷāyatana). The three types of craving (taṇhā) are for:

1. sensual pleasures (kāma-taṇhā),
2. existence (bhava-taṇhā), and
3. non-existence (vibhava-taṇhā).

The grasping tightly to the objects of craving (taṇhā) and to wrong views (micchā diṭṭhi) results in clinging (upādāna) which is an intensification of craving. Clinging results in views that support craving for comfortable and pleasurable situations and objects as well as for continued existence.

There are four types, clinging (upādāna) to:

1. sensuality (kāmuṇupādāna),
2. views (diṭṭhupādāna),
3. rules and rituals, habits and practices (sīlabbatupādāna), and
4. ego belief (attavādupādāna).

Please note that the following progression on how clinging arises was borrowed from a source that cannot be located.

- What the mind takes for food is compounded, it deteriorates and changes; there's a subtle level of stress inherent in keeping the compound going.
- We're a slave to our appetites. When the demands of these slave drivers aren't met we don't act in honorable ways.
- We keep doing something again and again - that's the clinging - as a means of finding happiness. That's the feeding.

Clinging (upādāna) produces a new round of volitional formations (saṅkhārā) that results in becoming-existence (bhava). Becoming-existence (bhava) occur in two modes:

1. kamma-existence (kammabhava) consists of past kamma that results in becoming-existence into one of the three realms (loka). This is the active life process.
2. rebirth-existence (upapattibhava) is the state of becoming-existence while dwelling in one of the three realms (loka). This is the passive life process.

Kamma-existence (kammabhava) results in birth (jāti) in one of the following three realms (loka):

1. Desire Realms (kāma loka) consists of eleven realms populated by sentient beings who have pleasurable and non-pleasurable experiences. Seven of these realms are favorable destinations: the human realm (manussa loka) and six lower celestial realms occupied by devas. The four lowest realms are the non-favorable destinations: animal realm (tiracchāna yoni), hungry ghosts realm (peta-loka), demon realm (asura nikāya) and the hell realm (niraya).
2. Subtle Form Realms (rūpa loka) consist of sixteen realms where devas dwell. These realms are reached by sentient beings who have developed one of the four fine-material absorptions (rupajhāna). The highest subtle form realms are the Pure Abodes reached by the Non-Returner (anāgāmi), the third stage of Awakening.
3. Formless Realms (ārūpya loka) consist of four realms reached while meditating in one of the four formless absorptions (arupajhāna). The Subtle Form Realms and the Formless Realms are the heavens (sagga).

Devas ("Radiant Ones") are deities who live in realms where they experience mostly sublime mental pleasures and are generally invisible to humans. The devas possess refined bodies of pure light. However, devas are not gods or permanent but are susceptible, just like all human and other sentient beings, to ever-repeated rebirth, old age and death, and are not freed from the cycle of existence (saṃsāra) and from suffering (dukkha).

Rebirth results in suffering (dukkha) at birth (jāti), old age (jarā) and death (maraṇa).

Experiences of dukkha include sorrow (soka), lamentation (parideva), pain (dukkha), grief (domanassa) and despair (upāyāsa).

The twelve factors of Dependent Origination may be interrupted to be applied over three lives. The following sutta illustrates the series.

The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

12.19 (9) The Wise Man and the Fool

Bhikkhus, for the fool, hindered by ignorance and fettered by craving, this body has originated. For the fool that ignorance has not been abandoned and that craving has not been utterly destroyed. For what reason? Because the fool has not lived the holy life for the complete destruction of suffering. Therefore, with the breakup of the body, the fool fares on to [another] body. Faring on to [another] body, he is not freed from birth, aging, and death; not freed from sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure, and despair; not freed from suffering, I say.

Bhikkhus, for the wise man, hindered by ignorance and fettered by craving, this body has originated. For the wise man that ignorance has been abandoned and that craving has been utterly destroyed. For what reason? Because the wise man has lived the holy life for the complete destruction of suffering. Therefore, with the breakup of the body, the wise man does not fare on to [another] body. Not faring on to [another] body, he is freed from birth, aging, and death; freed from sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure, and despair; freed from suffering, I say.

This, bhikkhus, is the distinction, the disparity, the difference between the wise man and the fool, that is, the living of the holy life.

- **Past Life**
Ignorance (avijjā) and volitional formations (saṅkhārā) from the past life cause both the fool and the wise man to be reborn in the present life. Ignorance and volitional formations implies the presence of craving (taṇhā), clinging (upādāna) and kamma-existence (kammabhava).
- **Present Life**
Past kamma (vipāka) created by ignorance (avijjā) and volitional formations (saṅkhārā) are the causes which result in the present life: consciousness (viññāṇa), mentality-materiality (nāmarūpa), six sense bases (saḷāyatana), contact (phassa), and feeling (vedanā). Craving (taṇhā), clinging (upādāna) and kamma-existence (kammabhava) are volitional (kamma) and will have results in the future. The wise man abandons ignorance (avijjā) and craving (taṇhā) in the present life and is not reborn again.
- **Future Life**
The fool does not abandon ignorance (avijjā) and craving (taṇhā) in the present life and these defilements result in volitional formations (saṅkhārā), clinging (upādāna) and rebirth becoming-existence (upapattibhava), these are the causes for a future life that result in suffering (dukkha), birth (jāti), old age (jarā) and death (maraṇa).

The following table is borrowed from The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi.

3 periods	12 factors	20 modes in 4 groups
Past Life	1. ignorance (avijjā) 2. volitional formations (saṅkhārā)	5 past causes: 1, 2, 8, 9, 10 condition the present life.
Present Life	3. consciousness (viññāṇa) 4. mentality-materiality (nāmarūpa) 5. six sense bases (saḷāyatana) 6. contact (phassa) 7. feeling (vedanā)	5 present effects 5: 3-7 are the result of past ignorance and kamma.
	8. craving (taṇhā) 9. clinging (upādāna) 10. becoming-existence (bhava)	5 present causes: 8, 9, 10, 1, 2 condition the future life.
Future Life	11. birth (jāti) 12. suffering (dukkha): old age (jarā) and death	5 future effects: 3-7 are the result of the present life.

The two roots:

1. Ignorance (from past to present)
2. Craving (from present to future)

The three connections:

1. Past causes with present effects (between 2 and 3)
2. Present effects with present causes (between 7 and 8)

3. Present causes with future effects (between 10 and 11)

Dependent Origination is described in three rounds:

1. defilements (kilesavaṭṭa) are composed of ignorance (1), craving (8), and clinging (9);
2. action (kammaavaṭṭa) are composed of volitional formations (2) and kamma-existence (part of 10); and
3. results (vipakavaṭṭa) are composed of consciousness (3), mentality-materiality (4), six sense bases (5), contact (6), feeling (7), rebirth-existence (part of 10), birth (11), and suffering (12).

The round of defilements result in the round of defiled actions. The round of defiled actions result in the round of results. The round of results produce the round of defilements. In this manner, saṃsāra, the round of rebirths revolves without a perceivable beginning.

The round of existence (saṃsāra) can be dismantled by uprooting ignorance (avijjā) with penetrating knowledge of the Four Noble Truths (cattāri ariyasaccāni); craving (taṇhā) and clinging (upādāna) is then no longer generated by the mind; and volitional formations (saṅkhārā), are no longer produced that results in rebirth (jāti). The goal of the teaching is now accomplished by escaping from saṃsāra and the inherent suffering (dukkha).

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

28 Mahāhatthipadopama Sutta: The Greater Discourse on the Simile of the Elephant's Footprint

20. "But with the remainderless fading away and cessation of ignorance comes cessation of formations; with the cessation of formations, cessation of consciousness; with the cessation of consciousness, cessation of mentality-materiality; with the cessation of mentality-materiality, cessation of the sixfold base; with the cessation of the sixfold base, cessation of contact; with the cessation of contact, cessation of feeling; with the cessation of feeling, cessation of craving; with the cessation of craving, cessation of clinging; with the cessation of clinging, cessation of being; with the cessation of being, cessation of birth; with the cessation of birth, ageing and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair cease. Such is the cessation of this whole mass of suffering.

The mind well trained cultivates wisdom (paññā) by practicing the Noble Eightfold Path (ariya aṭṭhaṅgika magga), The Fourth Noble Truth:

1. Right View (sammā-ditṭhi),
2. Right Intention (sammā-saṅkappa),
3. Right Speech (sammā-vācā),
4. Right Action (sammā-kammanta),
5. Right Livelihood (sammā-ājīva),
6. Right Effort (sammā-vāyāma),
7. Right Mindfulness (sammā-sati), and
8. Right Concentration (sammā-samādhi).

Wisdom uproots ignorance, thereby future suffering does not arise by the reverse sequence of Dependent Origination (paṭilōma paṭicca samuppāda):

1. ignorance (avijjā) is uprooted (nirodhā),² ignorance does not cause to arise (nirodhā)
2. volitional formations (saṅkhārā), volitional formations does not cause to arise (nirodhā)
3. consciousness (viññāṇa), consciousness does not cause to arise (nirodhā)
4. mentality-materiality (nāmarūpa), mentality-materiality does not cause to arise (nirodhā)
5. six sense bases (saḷāyatana), six sense bases does not cause to arise (nirodhā)
6. contact (phassa), contact does not cause to arise (nirodhā)
7. feeling (vedanā), feeling does not cause to arise (nirodhā)
8. craving (taṇhā), craving does not cause to arise (nirodhā)
9. clinging (upādā), clinging does not cause to arise (nirodhā)
10. becoming-existence (bhava), becoming-existence does not cause to arise (nirodhā)
11. birth (jāti), birth does not cause to arise (nirodhā)
12. aging (jarā) and death (maraṇa), sorrow (soka), lamentation (parideva), pain (dukkha), grief (domanassa), and despair (upāyāsa).

Such is the cessation of this whole mass of suffering (evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa nirodho hotīti).

Note 2: The pāli word nirodhā means ‘cessation’, the fact of not arising, and may be expressed as “does not cause to arise”.

August 2023 - Kamma

The word “karma” originated in the ancient Indian language of Sanskrit and is now a recognized word in the English language. Pāli is another ancient Indian language and is the language of Theravāda Buddhism. The pāli word “kamma” is equivalent to “karma”.

Merriam-Webster Dictionary, definition for karma

- The force generated by a person's actions held in Hinduism and Buddhism to perpetuate transmigration and in its ethical consequences to determine the nature of the person's next existence.
- Broadly: such a force considered as affecting the events of one's life.
- "You reap what you sow." ... that what goes around comes around.

The expression, ‘Do good, receive good; do bad, receive bad’, is derived from the following Buddhist proverb:

The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

11.10 (10) Seers by the Ocean

903 Whatever sort of seed is sown,
That is the sort of fruit one reaps:
The doer of good reaps good;
The doer of evil reaps evil.

Kamma is intentional moral action whose results have potential effects across numerous life times. Kamma is the law of moral cause and effect, where intentional moral actions have consequences. Moral intentional actions may be either wholesome or unwholesome. Wholesome actions cause pleasant experiences, while unwholesome actions cause unpleasant experiences. The past kamma created by a sentient being has the potential to effect that being's current and future lives, and the kamma created in the present life has the potential to effect the current life and future existence. The effects of kamma determines the cosmic realm where rebirth will take place and whether the being is equipped with fortunate or unfortunate circumstances within that realm.

The cosmic realms (loka) refer to various planes or dimensions of existence within Buddhist cosmology. The following are the six main realms of existence.

1. Heavenly Realm (deva loka) are inhabited by devas. Devas are celestial beings or deities who experience mostly pleasure and a long lifespan. Devas are still subject to ageing, sickness death, and rebirth.
2. Titan or Demigod Realm (asura loka) are inhabited by asuras. Asuras are powerful beings who are driven by jealousy, aggression, and a desire for power. Asuras are often fighting battles with each other and with the devas. Despite their immense strength, they are dissatisfied and tormented.
3. Human Realm (manussa loka) are inhabited by human beings. This is a favorable realm due to the experience of both happiness (sukha) and suffering (dukkha) because suffering motivates people to cultivate such spiritual qualities as wisdom and loving-kindness in order to achieve liberation from suffering.
4. Animal Realm (tiracchāna loka) are inhabited by animals who have a preponderance of ignorance and instinctual behavior. Animals have limited cognitive abilities, are motivated by survival instincts; and suffer greatly from hunger, fear, and predation.
5. Hungry Ghost Realm (peta loka) are inhabited by pretas who suffer from intense hunger and thirst. Pretas have insatiable appetites but due to their extremely narrow throats and tiny mouths, they are constantly frustrated and tormented by the impossibility of satisfying their cravings.
6. Hell Realm (niraya loka) are inhabited by beings who experience intense suffering and torment. Hell beings experience excruciating pain as a result of unwholesome actions.

Kamma is the principal which engenders saṃsāra: the endless round of birth, aging, sickness, death, and rebirth. The life of beings caught within saṃsāra experience suffering (dukkha) as they continuously wander across various realms of existence by taking repeated birth in fortunate and unfortunate realms. The aim of the teachings of Buddha is to escape from saṃsāra by uprooting the defilements that produce kamma and empower the cycle of saṃsāra.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

98 Vāseṭṭha Sutta: To Vāseṭṭha

57. One is not a brahmin by birth,
Nor by birth a non-brahmin.
By action [kamma] is one a brahmin,
By action [kamma] is one a non-brahmin.
58. For men are farmers by their acts,
And by their acts are craftsmen too;
And men are merchants by their acts,
And by their acts are servants too.
59. And men are robbers by their acts,
And by their acts are soldiers too;
And men are chaplains by their acts,
And by their acts are rulers too.
60. “So that is how the truly wise
See action [kamma] as it really is,
Seers of dependent origination,
Skilled in action [kamma] and its results.
61. Action makes the world go round,
Action makes this generation turn.
Living beings are bound by action [kamma]
Like the chariot wheel by the linchpin.
62. Asceticism, the holy life,
Self-control and inner training —
By this one becomes a brahmin,
In this supreme brahminhood lies.⁹⁰⁷
63. One possessing the triple knowledge,
Peaceful, with being all destroyed:
Know him thus, O Vāseṭṭha,
As Brahmā and Sakka for those who understand.”

Note 907 This verse and the following one again refer to the arahant. Here, however, the contrast is not between the arahant as the one made holy by his actions [kamma] and the born brahmin unworthy of his designation, but between the arahant as the one liberated from the bondage of action [kamma] and result and all other beings who remain tied by their actions [kamma] to the wheel of birth and death.

The teachings on kamma serve as a moral compass, encouraging individuals to cultivate wholesome intentions in order to experience well being both in the present and in future life times. The principal is not about punishment or reward but rather about the natural unfolding of events based on intentional actions.

Kamma is not a deterministic system where every action will have an immediate and equal reaction. The complexity of kamma and the interconnectedness of all beings and phenomena make it impossible to predict specific outcomes.

The effects of kamma are not permanent or fixed, and there are kammās whose effects can persist in the present life and influence future lives. The consequences of past actions can be modified or mitigated through present actions. By engaging in wholesome actions in the present, individuals can generate wholesome kamma, which can dilute, counter or modify unwholesome kamma accumulated

from past actions. Conversely, engaging in unwholesome actions in the present may further perpetuate unwholesome kamma and its effects.

Kamma in Theravāda Buddhism is intention (*cetanā*), also called volitional action, that initiates behaviour. Involuntary and unintentional modes of behaviour do not produce kamma.

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya

translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

6.63

(5) “When it was said: ‘Kamma should be understood ... the way leading to the cessation of kamma should be understood,’ for what reason was this said?

“It is volition [*cetanā*], bhikkhus, that I call kamma. For having willed, one acts by body, speech, or mind.

“And what is the source and origin of kamma? Contact is its source and origin.

“And what is the diversity of kamma? There is kamma to be experienced in hell; there is kamma to be experienced in the animal realm; there is kamma to be experienced in the realm of afflicted spirits; there is kamma to be experienced in the human world; and there is kamma to be experienced in the deva world. This is called the diversity of kamma.

“And what is the result of kamma? The result of kamma, I say, is threefold: [to be experienced] in this very life, or in the [next] rebirth, or on some subsequent occasion. This is called the result of kamma.

“And what, bhikkhus, is the cessation of kamma? With the cessation of contact there is cessation of kamma.¹⁴²⁰

“This noble eightfold path is the way leading to the cessation of kamma, namely, right view ... right concentration.

“When, bhikkhus, a noble disciple thus understands kamma, the source and origin of kamma, the diversity of kamma, the result of kamma, the cessation of kamma, and the way leading to the cessation of kamma, he understands this penetrative spiritual life to be the cessation of kamma.

“When it was said: ‘Kamma should be understood ... the way leading to the cessation of kamma should be understood,’ it is because of this that this was said.

Note 1420 This should probably be understood in the sense that, because contact is the condition for intention and kamma can be explained as intention, contact is therefore the condition for kamma.

Intentional behaviour can be displayed at one or at a combination of three doors (*dvāra*).

1. Body (*kāya dvāra*) refers to bodily actions and physical activity.
2. Speech (*vācā dvāra*) refers to verbal actions, speech and any form of communication.
3. Mind (*mano* or *nāma dvāra*) refers to mental actions, volitional activities and mental processes including thoughts, intentions, mental states, beliefs, and emotions.

The intention may be either wholesome (*kusala*) or unwholesome (*akusala*). Wholesome intention is wholesome kamma and is the volition to not harm oneself or others. Unwholesome intention is unwholesome kamma and is the volition to harm oneself or others. Combining the three doors (*dvāra*) with wholesome (*kusala*) kamma and unwholesome (*akusala*) kamma results in six kinds of kamma:

1. unwholesome physical actions,
2. unwholesome verbal actions,
3. unwholesome mental actions,
4. wholesome physical actions,
5. wholesome verbal actions, and
6. wholesome mental actions.

Kamma and the fruit or result of kamma (*vipāka*) is classified in the Pāli Canon into the following four categories.

1. Dark actions (*akusala kamma*) with dark results (*akusala vipāka*) refers to physical (*kāya*), verbal (*vacī*), and mental (*mano*) volitional formations (*saṅkhāra*) that are unwholesome (*akusala*) and result in some form of suffering (*dukkha*). Volitional formations are conditioned phenomena that arise due to volition (*cetanā*) and volition is kamma. Examples of dark actions are harming sentient

- beings (pāṇātipāta), stealing (adinnādāna), sexual misconduct (kāmesu-micchācāra), lying (musāvādā), and partaking of illicit drugs (sūkaramadapāna) and alcoholic beverages (madapāna).
2. Bright actions (kusala kamma) with bright results (kusala vipāka) refers to physical, verbal, and mental volitional formations that are wholesome (kusala) and result in some form of happiness (sukha). Examples of bright actions are training in loving-kindness (metta), generosity (dāna or cāga), ethical behaviour (sīla), meditation (samādhi) and the Ten Wholesome Courses of Action (kusalakammamāpathā).
 3. Bright and dark actions with bright and dark results refers to physical, verbal, and mental volitional formations that are partly wholesome and unwholesome, and result in some happiness and some suffering. The majority of human behaviour falls under this category.
 4. Neither bright-nor-dark actions with neither bright-nor-dark results (nekkhamma) refers to those actions performed in order to bring an end to kamma, i.e. intention aimed at uprooting the root defilements of ignorance (avijjā), greed (lobha) and hatred (dosa).

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

57 Kukkuravatika Sutta: The Dog-Duty Ascetic

7. “Puṇṇa, there are four kinds of action proclaimed by me after realising them for myself with direct knowledge. What are the four? There is dark action with dark result; there is bright action with bright result; there is dark-and-bright action with dark-and-bright result; and there is action that is neither dark nor bright with neither-dark-nor-bright result, action that leads to the destruction of action.

8. “And what, Puṇṇa, is dark action with dark result? Here someone generates an afflictive bodily formation, an afflictive verbal formation, an afflictive mental formation.⁶⁰² Having generated an afflictive bodily formation, an afflictive verbal formation, an afflictive mental formation, he reappears in an afflictive world.⁶⁰³ When he has reappeared in an afflictive world, afflictive contacts touch him. Being touched by afflictive contacts, he feels afflictive feelings, exclusively painful, as in the case of the beings in hell. Thus a being’s reappearance is due to a being:⁶⁰⁴ one reappears through the actions one has performed. When one has reappeared, contacts touch one. Thus I say beings are the heirs of their actions. This is called dark action with dark result.

9. “And what, Puṇṇa, is bright action with bright result? Here someone generates an unafflictive bodily formation, an unafflictive verbal formation, an unafflictive mental formation.⁶⁰⁵ Having generated an unafflictive bodily formation, an unafflictive verbal formation, an unafflictive mental formation, he reappears in an unafflictive world.⁶⁰⁶ When he has reappeared in an unafflictive world, unafflictive contacts touch him. Being touched by unafflictive contacts, he feels unafflictive feelings, exclusively pleasant, as in the case of the gods of Refulgent Glory. Thus a being’s reappearance is due to a being; one reappears through the actions one has performed. When one has reappeared, contacts touch one. Thus I say beings are the heirs of their actions. This is called bright action with bright result.

10. “And what, Puṇṇa, is dark-and-bright action with dark-and-bright result? Here someone generates a bodily formation that is both afflictive and unafflictive, a verbal formation that is both afflictive and unafflictive, a mental formation that is both afflictive and unafflictive.⁶⁰⁷ Having generated a bodily formation, a verbal formation, a mental formation that is both afflictive and unafflictive, he reappears in a world that is both afflictive and unafflictive. When he has reappeared in a world that is both afflictive and unafflictive, both afflictive and unafflictive contacts touch him. Being touched by both afflictive and unafflictive contacts, he feels both afflictive and unafflictive feelings, mingled pleasure and pain, as in the case of human beings and some gods and some beings in the lower worlds. Thus a being’s reappearance is due to a being: one reappears through the actions one has performed. When one has reappeared, contacts touch one. Thus I say beings are the heirs to their actions. This is called dark-and-bright action with dark-and-bright result.

11. “And what, Puṇṇa, is action that is neither dark nor bright with neither-dark-nor-bright result, action that leads to the destruction of action? Therein, the volition for abandoning the kind of action that is dark with dark result, and the volition for abandoning the kind of action that is bright with bright result, and the volition for abandoning the kind of action that is dark and bright with dark-and-

bright result: this is called action that is neither dark nor bright with neither-dark-nor-bright result, action that leads to the destruction of action.⁶⁰⁸ These are the four kinds of action proclaimed by me after realising them for myself with direct knowledge.”

Notes

602 Here an “afflictive bodily formation” may be understood as the volition [cetanā] responsible for the three courses of unwholesome bodily action; an “afflictive verbal formation” as the volition responsible for the four courses of unwholesome verbal action; and an “afflictive mental formation” as the volition responsible for the three courses of unwholesome mental action. [See The Ten Courses of Wholesome kamma (kusalakammāpathā) below]

603 He is reborn in one of the states of deprivation — hell, the animal kingdom, or the realm of ghosts.

604 Beings are reborn through the actions they perform and in ways conforming to those actions.

605 Here the volitions responsible for the ten courses of wholesome action, together with the volitions of the jhānas, are intended.

606 He is reborn in a heavenly world.

607 Strictly speaking, no volitional action can be simultaneously both wholesome and unwholesome, for the volition responsible for the action must be either one or the other. Thus here we should understand that the being engages in a medley of wholesome and unwholesome actions, none of which is particularly dominant.

608 This is the volition of the four supramundane paths culminating in arahantship. Although the arahant performs deeds, his deeds no longer have any kammic potency to generate new existence or to bring forth results even in the present existence.

The pāli word “kusala” which have been translated as ‘wholesome’, literally means ‘skillful’. The Pāli Canon mentions four definitions for the term kusala, they are as follows; the source for this material is from BuddhaDhamma: The Laws of Nature and Their Benefits to Life by Bhikkhu P. A. Payutto.

1. Free of illness (ārogya) is mental health. That which is kusala is conducive to mental health and help to prevent mental illness. The mind that is under the sway of kusala is not distressed, agitated, impaired, or weak; rather, it is robust, nimble, pliable, and at ease.
2. Harmless and blameless (anavajja). The mind is without defect, free of corruption, unblemished, and undisturbed; complete, pure, clear, and bright.
3. Arising from wisdom and intelligence (kosalla sambhūta). A mind with kusala has wisdom and understanding; is luminous, and has clear sight into truth due to wise reflection (yoniso manasikāra). This is the primary definition for kusala.
4. Happiness arises as a result of kusala behaviour and leads to more happiness (sukha vipāka). When kusala is present in the mind, happiness and contentment arise immediately.

The following are examples of wholesome (kusala) qualities.

- mindfulness, the ability to sustain attention (sati)
- lovingkindness, goodwill, the wish for others to be happy (mettā)
- non-greed, absence of craving, the inclination to be generous (alobha)
- wisdom, penetrative insight (paññā)
- tranquillity (passaddhi), physical rest and mental calm, an absence of stress and restlessness
- wholesome enthusiasm, love of goodness, aspiration for truth (kusala chanda)
- delight and rejoicing when others succeed or are happy (muditā)
- faith in the Triple Gem (saddhā)
- training in moral precepts (sīla)
- concentration (samādhi)
- merit, goodness (puñña)

The pāli word “akusala” which has been translated as ‘unwholesome’ and literally means ‘unskillful’.

Akusala refers to an unsound state of mind, to a lack of mental health, and arise due to ignorance (avijjā) and result in suffering (dukkha). The following are examples of unwholesome (akusala) qualities.

- greed, covetousness, grasping (kāma chanda)

- ill-will, indignation, resentment (byāpāda)
- despondency, discouragement, apathy, listlessness, lethargy (thīna middha)
- restlessness, mental agitation, mental disturbance, moodiness, worry, anxiety (uddhacca kukkuccha)
- doubt, indecisiveness (vicikicchā)
- anger (kodha)
- envy (issā)
- stinginess, jealousy, a wish to obstruct others (macchariya)
- conceit, arrogance, pride (māna)
- lust, longing, yearning, wish, desire (rāga)
- prejudice (daṇḍha)
- wrong view (diṭṭhi)
- filthy, indecent, wicked, evil (pāpa) - are states of mind leading to the round of suffering (vaṭṭa dukkha) or states of mind leading to a bad destination (duggati)

When wholesome (kusala) qualities are present the mind is in a state of wellbeing. When unwholesome (akusala) qualities are present the mind is damaged.

Wholesome intention (kusala kamma) empowers wholesome behaviour and are produced by training in the following Ten Courses of Wholesome kamma (kusalakammamāpathā).

Bodily Behaviour

1. abstain from killing living beings (pāṇātipātā veramaṇī),
2. abstain from taking what is not given (adinnādānā veramaṇī),
3. abstain from wrong conduct in regard to sense pleasures-sexual desires, intoxicants, gambling, etc. (kāmesu micchācārā veramaṇī),

Verbal Behaviour

4. abstain from false speech (musāvādā veramaṇī),
5. abstain from slanderous, malicious, and tale bearing speech (pisuṇāya vacāya veramaṇī),
6. abstain from harsh speech (pharusāya vācāya veramaṇī),
7. abstain from idle chatter, gossiping, and useless speech (samphappalāpā veramaṇī),

Mental Behaviour

8. free from covetousness (anabhijjhā),
9. free from ill will (abyāpāda), and
10. hold right views, free from wrong views (sammādiṭṭhi).

The Ten Courses of Unwholesome kamma (akusalakammamāpathā) are the opposite of The Ten Courses of Wholesome kamma (kusalakammamāpathā).

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translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

167 (1) Paccorohaṇī (1)

(1) "Here, brahmin, the noble disciple reflects thus: 'The result of the destruction of life is bad both in this present life and in future lives.' Having reflected thus, he abandons the destruction of life; he descends from the destruction of life.

(2) "... 'The result of taking what is not given is bad both in this present life and in future lives.' Having reflected thus, he abandons taking what is not given; he descends from taking what is not given.

(3) "... 'The result of sexual misconduct is bad both in this present life and in future lives.' Having reflected thus, he abandons sexual misconduct; he descends from sexual misconduct.

(4) "... 'The result of false speech is bad both in this present life and in future lives.' Having reflected thus, he abandons false speech; he descends from false speech.

(5) "... 'The result of divisive speech is bad both in this present life and in future lives.' Having reflected thus, he abandons divisive speech; he descends from divisive speech.

(6) "... 'The result of harsh speech is bad both in this present life and in future lives.' Having reflected thus, he abandons harsh speech; he descends from harsh speech.

(7) "... 'The result of idle chatter is bad both in this present life and in future lives.' Having reflected thus, he abandons idle chatter; he descends from idle chatter.

(8) "... 'The result of longing is bad both in this present life and in future lives.' Having reflected thus, he abandons longing; he descends from longing.

(9) "... 'The result of ill will is bad both in this present life and in future lives.' Having reflected thus, he abandons ill will; he descends from ill will.

(10) "... 'The result of wrong view is bad both in this present life and in future lives.' Having reflected thus, he abandons wrong view; he descends from wrong view.

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translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

214 (4) Destruction of Life

"Bhikkhus, one possessing four qualities is deposited in hell as if brought there. What four? One destroys life, takes what is not given, engages in sexual misconduct, and speaks falsely. One possessing these four qualities is deposited in hell as if brought there.

"Bhikkhus, one possessing four qualities is deposited in heaven as if brought there. What four? One abstains from the destruction of life, from taking what is not given, from sexual misconduct, and from false speech. One possessing these four qualities is deposited in heaven as if brought there."

Wholesome kamma (kusala kamma) may also be created by training in the following Ten Bases of Meritorious Actions (puññakiriya vatthu); the source of this list is the Buddhist Commentary Atthasālinī: The Expositor.

1. Generosity (dāna),
2. Moral Precepts (sīla),
3. Meditation (bhāvanā),
4. Respectfulness (apacāyana),
5. Service (veyyāvacca),
6. Dedication of Merit (pattidāna),
7. Rejoicing in Others' Merit (pattānumodanā),
8. Listening to the Dhamma (dhammasavana),
9. Teaching the Dhamma (dhammadesanā), and
10. Righteous Views (diṭṭhijukamma).

The Itivuttaka: The Buddha's Sayings translated by Bhikkhu P. A. Payutto

30 Remorse (Tapaniya Sutta)

Monks, there are these two things that cause distress. Which two? There is the case of the person who has not done what is good, has not done what is wholesome, and has not performed meritorious deeds, which counteract fear. Instead he has done what is evil, savage and cruel. Thinking, 'I have not done what is wholesome; I have done what is evil', he is distressed.

Dependent on ignorance (avijjā), volitional formations (saṅkhārā) arise, this is stated in the Buddha's teaching of Dependent Origination (paṭicca samuppāda). Volitional formations are conditioned phenomena that arise due to volition (cetanā) and volition is kamma. Therefore, the root cause of kamma is ignorance.

Ignorance is defined as not knowing the Four Noble Truths (cattāri ariyasaccāni) and may also be understood as not knowing the Three Characteristics of Existence (ti-lakkhaṇa) as well as not understanding Dependent Origination (paṭicca samuppāda). Ignorance (avijjā) is relatively equivalent to delusion (moha).

The Noble Eightfold Path: Way to the End of Suffering by Bhikkhu Bodhi

Chapter 1, Footnote 1

Ignorance is actually identical in nature with the unwholesome root "delusion" (moha). When the Buddha speaks in a psychological context about mental factors, he generally uses the word "delusion" (moha); when he speaks about the causal basis of saṃsāra, he uses the word "ignorance" (avijjā).

Kamma is condition by three mental factors called roots (mūla).

The three unwholesome roots (akusala mūla) of unwholesome kamma (akusala kamma) are the following.

1. greed (lobha),
 2. hatred (dosa), and
 3. delusion (moha).
- Greed (lobha) is self-centered (egotistical) and unskillful desire for personal sensual gratification. Synonyms for greed are grasping (upādāna), craving (taṇhā), and attachment (rāga) .
 - Hatred (dosa) is the fear of associating with what is unwanted or not receiving what is wanted. Hatred is aversion towards unpleasant people, circumstances, and uncomfortable feelings. Synonyms for hatred are ill will (vyāpāda), aversion (dosa), resentment (upanāha), and anger (paṭigha or kodha).
 - Delusion (moha) is the mental factor of being deceived or misled due to ignorance. Delusion is the absence of understanding or insight into the nature of reality. Synonyms for delusion are ignorance (avijjā), dullness (middha), bewilderment (moha), misperception (vipallāsa), confusion (moha), blindness (andha), unawareness (avidyā), and wrong views (micchādiṭṭhi) of reality.

The three wholesome roots (kusala mūla) of wholesome kamma (kusala kamma) are the following.

1. non-greed (alobha)
 2. non-hatred (adosa), and
 3. non-delusion (amoha).
- Non-greed (alobha) is equivalent to generosity (dāna or cāga) and detachment (virāga).
 - Non-hatred (adosa) is equivalent to loving-kindness (mettā), free of hostility (anīgha), and absence of ill-will (avyāpāda).
 - Non-delusion (amoha) is equivalent to wisdom (paññā), knowledge (vijjā), and insight (ñāṇa).

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111 (9) Causes (1)

“Bhikkhus, there are these three causes for the origination of kamma. What three? Greed is a cause for the origination of kamma; hatred is a cause for the origination of kamma; delusion is a cause for the origination of kamma.

There are kammās that produce conditions that either advance or block the effects of other kammās. These conditions are the Four Accomplishments (sampatti) and the Four Defects (vipatti). When conditions are sufficient for wholesome kamma to bring forth the wholesome result and prevent unwholesome kamma to produce an effect then those conditions are called ‘sampatti’. When conditions are deficient for wholesome kamma to produce an effect then unwholesome kamma will bring forth the unwholesome result and those conditions are called ‘vipatti’. The Four Accomplishments (sampatti) are the following; the source for this material is from BuddhaDhamma: The Laws of Nature and Their Benefits to Life by Bhikkhu P. A. Payutto.

1. Accomplishment of Birth (gati sampatti) is to be reborn in a favourable environment and realm of existence. The environment is supportive of wellbeing.
2. Accomplishment of the Body (upadhi sampatti) is to have a fortunate body, pleasant physical features, an attractive body, healthy and strong.
3. Accomplishment of Time (kāla-sampatti) is to be reborn in a favourable time. The country is in a state of peace, with virtuous leaders and citizens, when people praise what is wholesome and condemn what is unwholesome.
4. Accomplishment of Undertaking (payoga sampatti) is having the knowledge and diligence for favourable activity. Actions are conducted appropriately and skillfully in accordance to what is required.

The Four Defects (vipatti) are the following.

1. Defect or Failure as Regards Place of Birth (gati vipatti) is being reborn in a unfavorable environment and realm of existence. The environment is not supportive of wellbeing.

2. Defect or Failure as Regards the Body (*upadhi vipatti*) is to have an unfortunate body, unpleasant physical features, an non-attractive body, sickly and weak.
3. Defect or Failure as Regards Time (*kāla vipatti*) is to be reborn in a unfavorable time. The country is in a state of war, with immoral leaders and citizens, when people praise what is unwholesome and condemn what is wholesome.
4. Defect or Failure as Regards Undertaking (*payoga vipatti*) is having a mind that is under the power of ignorance and laziness, favors wrongful activities. Actions are not conducted appropriately nor skillfully in accordance to what is required.

Kamma is not the only cause that conditions present and future circumstances. Everything that happens in *samsāra* is not due only to the effects of kamma. The Buddhist Commentaries describe how five natural laws (*niyāma*) influence the lives of sentient beings. The five laws are the following.

1. Physical Laws (*uthu niyāma*). This refers to the external environment and to alterations in physical matter. For example, the weather and seasons; and the fact that all things are subject to change and decay.
2. Biological Laws (*bija niyāma*). For example, the fact that a specific plant will produce a specific fruit.
3. Psychological Laws (*citta niyāma*). The laws of nature pertaining to the functioning of the mind. For example, cognition, perception, thinking, etc.
4. Law of Kamma (*kamma niyāma*). Natural laws pertaining to human behaviour. An example are moral laws.
5. Order of the Norm (*dhamma niyāma*). The law of nature pertaining to the interrelationship and mutual conditionality of all things, the general law of cause and effect. The above four laws are included in *dhamma niyāma*. An example of *dhamma niyāma* is the Three Characteristics of Existence (*ti-lakkhaṇa*) which are impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and not-self (*anattā*). The Law of Kamma is but one of the five laws that influence the lives of sentient beings, the other four laws also effects the lives of beings.

The Buddha's teaching of *anatta*, or not-self, is the reality that there is no permanent, unchanging entity or soul behind the individual's actions. The personality refers to various traits, tendencies, and patterns of behavior that are associated with an individual; and is a dynamic and ever-changing process, influenced by the above five natural laws (*niyāma*), including genetics, upbringing, cultural influences, education, and personal experiences. Kamma, one of the five natural laws, only has an indirect effect on the development of the personality. Past kamma do contribute to how perceptions are experienced and the acquiring of specific views, kamma does not exclusively determine the personality.

There are certain aspects of kamma that are called "*acinteyya*", which means they are beyond the scope of conceptual understanding and speculation; i.e., they are imponderable and immeasurable. The imponderable aspects of kamma are the following.

1. The results of kamma (*kammavipāka*), the specific outcomes or consequences of kamma are considered imponderable. Human beings, with the exception of a Buddha, cannot fully comprehend or predict how a particular action will manifest in the future. The effects of kamma are influenced by numerous factors, including the intention behind the action, the five laws of nature (*niyāma*), and the complex web of causes and conditions over countless past lives.
2. The workings of kamma, the precise mechanisms and processes by which kamma operates, are beyond conceptual understanding.
3. The range or extent of kamma refers to the span of its effects. Kamma can produce results that are limited to the present life, extend into future lives, or have both immediate and long-term consequences. The full extent of the range of kamma is incomprehensible, as it extends across multiple lifetimes and can interact with various conditions.
4. The ultimate origin or beginning of kamma is imponderable. Human understanding cannot determine when or how the cycle of kamma began. The Buddha emphasize the importance of focusing on the present moment and the cultivation of wholesome actions rather than becoming entangled in speculative inquiries about the origins of kamma and ignorance.

The classification of these aspects of kamma as *acinteyya* serves as a reminder of the limitations of conceptual thinking and the need to cultivate wisdom through direct experience and

meditative insight. Individuals are encouraged to focus on the practice of ethical conduct, meditation, and the development of wisdom to attain liberation from the cycle of kamma and rebirth (saṃsāra).

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya

translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

4.77 (7) Inconceivable Matters

“Bhikkhus, there are these four inconceivable [acinteyyāni] matters that one should not try to conceive; one who tries to conceive them would reap either madness or frustration. What four?

- (1) The domain of the Buddhas is an inconceivable matter that one should not try to conceive; one who tries to conceive it would reap either madness or frustration.
- (2) The domain of one in jhāna is an inconceivable matter ...
- (3) The result of kamma is an inconceivable matter ...
- (4) Speculation about the world is an inconceivable matter that one should not try to conceive; one who tries to conceive it would reap either madness or frustration. These are the four inconceivable matters that one should not try to conceive; one who tries to conceive them would reap either madness or frustration.”

The concept of kamma, which states that intentional actions have consequences in the present and future existences, is taught in the pāli suttas. However, the specific mechanics of how kamma operates are not discussed in the Pāli Canon.

The following categories and classifications of kamma originated in Buddhist Commentaries and Abhidhamma texts and are not discussed in the pāli suttas. The Pāli Canon does not use the following terms or provide detailed explanations about the mechanics of how various kammās interact with each other. The Buddhist Commentaries and Abhidhamma texts were created after the suttas were compiled in the Pāli Canon and are considered secondary sources and not equal in importance with the canonical texts.

Commentaries distinguish sixteen kinds of kamma in the following four groups of four; the source for this material is from BuddhaDhamma: The Laws of Nature and Their Benefits to Life by Bhikkhu P. A. Payutto.

- I. Kamma operates over time. The effects of kamma are not always immediate and can take place over a long period of time, sometimes extending across multiple lifetimes. The Four kammās According to its Time of Ripening (pākakāla) are as follows.
 1. Immediate effective kamma (ditṭhadhammavedanīya kamma) have effects that manifest in this present life. For example, if someone engages in a compassionate act and helps others in need, they may experience immediate feelings of joy and contentment as a result of their virtuous action. On the other hand, if someone engages in harmful actions such as lying, stealing, or causing harm to others, they may experience immediate feelings of guilt, remorse, or face legal repercussions or damaged relationships.
 2. Subsequently effective kamma (uppajjavedanīya kamma) have effects that are not immediate but will result in the next life, the next state of existence.
 3. Indefinitely effective kamma (aparāpariyavedanīya kamma) have effects across multiple lives, in subsequent states of existence.
 4. Ineffective kamma (ahosi kamma) refers to actions that do not produce effects. These kammās do not produce effects in this life (immediate effective kamma), in the next life (subsequent effective kamma) nor in future lives (indefinite effective kamma).
- II. Kamma may influence and modify one another. The four ways in which kamma produces results are called the Four Functioning (kicca) kammās and they are the following.
 5. Reproductive or Productive kamma (janaka kamma) results in the birth of the five aggregates (khandha) both at the moment of conception (paṭisandhi) and during the entire lifespan (pavatti kāla). This kamma is the last intentional thought at death which determines the destiny of the being at rebirth.
 6. Supportive kamma (upatthambana kamma) is not strong enough to produce a result by itself. This kamma supports reproductive kamma during the lifespan and may strengthen the effects of both wholesome and unwholesome kamma, making them more pronounced or enduring.

- For example, a fortunate birth may be accompanied with the supportive kamma of good health and happiness. An unfortunate birth may be accompanied with the supportive kamma of poor health and extensive suffering.
7. Counteractive or Obstructive kamma (upapīḷaka kamma) weakens, interrupts and retards the results of both reproductive kamma and supportive kamma. This kamma may diminish or weaken the effects of both wholesome and unwholesome kamma, making them less pronounced or short-lived. For example, a person with a fortunate birth may have ailments that prevent the enjoyment of happiness. An animal, a being of an unfortunate birth, may have the counteractive kamma to live a comfortable life.
 8. Destructive kamma (upaghātaka kamma) destroys both wholesome and unwholesome kamma, preventing them from producing results. For example, Devadatta who tried to kill the Buddha and cause a schism, though he had good reproductive kamma resulting in royal birth and supportive kamma that resulted in comfort and prosperity, his counteractive kamma resulted in him being excommunicated from the saṅgha, and the destructive kamma resulted in him experiencing dishonor and suffering.
- III. Kamma can be classified into categories based on the weight or severity of the actions and their results. The Four kmmas According to the Order of Bearing Fruit (pākadāna pariyāya) are as follows.
9. Weighty kamma (garuka kamma) have significant and long-lasting consequences. Weighty or serious kamma includes actions that are morally significant and produce results in this life or in the next life. The consequences of weighty kamma can have a profound impact in future experiences and can lead to rebirth in different realms of existence. Examples of wholesome weighty kamma are the eight concentrative attainments (samāpatti): the four rūpa jhānas and the four arūpa jhānas. Examples of unwholesome weighty kamma are the five heinous deeds (anantariya kamma): matricide, parricide, murder of arahant, wounding the Buddha and creation of schism in the saṅgha. Unwholesome weighty kamma also include actions such as killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, and intentional harm to others. Weighty kamma bears fruit first and override other forms of kamma.
 10. Habitual kamma (bahula or āciṅṅa kamma) refers to actions that are repeated frequently and become ingrained habits or patterns of behavior. For example, constant moral or immoral behaviour. These kmmas help shape the person's character and tendencies, influencing future actions and experiences. This kamma is also what was frequently recalled at the moments before death. If weighty kamma does not exist then habitual kamma will produce the effect.
 11. Death-Proximate kamma (āsanna kamma) is the action remembered at the moments before death. This kamma determines the destiny of the future birth. If the two aforementioned kinds of kmmas do not exist, then this proximate kamma bears fruit. There are customs in Buddhist countries that remind the dying person of the good deeds they have done throughout their life and also encourage them to perform acts of merit on their death bed in order to create proximate kamma.
 12. Cumulative or Reserve kamma (katattā kamma or katattāvāpana kamma) is performed with weak intention or kamma performed indirectly with some other intention in mind. This is a mild form of kamma. Whenever the three aforementioned kinds of kamma do not exist, this reserve kamma bears fruit. Reserve kamma also refers to actions that are consciously intended but are delayed in producing their effects. These kmmas may manifest their effects in a future life rather than in the present one. For example, when someone performs a wholesome kamma with the intention of its effects to manifest in a future existence.
- IV. Kamma is also classified into four categories based on the realm in which the effects take place. The Four kmmas According to the Location - Sphere of Existence (bhava) - in which its Effect (pākatthāna) Takes Place are the following.
13. Unwholesome or Immoral kamma (akusala kamma) refers to the Ten Unwholesome Courses of Action (akusala kammaṃpatha). These kmmas will ripen in the four realms of misery (apāya bhūmi): animal (tiracchāna loka), ghost (peta loka), demon (asura loka), and hell (niraya loka) realms.

14. Wholesome or Moral kamma (kāmāvacarakusala kamma) refers to the Ten Wholesome Courses of Action (kusala kammaṃpatha) and the ten bases of meritorious action (puññakiriya vatthu). These kammās will lead to birth in the seven sensuous happy planes (kāmasugati bhūmi): six celestial realms (sagga) and the human realm (manussa).
15. Wholesome kamma (rūpāvacarakusala kamma) refers to the four fine-material jhānas that are experienced by accomplished meditators. These meditators take birth in the fine-material realms (rūpa bhava).
16. Wholesome kamma (arūpāvacarakusala kamma) refers to the four formless jhānas that are experienced by accomplished meditators. These meditators take birth in the formless realms (arūpa bhava).

Some of these categories do have a basis in the Pāli Canon. This is true with the first three factors of the first group, classified according to the time of taking effect.

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translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

6.63 (9) Penetrative

(5) “And what is the result of kamma? The result of kamma, I say, is threefold: [to be experienced] in this very life, or in the [next] rebirth, or on some subsequent occasion. This is called the result of kamma.

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya

translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

34 (4) Causes

“Bhikkhus, there are these three causes for the origination of kamma. What three? Greed is a cause for the origination of kamma; hatred is a cause for the origination of kamma; delusion is a cause for the origination of kamma.

- (1) “Any kamma, bhikkhus, fashioned through greed, born of greed, caused by greed, originated by greed, ripens wherever the individual is reborn. Wherever that kamma ripens, it is there that one experiences its result, either in this very life, or in the [next] rebirth, or on some subsequent occasion.
- (2) “Any kamma fashioned through hatred, born of hatred, caused by hatred, originated by hatred, ripens wherever the individual is reborn. Wherever that kamma ripens, it is there that one experiences its result, either in this very life, or in the [next] rebirth, or on some subsequent occasion.
- (3) “Any kamma fashioned through delusion, born of delusion, caused by delusion, originated by delusion, ripens wherever the individual is reborn. Wherever that kamma ripens, it is there that one experiences its result, either in this very life, or in the [next] rebirth, or on some subsequent occasion.

The following sutta is included for study and is concerned with the results (vipāka) of kamma.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by

Bhikkhu Bodhi

135 Cūḷakammavibhanga Sutta: The Shorter Exposition of Action

3. “Master Gotama, what is the cause and condition why human beings are seen to be inferior and superior? For people are seen to be short-lived and long-lived, sickly and healthy, ugly and beautiful, uninfluential and influential, poor and wealthy, low-born and high-born, stupid and wise. What is the cause and condition, Master Gotama, why human beings are seen to be inferior and superior?”

4. “Student, beings are owners of their actions [kamma], heirs of their actions [kamma]; they originate from their actions [kamma], are bound to their actions [kamma], have their actions [kamma] as their refuge. It is action [kamma] that distinguishes beings as inferior and superior.” ...

5. “Here, student, some man or woman kills living beings and is murderous, bloody-handed, given to blows and violence, merciless to living beings. Because of performing and undertaking

such action [kamma], on the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in a state of deprivation, in an unhappy destination, in perdition, even in hell. But if on the dissolution of the body, after death, he does not reappear in a state of deprivation, in an unhappy destination, in perdition, in hell, but instead comes back to the human state, then wherever he is reborn he is short-lived.¹²²⁴ This is the way, student, that leads to short life, namely, one kills living beings and is murderous, bloody-handed, given to blows and violence, merciless to living beings.

6. "But here, student, some man or woman, abandoning the killing of living beings, abstains from killing living beings; with rod and weapon laid aside, gentle and kindly, he abides compassionate to all living beings. Because of performing and undertaking such action [kamma], on the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in a happy destination, even in the heavenly world. But if on the dissolution of the body, after death, he does not reappear in a happy destination, in the heavenly world, but instead comes back to the human state, then wherever he is reborn he is long-lived.¹²²⁵ This is the way, student, that leads to long life, namely, abandoning the killing of living beings, one abstains from killing living beings; with rod and weapon laid aside, gentle and kindly, one abides compassionate to all living beings.

7. "Here, student, some man or woman is given to injuring beings with the hand, with a clod, with a stick, or with a knife. Because of performing and undertaking such action [kamma], on the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in a state of deprivation... But if instead he comes back to the human state, then wherever he is reborn he is sickly. This is the way, student, that leads to sickness, namely, one is given to injuring beings with the hand, with a clod, with a stick, or with a knife.

8. "But here, student, some man or woman is not given to injuring beings with the hand, with a clod, with a stick, or with a knife. Because of performing and undertaking such action [kamma], on the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in a happy destination... But if instead he comes back to the human state, then wherever he is reborn he is healthy. This is the way, student, that leads to health, namely, one is not given to injuring beings with the hand, with a clod, with a stick, or with a knife.

9. "Here, student, some man or woman is of an angry and irritable character; even when criticised a little, he is offended, becomes angry, hostile, and resentful, and displays anger, hate, and bitterness. Because of performing and undertaking such action [kamma]... he reappears in a state of deprivation... But if instead he comes back to the human state, then wherever he is reborn he is ugly. This is the way, student, that leads to ugliness, namely, one is of an angry and irritable character... and displays anger, hate, and bitterness.

10. "But here, student, some man or woman is not of an angry and irritable character; even when criticised a lot, he is not offended, does not become angry, hostile, and resentful, and does not display anger, hate, and bitterness. Because of performing and undertaking such action [kamma]... he reappears in a happy destination... But if instead he comes back to the human state, then wherever he is reborn he is beautiful. This is the way, student, that leads to being beautiful, namely, one is not of an angry and irritable character... and does not display anger, hate, and bitterness.

11. "Here, student, some man or woman is envious, one who envies, resents, and begrudges the gains, honour, respect, reverence, salutations, and veneration received by others. Because of performing and undertaking such action [kamma]... he reappears in a state of deprivation... But if instead he comes back to the human state, then wherever he is reborn he is uninfluential. This is the way, student, that leads to being uninfluential, namely, one is envious... towards the gains, honour, respect, reverence, salutations, and veneration received by others.

12. "But here, student, some man or woman is not envious, one who does not envy, resent, and begrudge the gains, honour, respect, reverence, salutations, and veneration received by others. Because of performing and undertaking such action [kamma]... he reappears in a happy destination... But if instead he comes back to the human state, then wherever he is reborn he is influential. This is the way, student, that leads to being influential, namely, one is not envious... towards the gains, honour, respect, reverence, salutations, and veneration received by others.

13. "Here, student, some man or woman does not give food, drink, clothing, carriages, garlands, scents, unguents, beds, dwelling, and lamps to recluses or brahmins. Because of performing and

undertaking such action [kamma]... he reappears in a state of deprivation... But if instead he comes back to the human state, then wherever he is reborn he is poor. This is the way, student, that leads to poverty, namely, one does not give food... and lamps to recluses or brahmins.

14. "But here, student, some man or woman gives food... and lamps to recluses or brahmins. Because of performing and undertaking such action [kamma]... he reappears in a happy destination... But if instead he comes back to the human state, then wherever he is reborn he is wealthy. This is the way, student, that leads to wealth, namely, one gives food... and lamps to recluses or brahmins.

15. "Here, student, some man or woman is obstinate and arrogant; he does not pay homage to one who should receive homage, does not rise up for one in whose presence he should rise up, does not offer a seat to one who deserves a seat, does not make way for one for whom he should make way, and does not honour, respect, revere, and venerate one who should be honoured, respected, revered, and venerated. Because of performing and undertaking such action [kamma]... he reappears in a state of deprivation... But if instead he comes back to the human state, then wherever he is reborn he is low-born. This is the way, student, that leads to low birth, namely, one is obstinate and arrogant... and does not honour, respect, revere, and venerate one who should be honoured, respected, revered, and venerated.

16. "But here, student, some man or woman is not obstinate and arrogant; he pays homage to one who should receive homage, rises up for one in whose presence he should rise up, offers a seat to one who deserves a seat, makes way for one for whom he should make way, and honours, respects, reveres, and venerates one who should be honoured, respected, revered, and venerated. Because of performing and undertaking such action [kamma]... he reappears in a happy destination... But if instead he comes back to the human state, then wherever he is reborn he is high-born. This is the way, student, that leads to high birth, namely, one is not obstinate and arrogant... and honours, respects, reveres, and venerates one who should be honoured, respected, revered, and venerated.

17. "Here, student, some man or woman does not visit a recluse or a brahmin and ask: 'Venerable sir, what is wholesome? What is unwholesome? What is blameable? What is blameless? What should be cultivated? What should not be cultivated? What kind of action [kamma] will lead to my harm and suffering for a long time? What kind of action [kamma] will lead to my welfare and happiness for a long time?' Because of performing and undertaking such action [kamma]... he reappears in a state of deprivation... But if instead he comes back to the human state, then wherever he is reborn he is stupid. This is the way, student, that leads to stupidity, namely, one does not visit a recluse or brahmin and ask such questions.

18. "But here, student, some man or woman visits a recluse or a brahmin and asks: 'Venerable sir, what is wholesome?... What kind of action [kamma] will lead to my welfare and happiness for a long time?' Because of performing and undertaking such action [kamma]... he reappears in a happy destination... But if instead he comes back to the human state, then wherever he is reborn he is wise. This is the way, student, that leads to wisdom, namely, one visits a recluse or brahmin and asks such questions.

19. "Thus, student, the way that leads to short life makes people short-lived, the way that leads to long life makes people long-lived; the way that leads to sickness makes people sickly, the way that leads to health makes people healthy; the way that leads to ugliness makes people ugly, the way that leads to beauty makes people beautiful; the way that leads to being uninfluential makes people uninfluential, the way that leads to being influential makes people influential; the way that leads to poverty makes people poor, the way that leads to wealth makes people wealthy; the way that leads to low birth makes people low-born, the way that leads to high birth makes people high-born; the way that leads to stupidity makes people stupid, the way that leads to wisdom makes people wise.

20. "Beings are owners of their actions [kamma], student, heirs of their actions [kamma]; they originate from their actions [kamma], are bound to their actions [kamma], have their actions [kamma] as their refuge. It is action [kamma] that distinguishes beings as inferior and superior."

Notes:

- 1224 If the kamma of killing directly determines the mode of rebirth, it will produce rebirth in one of the states of deprivation. But if a wholesome kamma brings about a human rebirth — and rebirth as a human being is always the result of wholesome kamma — the kamma of killing will operate in a manner contrary to that of the rebirth-generative kamma by causing various adversities that may eventuate in a premature death. The same principle holds for the subsequent cases in which unwholesome kamma comes to maturity in a human existence: in each case the unwholesome kamma counteracts the wholesome kamma responsible for the human rebirth by engendering a specific type of misfortune corresponding to its own distinctive quality.
- 1225 In this case the wholesome kamma of abstaining from killing may be directly responsible for either the heavenly rebirth or the longevity in a human existence. The same principle applies in all the passages on the maturation of wholesome kamma.

September 2023 - Tranquility Meditation (samatha) and The Five Hindrances (pañca nīvaraṇā)

This September Newsletter will discuss Tranquility Meditation (samatha) and The Five Hindrances (pañca nīvaraṇā). The October Newsletter will discuss Insight Meditation (vipassanā). There will be some overlap when discussing these two forms of meditation: tranquility and insight.

The pāli word "bhāvanā" is translated as 'meditation' and is the practice of mental cultivation that includes mindfulness (sati), concentration (samādhi), development of wholesome (kusala) qualities of mind, and wisdom (paññā). Bhāvanā is the process of training the mind to develop calm abiding (samatha) and insight (vipassanā) into the nature of reality. Meditation (bhāvanā) consist of the following two categories:

1. serenity or tranquility meditation (samatha bhāvanā) that cultivates concentration (samādhi), and
2. insight meditation (vipassanā bhāvanā) that cultivates wisdom (paññā).

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya
translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

2.31 (11) "Bhikkhus, these two things pertain to true knowledge. What two? Serenity and insight. When serenity is developed, what benefit does one experience? The mind is developed. When the mind is developed, what benefit does one experience? Lust is abandoned. When insight is developed, what benefit does one experience? Wisdom is developed. When wisdom is developed, what benefit does one experience? Ignorance is abandoned.

"A mind defiled by lust is not liberated, and wisdom defiled by ignorance is not developed. Thus, bhikkhus, through the fading away of lust there is liberation of mind, and through the fading away of ignorance there is liberation by wisdom."

Of these two categories, the cultivation of insight (vipassanā) has the greater importance because wisdom (paññā) is necessary to uproot from the mind the Three Unwholesome Roots (akusala mūla). The Three Unwholesome Roots (akusala mūla) are the following:

1. delusion (moha) = ignorance (avijjā),
2. greed (lobha), and
3. hatred (dosa).

The three unwholesome roots cause the cycle of repeated birth, ageing, sickness, death, and rebirth (saṃsāra) and also the suffering (dukkha) experienced within saṃsāra. Tranquility meditation (samatha) and the development of concentration (samādhi) contribute to the practice of insight meditation (vipassanā), and also serve as a comfortable and restful dwelling for the mind, pleasant abiding (sukha vihārāya) in this life.

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya
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4.41 (1) Concentration

"Bhikkhus, there are these four developments of concentration. What four? (1) There is a development of concentration that leads to dwelling happily in this very life. (2) There is a development of concentration that leads to obtaining knowledge and vision [ñānadassana]. (3) There is a development of concentration that leads to mindfulness and clear comprehension. (4) There is a development of concentration that leads to the destruction of the taints [āsavakkhaya]. (1) "And what, bhikkhus, is the development of concentration that leads to dwelling happily in this very life? Here, secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, a bhikkhu enters and dwells in the first jhāna, which consists of rapture and pleasure born of seclusion, accompanied by thought and examination. With the subsiding of thought and examination, he enters and dwells in the second jhāna, which has internal placidity and unification of mind and consists of rapture and pleasure born of concentration, without thought and examination. With the

fading away as well of rapture, he dwells equanimous and, mindful and clearly comprehending, he experiences pleasure with the body; he enters and dwells in the third jhāna of which the noble ones declare: 'He is equanimous, mindful, one who dwells happily.' With the abandoning of pleasure and pain, and with the previous passing away of joy and dejection, he enters and dwells in the fourth jhāna, neither painful nor pleasant, which has purification of mindfulness by equanimity. This is called the development of concentration that leads to dwelling happily in this very life.⁷¹⁷

(2) "And what is the development of concentration that leads to obtaining knowledge and vision? Here, a bhikkhu attends to the perception of light; he focuses on the perception of day thus: 'As by day, so at night; as at night, so by day.' Thus, with a mind that is open and uncovered, he develops a mind imbued with luminosity. This is the development of concentration that leads to obtaining knowledge and vision.

(3) "And what is the development of concentration that leads to mindfulness and clear comprehension? Here, a bhikkhu knows feelings as they arise, as they remain present, as they disappear; he knows perceptions as they arise, as they remain present, as they disappear; he knows thoughts as they arise, as they remain present, as they disappear. This is the development of concentration that leads to mindfulness and clear comprehension.

(4) "And what is the development of concentration that leads to the destruction of the taints? Here, a bhikkhu dwells contemplating arising and vanishing in the five aggregates subject to clinging: 'Such is form, such its origin, such its passing away; such is feeling ... such is perception ... such are volitional activities ... such is consciousness, such its origin, such its passing away.' This is the development of concentration that leads to the destruction of the taints.

"These are the four developments of concentration. And it was with reference to this that I said in the Pārāyana, in 'The Questions of Puṇṇaka':

"Having comprehended the world's highs and lows,
he is not perturbed by anything in the world.
Peaceful, fumeless, untroubled, wishless,
he has, I say, crossed over birth and old age."

Note 717: Evidently, this refers to the attainment of the jhānas either by one who does not use them to develop insight, or by an arahant, who enters the jhānas simply to dwell at ease. Elsewhere the jhānas are shown to lead to the destruction of the taints.

The practice of meditation produces merit (puñña). Merit is wholesome action (kusala kamma) that reaps benefit in this present life and in future lives, and merit is also a necessary condition to escape from the repeated cycle of rebirth (saṃsāra). The suttas in the Pāli Canon mentions mental development-meditation as one of the Three Kinds of Meritorious Actions (puñña kiriya vatthu). The Three Kinds of Meritorious Actions are the following:

1. generosity (dāna),
2. virtue (sīla), and
3. meditation (bhāvanā).

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya

translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

8.36 (6) Activity

"Bhikkhus, there are these three bases of meritorious activity. What three? The basis of meritorious activity consisting in giving; the basis of meritorious activity consisting in virtuous behavior; and the basis of meritorious activity consisting in meditative development.

The suttas also mention delight in mental development-meditation (bhāvanārāmatā) as one of the Four Noble Usages (ariyavaṃsa) for a monastic. A monastic, defined in the Buddhist Commentary Dhammapada-atthakathā by Buddhaghosa, as "the person who sees danger (in saṃsāra)". The Four Noble Usages are the following:

1. content with any robe (cīvara),
2. content with any almsfood (piṇḍapāta),

3. content with any lodging (senāsana), and
4. delight in mental development-meditation (bhāvanā) and abandoning the defilements (kilesa).

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya

translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

4.28 (8) Noble Lineages

- (1) “Here, a bhikkhu is content with any kind of robe ...
- (2) “Again, a bhikkhu is content with any kind of almsfood ...
- (3) “Again, a bhikkhu is content with any kind of lodging ...
- (4) “Again, a bhikkhu finds delight in development, is delighted with development, finds delight in abandoning, is delighted with abandoning.⁶⁸⁰ ...

Note 680 Mp [Buddhist Commentary Manorathapūranī (Aṅguttara Nikāya-atthakathā)]: “Finds delight in development (bhāvanārāmo): He delights in developing the four establishments of mindfulness, the four right strivings, the four bases for psychic potency, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven enlightenment factors, the seven contemplations, the eighteen great insights, the thirty-seven aids to enlightenment, and the thirty-eight meditation objects. Finds delight in abandoning (pahānārāmo): He delights in abandoning the defilements of sensual desire and so forth.”

Tranquility Meditation (samatha) aims to calm and stabilize the mind by focusing on a meditation anchor (kasiṇa). A meditation anchor is a visual, auditory or tactile object that practitioners use to focus their attention during meditation to develop mindfulness (sati) and concentration (samādhi). The anchor is used to settle the mind from mental distractions and proliferation with thinking, feelings and emotions. The anchor is discussed in greater detail below.

The practice of meditation cultivates mental tranquility which leads to absorption concentration (jhāna). Absorption concentration (jhāna) or “one-pointedness of mind” (ekaggata) is achieved through sustained concentration on a meditation anchor.

The experience of uncomfortable physical sensations of the body (dukkha) during meditation is normal. Movement of the body alleviates dukkha to some degree and will tend to also move the mind from stillness. To cultivate a still, silent and peaceful mind it is best not to move the body during meditation, at the very least minimize movement of the body. There is benefit in meditation that investigates the arising, change, location and intensity of dukkha by paying attention to dukkha without identification or getting entangled with the unpleasant feelings. Identify instead with the observer that transcends dukkha, thereby liberation from dukkha is cultivated. However, if the mental faculties of energy (virīya), mindfulness (sati) and concentration (samādhi) are not sufficient to remain aloof from dukkha, then the experience of dukkha will disturb the peace of mind without advancing towards liberation from dukkha; in such a situation, move the body mindfully to a more comfortable position. A suggested way of practice with weak mental faculties is to stay with dukkha for a few minutes longer in each meditation session before moving the body in order to exercise and strengthen the ‘muscles’ of energy, mindfulness and concentration.

During meditation, thoughts will naturally arise. When thoughts arise, acknowledge them without becoming attached, interested or reactive. Allow thoughts and any content of mind to pass through the awareness like clouds (~content) drifting across the sky (~awareness), observe them without attachment or interest and let them pass, and gently turn attention back to the meditation anchor or to the physical sensations of the posture. Let go of thoughts about the past or the future, and bring attention fully to the present moment. The contents of mind are one or more of the following Five Aggregates (khandā):

1. material form (rūpa khandha),
2. mental formations (saṅkhāra khandha),
3. perceptions (saññā khandha),
4. feelings (vedanā khandha), and
5. sense consciousness (viññāṇa khandha).

During meditation attention is directed to the meditation anchor and may be practiced in the following Four Bodily Postures (īryāpatha):

1. sitting posture (nisinna),
 2. standing posture (ṭhita),
 3. walking posture (gacchanta), and
 4. lying down posture (sayāna).
1. Sitting posture (nisinna) for meditation is performed with a still body that supports a still mind. Sit so that the body is comfortable and in a position that can be maintained without moving for the entire meditation period.
- The sitting posture may take various forms based on stability, individual comfort and physical limitations. The posture position should allow sitting for an extended period without discomfort or distraction. The following are some popular positions used for sitting meditation.
- Full lotus position is achieved by placing the right foot on the left thigh and the left foot on the right thigh.
 - Half lotus position is achieved by placing one foot on the opposite thigh while the other foot rests on the floor.
 - Burmese position is a simpler form of the half lotus position, both feet are placed on the floor with legs crossed and ankles slightly overlapping.
 - Seiza position is achieved by kneeling with the buttocks resting on the heels and the hands placed on the thighs or on the lap. The use of a cushion or bench may also be used to support the buttocks and reduce strain on the knees.
 - Chair position is suitable for when the floor-based postures are uncomfortable. Sit on a chair with the back straight and feet flat on the ground, without leaning against the chair's backrest.
- Sit on a cushion (zafu) and meditation mat to elevate the hips slightly. This may help to maintain a more stable and comfortable posture. A meditation bench may be used when sitting cross-legged is uncomfortable.
 - Straighten the back and relax the shoulders to ensure that the spine is erect and straight. Imagine a string pulling the crown of the head toward the ceiling. The straight back helps to maintain alertness and prevents drowsiness. Relax the shoulders, let the arms and hands rest naturally, and avoid tensing any muscles.
 - The knees, when possible, should touch the floor to support a stable posture.
 - Place the hands on the lap, either resting one hand on top of the other with the palms facing upward or forming a meditation hand gesture (mudra). The Dhyana Mudra is formed where the hands rest on the lap, right hand on top of the left, with the tips of the thumbs gently touching.
 - The head is slightly tilted down and tuck the chin slightly to align the neck with the spine. This prevents strain on the neck.
 - Close the eyes in order to avoid stimulation from visual objects. However, when experiencing drowsiness try opening the eyes either half way or completely open so that light can stimulate the mind and produce alertness.
2. Standing posture (ṭhita) for meditation is the practice of mindfulness while standing. This can be particularly useful during daily activities, such as when waiting in line.
- Choose a suitable location that is quiet and without distractions. Stand upright with the feet shoulder width apart, the back is straight but not tense, allow the arms to hang naturally by the sides, and relax the shoulders and neck.
 - Begin by taking a few deep breaths to relax the body and mind. Then, bring attention to the sensation of standing. Feel the weight of the body on the feet, the pressure of the feet on the ground, and the overall sensation of balance and stability. Slowly scan the body from head to toe, and from toe to head, and notice any areas of tension or discomfort. Release tension by relaxing the muscles in the stressed areas.
3. Walking posture (gacchanta) for meditation utilizes the energy of physical motion to keep the body awake, and the mind alert, mindful and concentrated. Walking mindfully may also be practiced in everyday activities by being fully present, promoting a sense of calm and clarity. Walking meditation is also used to refreshen the mind and body after periods of sitting meditation.

- One way to practice walking meditation is to walk at a slightly slower pace than normal for about thirty paces, make a complete stop at the end of the path, turn mindfully around and completely stop, before you begin to walk in the opposite direction along the path. Be attentive to the turning motion, and maintain awareness and mindfulness of each step. The mind is mindful and concentrated on the meditation anchor and/or to the sensations and movements of the feet and legs during each step.
 - Walk upright with a relaxed posture. The hands may be in a hand gesture (mudra), such as one hand gently holding the other at belly level or the arms swinging relaxed at the sides. Start by taking a few deep breaths to relax the body and mind, and begin walking at a slower pace than the usual gait.
 - Maintain awareness of the body throughout the practice, feeling the movements of the legs, hips, and arms during the walk. Feel the sensations in the feet as they make contact with the ground.
4. Lying down posture (sayāna) for meditation is awareness of the body and mind while lying down. While lying down meditation is calming and suitable for when the body is sick, it's important not to fall asleep during the practice but to remain fully awake, aware and attentive.
- Lie down on the back in a comfortable and relaxed position. A cushion or a yoga mat may be used for support. Keep the body straight but not rigid, and let the arms rest by the sides with palms facing up. Small pillows may be placed under the head and knees if needed for added comfort.
 - Perform a body scan by systematically directing the attention to different parts of the body, starting from the toes and moving upward to the head, and then from the head downward to the toes, paying attention to the sensations in the body. Release any tension or discomfort that is present in the parts of the body during the scan.

The development of tranquility (samatha) and meditative absorption (jhāna) allows for the temporary suppression of Five Hindrances which are obstacles or barriers to the development of deep states of tranquility, concentration (samādhi), and insight (vipassanā). Permanent suppression of the Five Hindrances are achieved through wisdom (paññā) and wisdom is developed with insight meditation (vipassanā). **The Five Hindrances (pañca nīvaraṇā)** are the following:

- I. sensual desire (kāmacchanda),
- II. ill will (vyāpāda),
- III. sloth and torpor (thīnamiddha),
- IV. restlessness and remorse (uddhaccakukkucca), and
- V. doubt (vicikicchā).

The hindrances, hinders one's progress on the spiritual path because it keeps the mind bound to the cycle of suffering (saṃsāra).

The following are general practices recommended to overcome the hindrances.

1. Recognize the hindrances when they initially arise, investigate them in terms of the Three Characteristics of Existence, and thereby let go of the hindrances. The Three Characteristics of Existence (ti-lakkhaṇa) are the following:
 - viii. impermanence (anicca),
 - ix. suffering (dukkha), and
 - x. not-self (anatta).

The hindrances are nothing other than thoughts, emotions, habits, and conditions of mind. Practice mindfulness (sati) of the impermanent nature of the hindrances by observing their arising and passing away without getting caught up in or entangled with them. Suffering is experienced when you crave or attach to that which is impermanent. That which is impermanent and suffering is not-self. The mind is able to let go of the hindrances upon realization of their three characteristics and will then be able to rest in equanimity (upekkhā). The practice of equanimity is discussed with the practice of the Divine Abodes (brahmavihāra) below.
2. Understand the causes and conditions that give rise to the hindrances by cultivating mindfulness (sati), concentration (samādhi) and insight (vipassanā) which recognizes the hindrances when they initially arise. The following are general causes for the arising of the hindrances.
 - i. Unrestrained sensory indulgence, engaging excessively in sensory pleasures without moderation can fuel the hindrance of sensual desire (kāmacchanda). Therefore, do not expose

- the mind to a degree of sensory stimulation that causes the mind to be overwhelmed and forgetful of the necessity to stay mindful, alert and aware.
- ii. Habitual patterns and frequent experiences of aversion, anger, and hostility can strengthen the hindrance of ill-will (vyāpāda). Therefore, train the mind to remain in a state of loving-kindness (metta) as the usual mode.
 - iii. Lack of energy (virīya) and effort in cultivating mindfulness (sati), concentration (samādhi), and wisdom (paññā) can lead to the hindrance of sloth and torpor (thīnamiddha). Therefore, put forth effort even when there is a perception of tiredness due to the fact that perceptions are not trustworthy and also, available energy does increase when effort is exerted that goes beyond perceived limitations.
 - iv. An overly busy or agitated lifestyle can contribute to the hindrance of restlessness and remorse (uddhaccakukkucca). Therefore, simplify one's life by minimizing possessions, clutter, and plans to achieve Worldly Concerns. The Eight Worldly Concerns (lokadhamma) are the following:
 1. Hope for gain (lābha) is attachment to gaining material possessions, wealth, and favorable circumstances.
 2. Fear of loss (alābha) is aversion to loss, poverty, and unfavorable conditions.
 3. Hope for fame (yasa) is attachment to gaining recognition, praise, and popularity.
 4. Fear of disrepute (ayasa) is aversion to insignificance and a negative reputation.
 5. Hope for praise (pasamsā) is attachment to receiving praise, compliments, and positive feedback.
 6. Fear of criticism (nindā) is aversion to criticism, negative feedback, and blame.
 7. Hope for pleasure (sukha) is attachment to experiencing pleasure, comfort, and happiness.
 8. Fear of pain (dukkha) is aversion to misery, discomfort, and suffering.
 - v. Insufficient study and practice of the teachings (Dhamma) and not associating with spiritual friends (kalyāṇa-mitta) can lead to the hindrance of doubt (vicikicchā). Therefore, associate with others who are training the mind in accordance with the Dhamma, and maintain daily discipline of study and practice of the teachings.
 - vi. External influences, environmental factors, and social conditioning can contribute to the arising of the hindrances. Avoid situations, environments, and individuals that are not supportive for spiritual practice but instead nurture the hindrances. Therefore, live in a wholesome and supportive environment for spiritual development, and engage in Right Livelihood (sammā ājiva). Right Livelihood does not employ the following five occupations:
 1. trading in weapons (satthavaṇijjā),
 2. trading in living beings (sattavaṇijjā),
 3. trading in meat (maṃsavaṇijjā),
 4. trading in intoxicants (majjavaṇijjā), and
 5. trading in poisons (visaṇijjā).
3. Mindfulness (sati) of the contents of mind, one or more of the Five Aggregates (khandā) mentioned above, will enable the mind to grow in consciousness, thereby have greater awareness of the arising of the hindrances as a content of mind. Mindfulness meditation involves observing the mind, acknowledging the arising of the hindrances and letting them go with equanimity (upekkhā). Mindfulness allows the mind to observe the hindrances without getting entangled in them, thereby gradually weakening their power. When you notice the hindrances arising, redirect your attention to something more beneficial, such as the meditation object, the breath (anapanasati), loving-kindness (metta), or contemplation on impermanence (anicca). Mindfulness practice also helps in maintaining presence and awareness of mind and body during daily activities outside of formal meditation.
 4. Meditation (bhāvanā) cultivates tranquility and insight. Tranquility meditation (samatha) aims to cultivate a calm, focused, and a stable mind by calming the mental hindrances. Insight meditation (vipassana) is used to specifically target and investigate each of the hindrances in terms of the Three Characteristics of Existence (ti-lakkhaṇa).

5. Paying attention to the breath (anapanasati) as a meditation anchor is used to develop mindfulness and to subdue the hindrances. The practice is be mindful of the rhythm of breathing, inhalation and exhalation. Pay attention to only one breath at a time, the breath that is here and now. Do not think of past or future breaths. Pay attention to whether the breath is long or short, warm or cool, and feel the breath entering and leaving the lungs.

A long breath has benefits over a short breath. The long breath calms the body and mind, and exercises the faculties of energy (viriyā), mindfulness (sati) and concentration (samādhi) in maintaining the long breath. Reciting the mantra “one long breath” while paying attention to the rhythm of breathing may also be helpful in reminding yourself to just pay attention to that one long breath.

Another method of practicing mindfulness of breathing is to count the breaths. The pair of inhalation and exhalation is counted as one number. Breath in “one”, breath out “one”, breath in “two”, breath out “two”, and so on up to “eight”; then start to count backwards from “eight” down to “one”. “Eight” as the limit of counting is selected for its reference to the Noble Eightfold Path (ariya aṭṭhaṅgika magga). Counting the breaths is useful when the mind is restless with thinking.

Increase focus and awareness of the breath immediately upon the initial rising of the hindrances (nīvaraṇā).

6. Meditating on the sound of silence, a refined meditation anchor or sign (nimitta), is useful in bringing the mind to subtle and deep states of concentration where the hindrances are temporarily not present. The sound of silence is heard as a background sound when the mind is quiet and still. The hindrances does not arise when there is no sense of self. Ajahn Sumedho explains the relationship between the sound of silence and the absence of a sense of self.

The Four Noble Truths by Ajahn Sumedho

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See if you can hear a kind of ringing sound in the mind, the sound of silence, the primordial sound. When you concentrate your attention on that, you can reflect: ‘Is there any sense of self?’ You see that when you’re really empty - when there’s just clarity, alertness and attention - there’s no self. There’s no sense of me and mine.”

7. Associate with spiritual friends (kalyāṇa-mitta), like-minded practitioners and spiritual mentors, will provide support and encouragement to overcome the hindrances. Participation in group meditation and Dhamma discussions will serve to inspire and motivate, so that the hindrances can be overcome with consistent practice. Wholesome (kusala) behavior, environments and spiritual friends will provide support to cultivate wholesome mental states.
8. Practice patience (khanti) and endurance (adhivāsanā) during the process of training in the various spiritual practices used to cultivate wholesome (kusala) and skillful (upāyakosalla) qualities.

Do not expect instant gratification. Obstacles and problems in one’s personal life or with spiritual practices will probably not be resolved quickly. There is wisdom in adopting a long term view that benefits from the practice will be perceived over an extended period. Patience and endurance are some of the most valuable qualities of mind to be cultivated.

Patience refers to the ability to remain calm, composed, and tolerant when confronted with difficulties, provocations, or suffering (dukkha); and is the capacity to endure hardships and challenges without becoming reactive or agitated. Patience goes beyond mere tolerance, it involves developing a deep understanding of the impermanence and interconnectedness of all of life. Practicing patience allows individuals to avoid unnecessary conflicts and maintain inner peace (santi) and equanimity (upekkhā); it involves letting go of anger, hatred, and the desire for revenge. Patience encourages compassion and empathy towards oneself and others. By cultivating patience, practitioners can break free from the cycle of suffering (saṃsāra), develop peace and contentment (santuṭṭhi), and remain in harmony with others, the environment and with oneself.

Endurance refers to the energy, diligence, and effort required to overcome obstacles and to persist in one’s spiritual practice; it involves the determination to continue walking the path towards enlightenment despite challenges, obstacles, setbacks, or distractions that may arise. Endurance is closely related to the concept of Right Effort (sammā vāyāma), which is one of the factors of the

Noble Eightfold Path (ariya aṭṭhaṅgika magga). Right Effort consists of generating the following four states of mind:

1. effort to avoid unwholesome states of mind from arising (saṃvara-padhāna),
2. effort to overcome unwholesome states of mind that have arisen (pahāna-padhāna),
3. effort to cultivate wholesome states of mind (bhāvanā-padhāna), and
4. effort to maintain wholesome states of mind that have arisen (anurakkhaṇa-padhāna).

Endurance is consistent effort aimed at purifying the mind of defilements (kilesa) and to benefit others without becoming complacent or discouraged in the face of difficulties. The focus is on the goal of liberation (nibbāna) from suffering (dukkha) inherent in the cycle of birth and death (saṃsāra) by maintaining consistency in the Three Fold Training of ethical conduct (sīla), meditation (bhāvanā samādhi), and wisdom (paññā).

- I. Training in ethical conduct (sīla) is achieved through practicing the following Five Precepts:
 5. abstain from destroying living beings (pāṇātipātā veramaṇī),
 6. abstain from stealing or taking that which is not freely given (adinnādānā veramaṇī),
 7. abstain from sexual misconduct (kamesu micchacara veramaṇī),
 8. abstain from false speech (musāvāda veramaṇī), and
 9. abstain from intoxicants that cause carelessness and cloud the mind (surā meraya majja pamādatthāna veramaṇī).
- II. Training in meditation (bhāvanā samādhi) is achieved through practicing tranquility meditation (samatha), and concentration (samādhi) that culminates in absorption concentration (jhāna).
- III. Training to develop wisdom (paññā) is achieved through investigation (dhammavicaya) and insight (vipassanā) meditation.

Another characteristic of endurance is to maintain a balanced approach in practice by not going to extremes. One is to strive towards liberation neither too vigorously nor too relaxed. Effort in practice is increased gradually. A balanced approach aids in maintaining a steady and consistent practice, and by so doing, results are realized and motivation for practice is continuous.

The qualities of patience and endurance are not only relevant for spiritual practice but are also relevant for daily life, fostering harmony in personal relationships and for a more compassionate and tolerant society. Overcoming the hindrances is a process that requires time and effort, discipline of consistent practice and trust that the hindrances will eventually be uprooted from the mind.

- I. Sensual desire (kāmacchanda) is literally the 'delight in sense pleasures'; the craving for sensory pleasures and attachments to sensory experiences, the desire to obtain and covet (abhijjhā) sensual pleasures obtained from the five objects of sensual enjoyment (kāmaguṇa): sights, sounds, odors, tastes, and tangible objects. There is also sensual desire for mental experiences. Sensual desire is greediness for sensual pleasures.

Attachment to sensory pleasures is a cause for the mind to be driven by craving (taṇhā) and to seek instant gratification, which leads to unwholesome actions and perpetuates the cycle of suffering (saṃsāra). When the mind is attached to and identify with sense objects, the mind is then distracted and preoccupied with sense experiences and sensual fantasies, and the mind will not become concentrated in stillness, silence nor peace.

The following specific practices are recommended to overcome sensual desire.

1. Contemplate the impurities (asubha bhāvanā), the unattractive and impermanent aspects of the physical body. The contemplation of the decaying nature of the body and objects of the senses will allow the mind to reduce attachment and desire for sensual objects, and have understanding of the transient nature of sensual pleasures.
 2. Renunciation (nekkhamma) reduces the mind's attachment to sensory pleasures and desires by reducing sensory stimuli and by practicing contentment with less sensory stimulation. This is the practice of minimizing exposure to those sense objects that cause the mind to become infatuated with sensory pleasures.
- II. Ill will (vyāpāda) is one of the Three Unwholesome Roots (akusala mūla) and defilements (kilesa) of mind. The Three Unwholesome Roots is mentioned above. Ill will is also known as anger or hatred (dosā).

Ill will, anger and hatred are mental hindrances that are also characterized by resentment, indignation, spite, malevolence, irritation, aversion, and displeasure. Ill will is an unwholesome mental state that produces animosity, hostility, or aversion towards oneself or others and involves the desire to harm, hurt, or cause suffering to oneself or others. The experience of ill will causes the mind to become clouded with aggression, and the resulting actions and speech are harmful or unkind. The mind under this hindrance is in conflict, disturbed, unbalanced, has diminished brightness, and has trouble establishing concentration (samādhi), attaining peace (santi) of mind and cultivating wisdom (paññā) and compassion (karuṇā).

The following specific practices are recommended to overcome ill will.

1. Train the mind in the following Divine Abodes (brahmavihāra), also known as the Four Immeasurables and Sublime Attitudes, as the standard or ordinary state of mind.
 - ii. Loving-kindness (mettā) meditation is a practice of cultivating boundless love and goodwill towards all beings, including oneself. Loving-kindness is a genuine and unconditional love, without expecting anything in return, and extending that love to others without exception and discrimination. This practice aims to dissolve feelings of animosity, hatred, and ill-will, promoting a sense of interconnectedness and unity among all sentient beings.
 - iii. Compassion (karuṇā) is the quality of having empathy and concern for the suffering of others. Compassion goes beyond mere sympathy but involves a deep understanding of the nature of suffering (dukkha) and a sincere wish to alleviate it. Practicing compassion involves cultivating a sense of connection with all sentient beings and extending a helping hand to those who are experiencing pain, difficulty, or hardship. This practice helps to reduce ego self-centeredness and to increase a sense of interconnectedness with all of life.
 - iv. Altruistic or sympathetic joy (muditā) is to feel joy and rejoice in the success, well-being, and happiness of others. Sympathetic joy goes beyond mere happiness at one's own achievements but rejoices in the accomplishments and beneficial experiences of others. This practice helps to overcome jealousy, envy, and competitiveness.

Cultivating sympathetic joy is the recognition of the interconnectedness of all life and the realization that the happiness of others is not separate from our own. The experience of joy when others are happy can work to overcome the divisive tendencies of ego self-centeredness, leading to a more open and compassionate heart.

- v. Equanimity (upekkhā) is impartial mental balance and evenness of mind that allows one to face life's ups and downs without being swayed by extreme and negative emotions. Developing equanimity can help one respond to challenging situations with greater clarity and composure.

The practice of equanimity is to treat all experiences, sentient beings, and situations with an open heart and a non-reactive mind. This doesn't mean being indifferent or apathetic, but rather having a deep sense of calm and tranquility that allows one to respond to life's challenges and joys with wisdom (paññā) and without being overwhelmed by emotions. Equanimity is cultivated through the practices of mindfulness (sati) and insight (vipassanā). The mind is trained to not be moved or react to the ups and downs of life, the changing nature of phenomena, or the preferences of the ego. This quality helps individuals navigate the world with a sense of inner peace and acceptance, regardless of whether situations are pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral.

2. Cultivate forgiveness (khanti) towards oneself and others is crucial for letting go of grudges and resentment. Forgiveness is the ability to be patient and endure without anger or resentment. The recognition that the unenlightened acts out of ignorance (avijjā) and thereby are subject to suffering (dukkha) is helpful to develop compassion (karuṇā) and understanding (paññā) towards oneself and others, and to let go of negative emotions like ill will.
3. Train in ethical conduct (sīla) is helpful to abstain from harmful actions, speech, and thoughts, thereby reducing the causes and conditions for ill will to arise. See above for the training in the Five Precepts.
4. Practice acts of generosity (dāna) and kindness (mettā) will help to develop a sense of connection with others and counteracts the ego self-centeredness that fuels ill will.

III. Sloth and torpor (thīnamiddha) is a state of dullness, heaviness, and lack of energy. The mind overwhelmed with sloth and torpor is bored and apathetic, in a low mood caused by loss of hope or courage and drowsiness.

Sloth is a symptom of the mind that is sluggish, lazy, discouraged, sad, depressed, lacking energy, effort, and enthusiasm. This hindrance may manifest as a general sense of inertia, where one feels lethargic and unwilling to engage in meditation or other virtuous activities.

Torpor is a symptom of the body that is drowsy, sleepy, sluggish, dull, a tendency to do nothing, mental foggy; lack of clarity, alertness, and attentiveness. With torpor, the mind is clouded, making it difficult to maintain mindfulness and concentration during meditation or during other activities.

The mind and body subjected to this hindrance is weak and not pliable for meditation, and the mind will not become concentrated. The following specific practices are recommended to overcome sloth and torpor.

1. Develop energy and enthusiasm for meditation practice by reflecting on its benefits and setting clear intentions.
2. Change postures to counteract physical lethargy and increase awareness and alertness of the meditation anchor, body and mind. Try alternating between the sitting (nisinna) and walking (gacchanta) meditation postures that are mentioned above under the Four Bodily Postures (īryāpatha).
3. Open your eyes partially to allow some light to permeate the mind and use the light as a meditation anchor. Imagine and visualize bright light to invigorate the mind.
4. Investigate the contents of mind using the Three Characteristics of Existence (ti-lakkhaṇa) described above and mentally recite inspiring Dhamma suttas and verses. An active mind will help in warding off sloth and torpor.
5. Get sufficient sleep to prevent fatigue during meditation while avoiding overindulgence with eating and sleeping. Overindulgence in food or indulging in sleep can contribute to lethargy and drowsiness. Avoid extremes by eating and sleeping enough for health and meditation, not too much nor too little.
6. Engage in physical activities like walking meditation, yoga, and other physical exercises to increase available energy for the body and mind. Physical movement will help prevent feelings of lethargy and increase alertness.

IV. Restlessness and remorse (uddhaccakukkucca) is a mind tainted with agitation, worry, regret, distraction, unsteadiness, vacillation, confusion, and turbulence; and is often accompanied by feelings of anxiety and unease.

The restless mind is scattered and not collected, unable to settle down and tends to jump from one thought to another. This hindrance hinders concentration and prevents the mind from becoming calm.

Remorse is regret over past actions or decisions; the mind experiences anxiety, distress, disturbance, turmoil, and worry. The mind dwells on mistakes, past wrongdoings, or missed opportunities, leading to a sense of guilt and unease; wanders aimlessly, entangled in negative thoughts and emotions.

Restlessness and remorse prevents the mind from becoming peaceful and cannot develop concentration. The following specific practices are recommended to overcome restlessness and remorse.

1. Avoid excessive striving or pushing too hard, as it can lead to restlessness. Maintain a balanced effort that is steady and consistent with disciplined practice.
2. Walking (gacchanta) meditation, one of the Four Bodily Postures (īryāpatha) discussed above, may be used to release pent-up energy and restlessness, grounding the mind in the present moment.
3. Body scan meditation can help calm restlessness and create a sense of ease in the mind. Systematically direct attention to different parts of the body, starting from the toes and moving upward to the head, and then from the head downward to the toes. Release any tension or discomfort that is present in the parts of the body during the scan, and pay attention to the sensations in the body.

4. Cultivate contentment (santuṭṭhi) and acceptance of the here and now, the present moment, that is without anticipation and desires for the future and regrets over the past. This practice will result in a peaceful mind that is free of restlessness and remorse.
 5. The training in ethical behavior will prevent remorse from arising due to harmful actions or unwholesome behaviors. See above for the training in Five Precepts.
 6. Use the meditation mantra "there is nowhere to go and nothing to do" to stay present in the moment, the here and now. The mantra is a reminder to let go of striving for something else or to be engaged in some other activity, but remain committed to the practice of meditation. The mantra is a reminder to let go of the habitual desire for external achievement and stimulation. The watching consciousness observes mental chatter and contents of mind that naturally falls away into silence. Focus on the here and now, the meditation anchor, and bodily sensations.
- V. Doubt (vicikicchā) is uncertainty, lack of confidence and skepticism about the validity of the Buddha's enlightenment, teachings of the Buddha (Dhamma), uncertainty about the nature of reality, the path of practice to liberation from suffering (dukkha), or the effectiveness of one's own practice. There is a wavering in faith and confidence in the teachings and the path. The mind hesitates and is indecisive, obstructed, disturbed, confused and is unable to become concentrated. There is an inability to recognize what is truly valuable and what is not valuable.

There is a constructive form of skepticism or questioning that encourages investigation and the analysis of teachings (Dhamma) and experiences. "Healthy doubt" is a state of mind that promotes understanding (paññā) and insight (vipassanā) rather than blind acceptance or rejection. The Buddha emphasized personal experience and direct realization over blind faith or dogma. Healthy doubt prevents rigid belief systems and encourages penetration of the teachings on deeper levels. Healthy doubt promotes the following methods.

- Critical examination of teachings, practices, and beliefs in order to discern what resonates with one's own experiences and understanding.
- Questioning and exploring the principals and practices can lead to personal insights and realization, that are meaningful and transformative.
- Developing analytical thinking, discernment, and the ability to differentiate between useful teachings and those that might not resonate with an individual's path at a particular time in one's life.
- Wise attention (yoniso manasikāra) is careful consideration and investigation, directing one's attention in a way that leads to insight and understanding.

Blind attachment to particular ideas, practices, or teachers is not healthy. The healthy approach to the study and practice of Dhamma is with an open mind, curiosity, and a willingness to explore, this leads to deeper understandings and personal growth. Healthy doubt is not a sign of failure or inadequacy but allows for acceptance of teachings and practices that are within one's ability to understand.

Unhealthy doubt is blindly or with inadequate investigation rejects the enlightenment of the Buddha, Dhamma and practices, and is an obstacle for cultivating wholesome mental qualities and meditation. The following specific practices are recommended for overcoming unhealthy doubt.

1. Investigate the teachings (Dhamma) and reflect on their meaning and relevance in your life. Understanding the principles of Dhamma can help clarify and remove doubts, and build confidence in the spiritual path.
2. Cultivate faith (saddha) in the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha, and let it support the practice.
3. Develop wisdom (paññā) by deepening one's understanding of the Dhamma and through investigation, doubts can gradually be dispelled, leading to greater clarity, confidence, and progress on the path towards liberation.
4. Seek guidance from experienced spiritual mentors and friends (kalyāṇa-mitta), and associate with a supportive spiritual community who can guide, answer questions and uncertainties. Being in the company of like-minded individuals is encouraging and uplifting.
5. Consistent meditation practice of serenity (samatha) and insight (vipassanā) will cultivate mindfulness (sati) and awareness (viññāṇa), leading to ever greater insights and a reduction in doubt. Insight meditation is used to step back from the contents of mind and mindfully observe

doubts without attachment or aversion. Observe the transient, conditioned, and unsubstantial nature of thoughts and emotions, including doubt.

6. Investigate doubts directly. Often doubts arise from preconceived ideas or unexamined beliefs. By investigating doubts with an open mind (intellectually) and heart (emotionally), there is the possibility of discovering their root causes and the ability to find a resolution to the uncertainties.
7. Recall moments when experiencing clarity, peace, or positive results from practice. Those experiences will strengthen confidence and trust in the path.

Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa wrote a Buddhist Commentary called Visuddhimagga: The Path of Purification that has been translated by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli. Buddhaghosa wrote that there are texts in the Pāli Canon which mention the following four levels of concentration (samādhi).

1. Momentary concentration (khaṇikasamādhi) exists when the mind has developed stable focus or one-pointedness on a meditation anchor for a short period of time before withdrawing from the peaceful state. Thoughts tend to proliferate with less frequency and is also the starting point for the development of insight (vipassanā).
2. Preliminary concentration (parikkamasamādhi) exists at the beginning of the meditation exercise that focuses on a meditation anchor. There is some degree of one-pointedness and calmness. This concentration is sometimes called 'insight concentration' (vipassanā samādhi): a concentration accompanied by wisdom (paññā) or a concentration applied for developing penetrative insight.
3. Access or Neighborhood concentration (upacārasamādhi) approaches but have not attained the first absorption concentration (jhāna); this is however, the initial stage of absorption. The Five Hindrances (nīvaraṇā) are suppressed and there may be a counterpart sign (patibhaganimitta). The counterpart sign is a mental image of the object of meditation, more subtle and refined than an ordinary mental image.
4. Absorption Concentration (appanasamādhi) is the complete and stable immersion or absorption of the mind on the meditation anchor. There are eight absorption concentrations called rūpa jhānas and arūpa jhānas. These are the highest stages and fulfillment of concentration.

A. Four Absorptions of the Form Sphere (rūpa jhāna)

There are four stages of rūpa jhāna. Rūpa refers to the material realm, as different from the desire (kama) realm and the nonmaterial (arupa) realm. Each jhāna is characterized by a set of factors which are present in that jhāna.

1st jhāna has five factors: applied thought (vitakka), sustained thought (vicāra), joy (pīti), pleasure (sukha), and one-pointedness of mind (ekaggata). There is seclusion from sensuality and the Five Hindrances (nīvaraṇā).

2nd jhāna is without applied and sustained thoughts. Thought conception and discursive thinking have ceased. There are three factors: joy, pleasure, and one-pointedness of mind. This jhāna is characterized by noble silence.

3rd jhāna is without applied and sustained thoughts, and joy. There are two factors: pleasure and one-pointedness of mind.

4th jhāna is without applied and sustained thoughts, joy and pleasure. There are two factors: equanimity (upekkhā) and one-pointedness of mind. Gross breathing may have ceased with the lungs, and subtle breathing may be through the pores of the skin.

B. Four Absorptions of the Formless Sphere (arūpa jhāna):

1. sphere of infinity of space (ākāsāñcāyatana),
2. sphere of infinity of consciousness (viññāṇañcāyatana),
3. sphere of infinity of nothingness (ākāñcāññāyatana), and
4. sphere of infinity of neither perception nor non-perception (nevasaññānasaññāyatana).

An item of interest is an observation by Bhikkhu Bodhi who have written in the Introduction to The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya: "in the Theravāda tradition the jhānas are not regarded as indispensable to the attainment of enlightenment".

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

141 Saccavibhanga Sutta: The Exposition of the Truths

31. “And what, friends, is right concentration?

1. Here, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, a bhikkhu enters upon and abides in the first jhāna, which is accompanied by applied and sustained thought [vitakka and vicāra: initial and sustained attention], with rapture [pīti] and pleasure [sukha] born of seclusion.
2. With the stilling of applied and sustained thought, he enters upon and abides in the second jhāna, which has self-confidence [clarity of mind] and singleness of mind [ekaggatā: one-pointedness] without applied and sustained thought, with rapture and pleasure born of concentration.
3. With the fading away as well of rapture, he abides in equanimity, and mindful and fully aware, still feeling pleasure with the body [body refers to the ‘mind body’ (nāma-kāya)], he enters upon and abides in the third jhāna, on account of which noble ones announce: ‘He has a pleasant abiding who has equanimity and is mindful.’
4. With the abandoning of pleasure and pain, and with the previous disappearance of joy and grief, he enters upon and abides in the fourth jhāna, which has neither-pain-nor-pleasure and purity of mindfulness due to equanimity [upekkhā].

This is called right concentration.

Concentration (samadhi) is the eighth factor in the Noble Eightfold Path (ariya aṭṭhaṅgika magga), which is the path to liberation from suffering (dukkha) and nibbāna, the state of perfect peace. Right concentration (sammā samādhi) in the Noble Eightfold Path is defined as the four rūpa jhānas and marks the point where all eight factors of the Path converge and engage in unison. Right concentration supports the cultivation of wisdom (paññā), and wisdom is indispensable for the eradication of the defilements (kilesa), the Five Hindrances (pañca nīvaraṇā), and for the realization of nibbāna. An aspect of wisdom is the ability to understand the Three Characteristics of Existence (ti-lakkhaṇa).

Right concentration of the Noble Eightfold Path is the fulfillment of concentration. However, the faculty of concentration is sometimes defined as ‘one-pointedness of mind’ (cittassekaggatā) as the following sutta passage illustrates.

The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

48.9 (9) Analysis (1)

“And what, bhikkhus, is the faculty of concentration? Here, bhikkhus, the noble disciple gains concentration, gains one-pointedness of mind, having made release the object. This is called the faculty of concentration.

A **meditation anchor (kaṣiṇa)** is a visual, auditory or tactile object that practitioners use to focus their attention during meditation to develop mindfulness (sati) and concentration (samādhi). The anchor is used to settle the mind from mental distractions and proliferation with thinking, feelings and emotions. The meditation anchor is a gross anchor that helps to settle the mind from gross contents of mind while the counterpart sign (patibhaganimitta), see above under Access or Neighborhood concentration (upacārasamādhi), is a subtle anchor that allows the mind to enter into deeper states of concentration. The following is a guide for using a meditation anchor.

- Beginners to meditation may experiment with different meditation anchors in order to determine which anchor the mind is inclined to stay with. Once an anchor is discovered to be enjoyed by the mind then only that anchor should be used consistently during all meditation sessions; i.e., do not change anchors from one session to another.
- Choose a meditation anchor among the ten types listed below. The most common anchor is that of the recollection of mindfulness of breathing (ānāpānasati). Mindfulness of breathing meditation was originally practiced by Lord Buddha and was used by him as the basis for his own practice, after which, he proceeded to insight meditation (vipassanā) through which he realized nibbāna.

- Cultivate sustained attention, unbroken attention on the meditation anchor. When the mind wanders, gently and non-judgmentally bring focus back to the anchor. It's normal for the mind to wander, so be patient and persevere in the practice.
- Alternating attention between the meditation anchor and the counterpart sign (patibhaganimitta) is common as the mind grows in deeper levels of concentration and the counterpart sign grows in stability.
- Integrate the calm and focused state of mind cultivated during meditation into daily life. This heightened awareness and concentration can help navigate challenges and develop insight.

Visuddhimagga chapters III to XI, lists forty meditation subjects (kammaṭṭhāna) which are mentioned throughout the Pāli Canon and provides directions on the practice used to develop concentration. The forty meditation subjects may be used as a meditation anchor (kasiṇa) and they are listed as follows.

- I. Ten kasiṇa exercises mentioned in the pāli suttas. The meditation involves focusing on a visual object, such as a colored disk or a flame. The meditator develops concentration by directing sustained attention to the object, and can produce all four rūpa jhānas.
 1. earth (paṭhavī kasiṇa),
 2. water (āpo kasiṇa),
 3. fire (tejo kasiṇa),
 4. air/wind (vāyo kasiṇa),
 5. blue (nīla kasiṇa),
 6. yellow (pīta kasiṇa),
 7. red (lohita kasiṇa),
 8. white (odāta kasiṇa),
 9. space (ākāsa kasiṇa), and
 10. consciousness (viññāṇa kasiṇa) is mentioned in the pāli suttas. In the Visuddhimagga, this exercise is described as 'light of the luminous mind' (āloka kasiṇa).
- II. Ten impure and loathsome (asubha) objects of repulsion (paṭikkūla), specifically cemetery contemplations (paṭikkūla manasikāra) on ten stages of human decomposition which aim to cultivate mindfulness of body (kāyagatāsati). These exercises produce the first rūpa jhāna.
 11. swollen corpse,
 12. discolored bluish corpse,
 13. festering corpse,
 14. fissured corpse,
 15. gnawed corpse,
 16. dismembered corpse,
 17. hacked scattered corpse,
 18. bleeding corpse,
 19. worm eaten corpse, and
 20. skeleton.
- III. Ten recollections (anussati)
 21. Recollection of the attributes of the Buddha (buddhānussati) can produce neighbourhood-concentration (upacāra samādhi). This practice involves reflecting upon the qualities, virtues, and teachings of the Buddha. By contemplating on the Buddha's life and teachings, practitioners cultivate faith, devotion, and tranquility.
 22. Recollection of the attributes of the Dhamma (dhammānussati) can produce neighbourhood-concentration (upacāra samādhi).
 23. Recollection of the attributes of the Saṅghā of Noble Ones (saṅghānussati) can produce neighbourhood-concentration (upacāra samādhi).
 24. Recollection of the benefits of practicing morality (sīlānussati) can produce neighbourhood-concentration (upacāra samādhi).
 25. Recollection of the benefits of practicing generosity (cāgānussati) can produce neighbourhood-concentration (upacāra samādhi).
 26. Recollection of the attributes of heavenly beings (devānussati) can produce neighbourhood-concentration (upacāra samādhi).

27. Recollection of the certainty of death (maraṇānussati) can produce neighbourhood-concentration (upacāra samādhi).
 28. Recollection of the characteristics of the body (kāyagatāsati) can produce the first rūpa jhāna.
 29. Recollection of mindfulness of breathing (ānāpānasati) can produce all four rūpa jhānas.
 30. Recollection of peace (upasamānussati) can produce neighbourhood-concentration (upacāra samādhi).
- IV. Four Divine Abidings (brahma-vihāra) meditations focuses on cultivating qualities whose blessings are directed towards oneself and others.
31. Loving kindness (mettā) can produce the first three rūpa jhānas.
 32. Compassion (karuṇā) can produce the first three rūpa jhānas.
 33. Sympathetic joy (muditā) can produce the first three rūpa jhānas.
 34. Equanimity (upekkhā) can only produce the fourth rūpa jhāna.
- V. Four immaterial states (arūpāyatana) are based upon the fourth rūpa jhāna.
35. Infinite space (ākāsānañcāyatana),
 36. Infinite consciousness (viññāṇañcāyatana),
 37. Infinite nothingness (ākāśañcāyatana), and
 38. Neither-perception-nor-non-perception (nevasaññānāsaññāyatana).
- VI. Other Meditations
39. Perception of the loathsomeness of food (āhārepaṭikkūlasaññā) can produce neighbourhood concentration (upacāra samādhi), and
 40. Analysis of the Four Great Elements (catudhātuvavatthāna) can produce neighbourhood concentration (upacāra samādhi). The Four Great Elements are the following:
 - a. earth (pathavi),
 - b. water (apo),
 - c. fire (tejo), and
 - d. air (vayo).

The following are Tips on Nurturing Meditation.

1. Cultivate structure and discipline in daily life to maintain momentum of practice and development of wholesome qualities. The path of training requires consistent effort, commitment, and dedication. The following suggestions are for consideration.
 - Establish a daily routine of meditation, preferably twice a day - once in the morning and again later in the day. A regular schedule helps to reinforce the practice and build momentum.
 - The daily routine may also include reciting mantras, reading Buddhist teachings, and engaging in acts of kindness and compassion.
 - Set clear intentions by defining your goals in practice. Whether it's cultivating mindfulness (sati), compassion (karuṇā), wisdom (paññā), or other wholesome qualities; having a clear purpose will keep you focused and motivated.
 - Join a supportive community (saṅgha) and benefit from a sense of belonging, opportunities for learning, and the chance to share experiences with like-minded individuals.
 - Study Buddhist Teachings (Dhamma) helps to deepen your understanding and inspiration for the practice.
 - Consciously cultivate mindfulness in daily life while engaging with daily activities, brings awareness to actions, speech, and thoughts throughout the day. Bring the practice into all aspects of life, not just during formal meditation sessions.
 - Practice generosity (dāna) by engaging in acts of giving and selflessness. Generosity is fundamental to practice and helps cultivate a compassionate selfless attitude.
 - Develop loving-kindness (metta) towards yourself by accepting imperfections that are caused by habits and conditions. Understand that progress in the training of mind is a gradual process that improves the imperfections by changing habits, and spiritual practices will eventually erode the defilements (kilesa) and hindrances (nīvaraṇā). Progress in training the mind tends to be cyclical, accept that there will be ups and downs, and avoid being overly self-critical.

- Seek guidance from experienced practitioners and spiritual friends (kalyāṇa-mitta). They can offer valuable insights, answer questions, and provide encouragement during challenging times.
 - Observe the Five Ethical Precepts (sīla) described above. Training in ethical principles provides a foundation for practice and prevents harmful unwholesome actions (akusala kamma).
 - Cultivate an attitude of gratitude (kataññu). Recognize the positive changes and growth that practice brings to your life and acknowledge the support that has been received along the way.
2. Investigate the concept that suffering (dukkha) is a friend. Dukkha is an inherent part of life, and it is essential to investigate and understand its nature in order to find true peace and happiness. While the idea that dukkha is a friend might initially seem counterintuitive, it is a profound and transformative insight. The following are some key aspects of this perspective.
 - Recognize the universality of dukkha. The First Noble Truth states that dukkha is a universal experience of existence, affecting all living beings in various forms, from physical pain and mental anguish to the dissatisfaction with the impermanent nature of life and the world.
 - Acknowledge the impermanent and unsatisfactoriness of worldly experiences, and that clinging to impermanent things and experiences, no matter how pleasant they are, in an attempt to find lasting happiness will always lead to dukkha. The realization that worldly pursuits are incapable of providing lasting contentment, the mind will then let go of attachments and desires for the impermanent Eight Worldly Concerns (lokadhamma), mentioned above, and sensual pleasures that cause distress.
 - Use dukkha as a catalyst for spiritual growth by acknowledging and accepting dukkha, there then is an opportunity to learn and grow from the experience. Dukkha serves as a teacher, showing us the nature of our mind and how we respond to various unpleasant circumstances. By investigating dukkha, insight (vipassanā) arises into its causes and the way to counter the causes.
 - Be the consciousness that observes dukkha without getting entangled in it. Pure consciousness transcends the experience of dukkha and is not affected by it. The identification with pure consciousness and not with any content of mind is liberation from dukkha. The contents of mind are one or more of the Five Aggregates (khandā) mentioned above.
 - Develop compassion (karunā) and understanding (paññā) of ones' own dukkha which will then lead to a deeper sense of compassion for others who are also experiencing dukkha. The shared experience of dukkha connects us all as suffering sentient beings.
 - Instead of reacting with aversion or denial of dukkha, cultivate equanimity (upekkhā) and acceptance of how things are, which helps one to navigate through life's challenges with greater ease.
 3. Each meditation is an experiential process and a valuable learning opportunity. The insights (vipassanā) gained during meditation are not just intellectual but are based on direct experience and investigations. Each meditation session is an opportunity for the realization of Dhamma. Meditation is a transformative process that leads to greater wisdom (paññā), peace (santi), and liberation from dukkha (nibbāna).
 - Each meditation exercises the mindfulness (sati) muscle while training the mind to be fully present and aware of each moment without judgment. The mindful mind observes thoughts, emotions, and sensations without getting attached to them.
 - Each meditation exercises and strengthens the concentration (samādhi) muscle while training the mind to pay attention and focus. Learning how to pay ever greater attention reaps benefits not only during meditation but in daily life.
 - Putting forth effort (virīya) in each meditation increases the perception of available energy for meditation and with the activities during daily life. There is the discovery that the mind has more energy for meditation and for other activities than what it thought it had available. Each meditation where effort is exerted develops the understanding that the mind can't be trusted (in general) when it complains that it lacks energy, when effort is exerted regardless of complaining thoughts, there is the discovery that there is in fact available energy. Perception of available energy increases each time the mind is taxed or goes beyond the energy it thinks it has.
 - Each meditation is an opportunity to develop insight (vipassanā) into the impermanent (anicca) nature of reality. The mind observes the arising and passing of the contents of experience. This

understanding allows the mind to let go of attachments to the contents and develop acceptance of the changing nature of life.

- Each meditation learns something new about suffering (dukkha). Through investigation, the mind learns the causes of dukkha (ignorance, craving, attachment, and aversion) and gain insights into how to alleviate dukkha.
 - Each meditation session builds upon previous experiences and provides an opportunity for growth and refinement of one's practice over time. Through steady and continuous practice of meditation - not interrupted by periods of no practice - maximum benefit of the practice is attained.
 - Each meditation develops the faculties of patience and endurance by facing obstacles, difficulties, distractions, and restlessness. These faculties are also used for peaceful and harmonious relationships with others and with activities throughout life.
4. Alternate between calm abiding (samatha) meditation and insight (vipassanā) meditation. Samatha rests and energizes the mind which is suitable for the work required in vipassanā meditation.
 5. The more the body sits in meditation the more will the body feel comfortable due to the process of adapting or adjusting. Here are some ways meditation can lead to physical comfort and accommodation:
 - Sitting in the same position for an extended period can initially be uncomfortable for those who aren't used to it. However, as you practice meditation regularly, you may notice increased flexibility in the muscles and tendons, making it easier to sit comfortably for longer durations.
 - An upright posture used during meditation is encouraged in order to maintain alertness and reduce the risk of discomfort and drowsiness. As the habit to focus on posture during meditation is formed, these habits to maintain good posture will extend beyond the meditation sessions, leading to overall improved posture and reduced physical strain in daily life.
 - Scanning the body during meditation and relaxing the tension in muscles may achieve overall physical relaxation. The focus on relaxation can contribute to physical comfort during meditation sessions.
 - For individuals dealing with chronic pain or physical discomfort, meditation can serve as a tool for managing pain. The practice of meditation can develop the ability to alleviate or minimize physical discomfort through focused attention and relaxation techniques.

October 2023 - Insight Meditation (vipassanā)

This October Newsletter will discuss Insight Meditation (vipassanā). The September Newsletter discussed Tranquility Meditation (samatha) and The Five Hindrances (pañca nīvaraṇā). There will be some overlap when discussing these two forms of meditation: tranquility and insight.

The pāli word “vipassanā” is translated as “insight” or “clear-seeing.” Insight Meditation (vipassanā) is the direct experience of wisdom (paññā) through the practice of observing and investigating physical and mental experiences occurring moment-to-moment with mindfulness (sati) and clear comprehension (sampajañña). Clear comprehension or clarity of consciousness, are translations of the pāli word “sampajañña,” and is a synonym for wisdom.

Insight Meditation develops insight into the true nature of reality, leading to the liberation from suffering (dukkha) and the realization of nibbāna. Nibbāna is the extinguishing or blowing out of the fires of greed (lobha), hatred (dosa) and ignorance (avijjā). Insight Meditation applies mindfulness and clear comprehension to the activities of daily life as the following sutta passage demonstrates.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

10 Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta: The Foundations of Mindfulness

8. “Again, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu is one who acts in full awareness when going forward and returning;¹⁴⁷ who acts in full awareness when looking ahead and looking away; who acts in full awareness when flexing and extending his limbs; who acts in full awareness when wearing his robes and carrying his outer robe and bowl; who acts in full awareness when eating, drinking, consuming food, and tasting; who acts in full awareness when defecating and urinating; who acts in full awareness when walking, standing, sitting, falling asleep, waking up, talking, and keeping silent.

Note 147: Sampajañña, also translated as “clear comprehension”, is analysed in the commentaries into four types: full awareness of the purpose of one’s action; full awareness of the suitability of one’s means; full awareness of the domain, that is, not abandoning the subject of meditation during one’s daily routine; and full awareness of reality, the knowledge that behind one’s activities there is no abiding self.

Insight is cultivated with observations and investigations of bodily sensations, thoughts, feelings, and mental processes, noting the Three Characteristics of Existence (tilakkhaṇa) and the arising and passing away of the Five Aggregates (pañca khandhā) which are the contents of mind. The Three Characteristics of Existence are:

1. impermanence (anicca),
 2. suffering (dukkha), and the
 3. absence of a permanent self (anatta).
- The contents of mind are one or more of the Five Aggregates (pañca khandā):

1. material form (rūpa khandha),
2. mental formations (saṅkhāra khandha),
3. perceptions (saññā khandha),
4. feelings (vedanā khandha), and
5. sense consciousness (viññāṇa khandha).

There is a non-personal awareness or pure consciousness that does not identify nor attach to the contents of mind.

The wisdom developed through the practice of insight breaks the cycle of repeated birth, old age, sickness, death and rebirth (saṃsāra). The following are relations concerning saṃsāra.

- Saṃsāra is the cycle of repeated birth and death that perpetuates the cycle of suffering (dukkha) that sentient beings experience in various realms due to the impermanence of life. This cycle continues until the realization nibbāna.
- Intentional actions (kamma) affects the present life and future rebirths in saṃsāra. Wholesome actions lead to comfortable circumstances, while unwholesome actions lead to uncomfortable circumstances.

- The Three Characteristics of Existence define the nature of existence within saṃsāra.
- The ultimate goal in Buddhism is to break free from the cycle of saṃsāra through the attainment of nibbāna. Nibbāna is experienced by a mind that is liberated from suffering and has put an end to rebirth. The path of practice to break free from saṃsāra and to realize nibbāna is the training in ethics (sīla), meditation (bhāvanā), and wisdom (paññā), which is elaborated in the Noble Eightfold Path (ariya aṭṭhaṅgika magga).
- There is no eternal or permanent soul or self that transmigrates in saṃsāra. Rather, the continuity of the 'stream' of consciousness and kamma is what takes rebirth in different circumstances.
- Saṃsāra is characterized by suffering and a sense of hunger or thirst for ever more sense pleasures, and there is also a preoccupation with the Eight Worldly Concerns (lokadhamma). Sentient beings continually seek, but cannot find, lasting happiness and fulfillment in the impermanent world and various realms of existence. The Eight Worldly Concerns (lokadhamma) are the following.
 9. Hope for gain (lābha) is attachment to gaining material possessions, wealth, and favorable circumstances.
 10. Fear of loss (alābha) is aversion to loss, poverty, and unfavorable conditions.
 11. Hope for fame (yasa) is attachment to gaining recognition, praise, and popularity.
 12. Fear of disrepute (ayasa) is aversion to insignificance and a negative reputation.
 13. Hope for praise (pasamsā) is attachment to receiving praise, compliments, and positive feedback.
 14. Fear of criticism (nindā) is aversion to criticism, negative feedback, and blame.
 15. Hope for pleasure (sukha) is attachment to experiencing pleasure, comfort, and happiness.
 16. Fear of pain (dukkha) is aversion to misery, discomfort, and suffering.

Insight meditation is practiced with mindfulness (sati) and concentration (samādhi) in the following two major categories and various subcategories:

- I. Three Characteristics of Existence (ti-lakkhaṇa)
 6. Impermanence (anicca)
 7. Suffering (dukkha)
 8. Not-self (anatta)
- II. Four Foundations of Mindfulness (satipaṭṭhāna)
 - E. Contemplations of the Body (kāyānupassanā)
 1. Mindfulness of Breathing (ānāpānasati)
 2. Four Postures (īryāpatha sañña)
 3. Clear Comprehension of Activities (sampajañña)
 4. Foulness (asubha) of the 32 Bodily Parts (dvattiṃsākāra)
 5. Four Great Elements (catudhātuvavatthāna)
 6. Charnel Ground Contemplations (paṭikkūla manasikāra)
 - F. Contemplation of Feelings (vedanā sañña)
 1. pleasant feelings (sukha) are of pleasure or happiness.
 2. unpleasant feelings (dukkha) are of discomfort, pain, or suffering.
 3. neutral feelings (adukkhamasukha) are neither pleasant nor unpleasant.
 - G. Contemplation of Mind (citta sañña)
 - H. Contemplation of Mind Objects (Dhammā sañña)
 - Five Hindrances (nīvaraṇā)
 - Five Aggregates (pañcupādānakkhandhā)
 - Six Sense Bases (saḷāyatana)
 - Seven Enlightenment Factors (bojjhanga)
 - Four Noble Truths (ariya catusacca)
- I. Investigate the contents of mind with the Three Characteristics of Existence (tilakkhaṇa)
 4. Impermanence (anicca)
 - Observe the impermanent nature of physical and mental phenomena, the contents of mind. Contemplate how everything in experience is subject to change and decay.
 - Observe the constant changes within the body, thoughts, and feelings. Recognize that these changes are happening in every moment.

- Observe the constant changes to external phenomena, such as nature, relationships, and material possessions. Everything is in a state of flux, arising and passing away. The contemplation of impermanence develops insight into the changing nature of saṃsāra and thereby, reduce attachment and desire for that which is impermanent.
5. Suffering - unsatisfactoriness (dukkha)
- Contemplate the unsatisfactory nature of life. Reflect on how attachment and clinging to impermanent things lead to suffering.
 - Consider the various forms of suffering, including physical pain, mental anguish, and the dissatisfaction that arises from constantly seeking pleasure and avoiding pain.
 - Recognize that even moments of happiness and pleasure are temporary and subject to change, which can also lead to suffering when they inevitably pass.
6. Not-self (anatta)
- The Buddha defined the “self” (atta) as that which is permanent, unchanging and constant. The ever changing personality is composed of the Five Aggregates (pañca khandā).
- Contemplate the idea that there is no permanent, unchanging self or soul. Investigate your own experiences to see if you can find a fixed, unchanging "I."
 - Observe that thoughts, feelings, and sensations arise and pass away without a permanent self controlling them.
 - Reflect on the interconnectedness of all phenomena, how everything is influenced by causes and conditions, and nothing exists in isolation. There is no permanent self because any notion of self implies something separate from the interdependent web of existence. The concept of interconnectedness is often referred to as "Dependent Origination" (paṭicca samuppāda) or the "law of conditionality." This teaching explains how all sentient beings and the world are interconnected in a complex network of causality.
- Dependent Origination demonstrates the constant change and impermanence of all phenomena. Each link in the chain is impermanent, including sense consciousness and the Five Aggregates (pañca khandā). If there were a permanent self, it would have to remain unchanged amidst this constant flux.
- The links in Dependent Origination illustrate how craving (taṇhā) and clinging (upādāna) lead to suffering (dukkha) and perpetuate the cycle of birth and death (saṃsāra). The belief in a fixed, unchanging self is a form of clinging that leads to suffering. Recognizing the not-self nature of phenomena is essential to breaking free from this cycle.
- See the July 2023 Newsletter for a discussion on Dependent Origination.

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya
translation by Bhikkhu Bodhi

3.IV.136 (4) Arising

- (1) “Bhikkhus, whether Tathāgatas arise or not, there persists that law, that stableness of the Dhamma, that fixed course of the Dhamma: ‘All conditioned phenomena are impermanent.’ A Tathāgata awakens to this and breaks through to it, and then he explains it, teaches it, proclaims it, establishes it, discloses it, analyzes it, and elucidates it thus: ‘All conditioned phenomena are impermanent.’
- (2) “Bhikkhus, whether Tathāgatas arise or not, there persists that law, that stableness of the Dhamma, that fixed course of the Dhamma: ‘All conditioned phenomena are suffering.’ A Tathāgata awakens to this and breaks through to it, and then he explains it, teaches it, proclaims it, establishes it, discloses it, analyzes it, and elucidates it thus: ‘All conditioned phenomena are suffering.’
- (3) “Bhikkhus, whether Tathāgatas arise or not, there persists that law, that stableness of the Dhamma, that fixed course of the Dhamma: ‘All phenomena are non-self.’ A Tathāgata awakens to this and breaks through to it, and then he explains it, teaches it, proclaims it, establishes it, discloses it, analyzes it, and elucidates it thus: ‘All phenomena are non-self.’”

- II. Four Foundations of Mindfulness (satipaṭṭhāna) cultivates mindfulness (sati) and awareness (sampajañña) with the following four contemplations:

- A. Contemplation of the Body (kāyānupassanā),
- B. Contemplation of Feelings (vedanā sañña),
- C. Contemplation of Mind (citta sañña), and
- D. Contemplation of Mind Objects (Dhammā sañña).

Contemplating these four aspects of experience with non-reactive awareness, will lead to insight (vipassanā) into their impermanent (anicca) and conditioned nature (saṅkhārā).

An aspect of mindfulness (sati) is careful attention and recollection of the Dhamma. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu stated in Heartwood of the Bodhi Tree, pp. 79, 101, and 117, that the aim of mindfulness is to stop the arising of disturbing thoughts and emotions, which arise from contact (phassa) with sense objects (bāhira). The practice is to continuously watch sensory experience in order to prevent the arising of craving (taṇhā) which would power future rebirths (jāti).

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translation by Bhikkhu Bodhi

10 Satipatṭhāna Sutta: The Foundations of Mindfulness

2. “Bhikkhus, this is the direct path for the purification of beings, for the surmounting of sorrow and lamentation, for the disappearance of pain and grief, for the attainment of the true way, for the realisation of Nibbāna — namely, the four foundations of mindfulness.
3. “What are the four? Here, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu¹³⁷ abides contemplating the body as a body, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world. He abides contemplating feelings as feelings, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world. He abides contemplating mind as mind, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world. He abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world.

Note 137 MA says that in this context, “bhikkhu” is a term indicating a person who earnestly endeavours to accomplish the practice of the teaching: “Whoever undertakes that practice... is here comprised under the term ‘bhikkhu.’”

- A. Contemplation of the Body (kāyānupassanā) involves observing and contemplating the various aspects of the body. The aim is to develop mindfulness (sati), overcome attachment to the physical form and to gain insight (vipassanā) into its impermanent (anicca) and not-self (anatta) nature. This contemplation encompasses the following 14 exercises.

7. Mindfulness of Breathing (ānāpānasati) is a form of tranquility meditation (samatha), which aims to cultivate mindfulness (sati), concentration (samādhi) and calm abiding. This practice involves focusing the mind on the natural breath, observing it as it comes in and goes out.

The practice is to train the mind to be fully present with each breath. The aim is to free the mind from distraction, agitation, and the fluctuations of thought and emotion, and to gain insight into the nature of the body. The breath may be observed at different points in the body, such as the nostrils, chest, or abdomen.

- Observe the breath without controlling it, simply being aware of its natural rhythm and qualities.
- Avoid developing aversion or attachment to bodily sensations.
- Contemplate impermanence by observing the changes taking place with each breath and with the sensations in the body. Recognize that the rhythm of breathing, the length and pressure of each breath, and bodily sensations are constantly changing, arising, and passing away. This contemplation develops insight into the impermanence of the body.
- Contemplate not-self while observing the body. Recognize that the body is composed of various elements, and there is no permanent, unchanging self within it. The body is a collection of ever-changing physical processes.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya
translation by Bhikkhu Bodhi

10 Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta: The Foundations of Mindfulness

4. “And how, bhikkhus, does a bhikkhu abide contemplating the body as a body? Here a bhikkhu, gone to the forest or to the root of a tree or to an empty hut, sits down; having folded his legs crosswise, set his body erect, and established mindfulness in front of him, ever mindful he breathes in, mindful he breathes out. Breathing in long, he understands: ‘I breathe in long’; or breathing out long, he understands: ‘I breathe out long.’ Breathing in short, he understands: ‘I breathe in short’; or breathing out short, he understands: ‘I breathe out short.’¹⁴⁰ He trains thus: ‘I shall breathe in experiencing the whole body’; he trains thus: ‘I shall breathe out experiencing the whole body.’¹⁴¹ He trains thus: ‘I shall breathe in tranquillising the bodily formation’; he trains thus: ‘I shall breathe out tranquillising the bodily formation.’¹⁴² Just as a skilled lathe-operator or his apprentice, when making a long turn, understands: ‘I make a long turn’; or, when making a short turn, understands: ‘I make a short turn’; so too, breathing in long, a bhikkhu understands: ‘I breathe in long’... he trains thus: ‘I shall breathe out tranquillising the bodily formation.’
5. “In this way he abides contemplating the body as a body internally, or he abides contemplating the body as a body externally, or he abides contemplating the body as a body both internally and externally.¹⁴³ Or else he abides contemplating in the body its nature of arising, or he abides contemplating in the body its nature of vanishing, or he abides contemplating in the body its nature of both arising and vanishing.¹⁴⁴ Or else mindfulness that ‘there is a body’ is simply established in him to the extent necessary for bare knowledge and mindfulness.¹⁴⁵ And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. That is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating the body as a body.

Notes: 140 The practice of mindfulness of breathing (ānāpānasati) involves no deliberate attempt to regulate the breath, as in hatha yoga, but a sustained effort to fix awareness on the breath as it moves in and out in its natural rhythm.

Mindfulness is set up at the nostrils or the upper lip, wherever the impact of the breath is felt most distinctly; the length of the breath is noted but not consciously controlled. The complete development of this meditation method is expounded in MN 118.

141 MA explains “experiencing the whole body” as signifying that the meditator becomes aware of each in-breath and out-breath through its three phases of beginning, middle, and end. In the first edition I followed this explanation and added in brackets “of breath” after “the whole body.” In retrospect, however, this interpretation seems forced, and I now prefer to take the phrase quite literally.

142 The “bodily formation” (kāyasankhāra) is defined at MN 44.13 as in-and-out breathing itself. Thus, as MA explains, with the successful development of the practice, the meditator’s breathing becomes increasingly quiet, tranquil, and peaceful.

143 MA: “Internally”: contemplating the breathing in his own body. “Externally”: contemplating the breathing occurring in the body of another. “Internally and externally”: contemplating the breathing in his own body and in the body of another alternately, with uninterrupted attention. A similar explanation applies to the refrain that follows each of the other sections, except that under the contemplation of feeling, mind, and mind-objects, the contemplation externally, apart from those possessing telepathic powers, must be inferential.

144 MA explains that the arising nature of the body can be observed in its conditioned origination through ignorance, craving, kamma, and food, as well as in the moment-by-moment origination of material phenomena in the body.

In the case of mindfulness of breathing, an additional condition is the physiological apparatus of respiration. The “vanishing nature” of the body is seen in the cessation of bodily phenomena through the cessation of their conditions as well as in the momentary dissolution of bodily phenomena.
145 MA: For the sake of a wider and wider and higher and higher measure of knowledge and mindfulness.

The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya
translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

V.X.8 (8) The Simile of the Lamp

“Bhikkhus, concentration by mindfulness of breathing, when developed and cultivated, is of great fruit and benefit. And how, bhikkhus, is concentration by mindfulness of breathing developed and cultivated so that it is of great fruit and benefit?”

“Here, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu, having gone to the forest, to the foot of a tree, or to an empty hut, sits down. Having folded his legs crosswise, straightened his body, and set up mindfulness in front of him, just mindful he breathes in, mindful he breathes out.... He trains thus: ‘Contemplating relinquishment, I will breathe in’; he trains thus: ‘Contemplating relinquishment, I will breathe out.’

“It is in this way, bhikkhus, that concentration by mindfulness of breathing is developed and cultivated so that it is of great fruit and benefit.

“I too, bhikkhus, before my enlightenment, while I was still a bodhisatta, not yet fully enlightened, generally dwelt in this dwelling. While I generally dwelt in this dwelling, neither my body nor my eyes became fatigued and my mind, by not clinging, was liberated from the taints.

“Therefore, bhikkhus, if a bhikkhu wishes: ‘May neither my body nor my eyes become fatigued and may my mind, by not clinging, be liberated from the taints,’ this same concentration by mindfulness of breathing should be closely attended to.

8. Contemplation while stationed within one of the Four Postures (īryāpatha sañña) is a practice aimed at developing mindfulness and insight into the impermanent and ever-changing nature of the body.
 - Reflect on the nature of the body changing from moment to moment and notice how sensations, thoughts, and emotions come and go.
 - Cultivate an attitude of non-judgmental awareness, accepting whatever arises in experience.
 - i. Sitting posture (nisinnā) develops awareness to the sensations of the body touching the chair or cushion, the posture of the back, and the position of the hands. Acknowledge any thoughts, feelings, or physical sensations that arise while sitting.
 - ii. Standing posture (ṭhita) develops awareness to the sensation of the feet on the ground, the balance of the body, and any movements or adjustments that are made while standing. Observe how the body feels in this posture and the impermanent nature of this state.
 - iii. Walking posture (gacchanta) develops awareness to the movement of the legs, the lifting and placing of the feet, and the rhythm of the steps. Be aware of the changing scenery and the sensations in the body during movement.
 - iv. Lying down posture (sayāna) develops awareness to the sensations of the lying down body and the surface that the body is lying on, the position of the limbs, and the relaxation of the muscles. Be aware of any thoughts or mental states that may arise in this posture.

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10 Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta: The Foundations of Mindfulness

6. “Again, bhikkhus, when walking, a bhikkhu understands: ‘I am walking’; when standing, he understands: ‘I am standing’; when sitting, he understands: ‘I am sitting’; when lying down, he understands: ‘I am lying down’; or he understands accordingly however his body is disposed.¹⁴⁶
7. “In this way he abides contemplating the body as a body internally, externally, and both internally and externally... And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. That too is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating the body as a body.

Note: 146 The understanding of the bodily postures referred to in this exercise is not our ordinary natural knowledge of our bodily activity, but a close, constant, and careful awareness of the body in every position, coupled with an analytical examination intended to dispel the delusion of a self as the agent of bodily movement.

5. Full Awareness or Clear Comprehension (sampajañña) of Activities involves being fully present and aware while engaging in various activities throughout the day.
- Enjoy mindfulness in the moment, observe experiences without attachment, and gain insight into the impermanent and not-self nature of reality.
 - Select a specific activity or task to perform mindfully. The activity can be any routine activity, such as eating, walking, washing dishes, or breathing.
 - Begin the activity slowly and deliberately. Pay close attention to each aspect and detail of the task, from the beginning to the end.
 - Engage the senses in the activity. Notice the physical sensations, sounds, smells, tastes, and visual aspects associated with the activity.
 - Stay present by utilizing energy and concentration. The mind has a habit to wander during activities. When thoughts start to drift away from the task at hand, gently bring focus back to the activity itself. Avoid getting lost in daydreams or distractions.
 - Observe emotions and intentions during the activity. Notice any desires, aversions, or attachments that arise in connection with the task. Be aware of how these mental states influence the mind’s intentions and resulting actions.
 - Practice a non-judgmental attitude with the activity. Instead of labeling things as good or bad, simply observe them as they are. Develop a clear and unbiased comprehension of the activity.
 - Maintain continuity of awareness throughout the entire duration of the activity. Be aware of each moment as it unfolds, without gaps in mindfulness.

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8. “Again, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu is one who acts in full awareness when going forward and returning;¹⁴⁷ who acts in full awareness when looking ahead and looking away; who acts in full awareness when flexing and extending his limbs; who acts in full awareness when wearing his robes and carrying his outer robe and bowl; who acts in full awareness when eating, drinking, consuming food, and tasting; who acts in full awareness when defecating and urinating; who acts in full awareness when walking, standing, sitting, falling asleep, waking up, talking, and keeping silent.
9. “In this way he abides contemplating the body as a body internally, externally, and both internally and externally... And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. That too is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating the body as a body.

Note: 147 Sampajañña, also translated as “clear comprehension” (Soma, Nyanaponika), is analysed in the commentaries into four types: full awareness of the purpose of one’s action; full awareness of the suitability of one’s means; full awareness

of the domain, that is, not abandoning the subject of meditation during one's daily routine; and full awareness of reality, the knowledge that behind one's activities there is no abiding self.

6. Attention to the Foulness (asubha) of the 32 Bodily Parts (dvattiṃsākāra) is to contemplate the impurities (asubha bhāvanā), the unattractive and impermanent aspects of the physical body. The aim of this practice is to overcome attachment and desire for the physical form.
- Set intention to see the body as it truly is, free from delusions of beauty or attractiveness.
 - Study the following list of 32 bodily parts for contemplation.
 - Visualize each bodily part individually. Reflect on the nature of each part during the visualization. Contemplate the impermanence, decay, and unattractiveness associated with each part. Consider how these parts change over time, decay, and eventually decompose.
 - Integrate the insights gained from asubha meditation into daily life. Use these insights to cultivate a healthier relationship with the body by reducing attachment and desire for the body. The goal is not to develop aversion towards the body but to see it more clearly and transcend attachments to it.

The following is the list of the 32 bodily parts:

1. hair of the head (kesā)
2. hair of the body (lomā)
3. nails (nakhā)
4. teeth (dantā)
5. skin (taco)
6. flesh (maṃsaṃ)
7. sinews (nahārū)
8. bones (aṭṭhī)
9. bone marrow (aṭṭhimiñjaṃ)
10. kidneys (vakkāṃ)
11. heart (hadayaṃ)
12. liver (yakanāṃ)
13. membranes (kilomakāṃ)
14. spleen (pihakaṃ)
15. lungs (papphāsaṃ)
16. bowels (antaṃ)
17. entrails (antagūṇaṃ)
18. undigested food (udariyaṃ)
19. excrement (karīsaṃ)
20. bile (pittaṃ)
21. phlegm (semhaṃ)
22. pus (pubbo)
23. blood (lohitāṃ)
24. sweat (sedo)
25. fat (medo)
26. tears (assu)
27. grease (vasā)
28. spittle (kheḷo)
29. mucus (siṅghāṇikā)
30. oil of the joints (lasikā)
31. urine (muttaṃ)
32. brain (matthaluṅgaṇ'ti)

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10. "Again, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu reviews this same body up from the soles of the feet and down from the top of the hair, bounded by skin, as full of many kinds of impurity thus: 'In this body there are head-hairs, body-hairs, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, bone-marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, diaphragm, spleen, lungs, intestines, mesentery, contents of the stomach, feces, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, grease, spittle, snot, oil of the joints, and urine.'¹⁴⁸ Just as though there were a bag with an opening at both ends full of many sorts of grain, such as hill rice, red rice, beans, peas, millet, and white rice, and a man with good eyes were to open it and review it thus: 'This is hill rice, this is red rice, these are beans, these are peas, this is millet, this is white rice'; so too, a bhikkhu reviews this same body... as full of many kinds of impurity thus: 'In this body there are head-hairs... and urine.'

11. "In this way he abides contemplating the body as a body internally, externally, and both internally and externally... And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. That too is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating the body as a body.

Note: 148 In later Pali works the brain is added to the above list to form thirty-two parts.

5. Contemplate the Four Great Elements (catudhātuvavatthāna). The practice develops insight into the impermanent and not-self nature of reality. The Four Great Elements are the foundational components of all material phenomena in the world, and are the following.
- i. Earth (pathavi) represents the element of solidity or hardness. Earth element of the body is contemplated by reflecting on the solidity and hardness of bones, teeth, and muscles.
 - ii. Water (apo) represents the element of fluidity or cohesion. Water element of the body is contemplated by reflecting on the sensations of fluidity and cohesion of liquids, such as blood, urine, saliva, and mucus.
 - iii. Fire (tejo) represents the element of heat or temperature. Fire element of the body is contemplated by reflecting on the sensations of heat, and is essential for various bodily functions. Contemplate the warmth you feel.
 - iv. Air (vayo) represents the element of motion or vibration. Air element of the body is contemplated by reflecting on the sensations of motion and vibration of the breath as it goes in and out, as well as of subtle energies that circulate in the body. Contemplate the movement of the breath as an expression of the air element.
- Reflect on how these elements are not just within the body but are also in all physical objects in the world. Contemplate how all material phenomena are composed of these four elemental qualities.
 - Contemplate the impermanence and not-self nature of the Four Great Elements. Realize that these elements are in a constant state of change and lack inherent, unchanging essence.

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12. "Again, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu reviews this same body, however it is placed, however disposed, by way of elements thus: 'In this body there are the earth element, the water element, the fire element, and the air element.'¹⁴⁹ Just as though a skilled butcher or his apprentice had killed a cow and was seated at the crossroads with it cut up into pieces; so too, a bhikkhu reviews this same body... by way of elements thus: 'In this body there are the earth element, the water element, the fire element, and the air element.'

13. “In this way he abides contemplating the body as a body internally, externally, and both internally and externally... And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. That too is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating the body as a body.
Note: 149 These four elements are explained by Buddhist tradition as the primary attributes of matter — solidity, cohesion, heat, and distension.

- 6-14. Charnel Ground Contemplations (paṭikkūla manasikāra) are composed of nine impure and loathsome (asubha) objects of repulsion (paṭikkūla), the various stages of decay of the body. These meditations are used to highlight the impermanence of the body, the inevitability of death, the unattractiveness, fragility, and disintegration of the body. The purpose for these meditations is to develop the urgency to remove attachment to the body which is a requirement for the realization of nibbāna.
- First, imagine a corpse of another while performing each of the nine meditations.
 - Second, imagine that the corpse is that of your own body while performing each of the nine meditations.

The following are the nine subjects for meditation.

6. Bloated Corpse (pūtikāsanā) is the contemplation of a corpse in a state of decay, swollen and discolored. This meditation highlights the impermanence and unattractiveness of the body.
7. Corpse Being Eaten by Animals and Maggots (vammikasāsanā) is to visualize a corpse being consumed by animals, such as crows or vultures, and maggots. This meditation underscores the inevitability of death and the transient nature of the body.
8. Corpse Reduced to a Skeleton (nikkujjanasāsanā) is to contemplate on a decomposed corpse whose form is reduced to only bones, a skeleton. This meditation emphasizes the impermanence and fragility of the physical form.
9. Corpse Reduced to Bones Scattered in the Wind (atthaṭṭhi saṅghāṭa sāsanā) is an image created by the imagination of the corpse's bones scattered in all directions by the wind. This meditation deepens the understanding of bodily impermanence.
10. Corpse Reduced to Bones Bleached White (ajjhāvasathika sāsanā) is a visualization of the corpse's bones white and clean of any debris as they lie in the sun. This meditation reinforces the idea of impermanence.
11. Corpse Reduced to Bones Turned to Dust (lohitaka sāsanā) is to visualize a corpse's bones turning into dust. This meditation highlights the eventual disintegration of the body.
12. Fleshless Corpse (kesamutthika sāsanā) is to contemplate a corpse with no flesh left, but only skin and sinews. This meditation underscores the changing and transient nature of the body's components.
13. Skeleton Held Together by Sinews (vakka sāsanā) is to imagine a skeleton held together by only sinews. This meditation emphasizes the fragile and interconnected nature of the body's parts.
14. Bleached Bones Scattered in All Directions (atthaṭṭhi parisāsanasāsanā) is to visualize the complete dispersal of a corpse's bleached bones in all directions. This meditation serves as a reminder of the ultimate fate of all bodies.

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14. “Again, bhikkhus, as though he were to see a corpse thrown aside in a charnel ground, one, two, or three days dead, bloated, livid, and oozing matter, a bhikkhu compares this same body with it thus: ‘This body too is of the same nature, it will be like that, it is not exempt from that fate.’¹⁵⁰
15. “In this way he abides contemplating the body as a body internally, externally, and both internally and externally... And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. That too is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating the body as a body.

16. “Again, as though he were to see a corpse thrown aside in a charnel ground, being devoured by crows, hawks, vultures, dogs, jackals, or various kinds of worms, a bhikkhu compares this same body with it thus: ‘This body too is of the same nature, it will be like that, it is not exempt from that fate.’
17. “... That too is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating the body as a body.
- 18–24. “Again, as though he were to see a corpse thrown aside in a charnel ground, a skeleton with flesh and blood, held together with sinews... a fleshless skeleton smeared with blood, held together with sinews... a skeleton without flesh and blood, held together with sinews... disconnected bones scattered in all directions — here a hand-bone, there a foot-bone, here a shin-bone, there a thigh-bone, here a hip-bone, there a back-bone, here a rib-bone, there a breast-bone, here an arm-bone, there a shoulder-bone, here a neck-bone, there a jaw-bone, here a tooth, there the skull — a bhikkhu compares this same body with it thus: ‘This body too is of the same nature, it will be like that, it is not exempt from that fate.’¹⁵¹
25. “... That too is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating the body as a body.
- 26–30. “Again, as though he were to see a corpse thrown aside in a charnel ground, bones bleached white, the colour of shells... bones heaped up... bones more than a year old, rotted and crumbled to dust [59], a bhikkhu compares this same body with it thus: ‘This body too is of the same nature, it will be like that, it is not exempt from that fate.’
31. “In this way he abides contemplating the body as a body internally, or he abides contemplating the body as a body externally, or he abides contemplating the body as a body both internally and externally. Or else he abides contemplating in the body its nature of arising, or he abides contemplating in the body its nature of vanishing, or he abides contemplating in the body its nature of both arising and vanishing. Or else mindfulness that ‘there is a body’ is simply established in him to the extent necessary for bare knowledge and mindfulness. And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. That too is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating the body as a body.

Notes: 150 The phrase “as though” suggests that this meditation, and those to follow, need not be based upon an actual encounter with a corpse in the state of decay described, but can be performed as an imaginative exercise. “This same body” is, of course, the meditator’s own body.

151 Each of the four types of corpse mentioned here, and the three types below, may be taken as a separate and self-sufficient subject of meditation; or the entire set may be used as a progressive series for impressing on the mind the idea of the body’s transience and insubstantiality. The progression continues in §§26–30.

- B. Contemplation of Feelings (*vedanā sañña*) observes and understands the nature of different feelings and sensations that arise in the body and mind. Feelings are part of human existence and arise in response to sensory experiences, thoughts, and emotions.
- Establish mindful awareness of feelings by bring attention to the present moment, focusing on bodily sensations and mental states.
 - Observe the subjective experience of feelings into one of the following three categories:
 1. pleasant feelings (*sukha*) are of pleasure or happiness,
 2. unpleasant feelings (*dukkha*) are of discomfort, pain, or suffering, and
 3. neutral feelings (*adukkhamasukha*) are neither pleasant nor unpleasant.
 - Distinguish between four types of feelings: bodily and mental, worldly and unworldly.
 4. Bodily feelings are sensations and physical feelings in the body. This includes sensations of comfort, discomfort, warmth, coldness, tension, relaxation, and so on.
 5. Mental feelings arise in the mind and include emotions. Observe and contemplate the various emotions and mental states that arise in the mind, such as happiness, sadness, anger, joy, and boredom.

6. Worldly feelings are those associated with attachment, craving, and suffering. These are feelings tied to the pursuit of sensual pleasures, material possessions, and worldly success. Reflect on how attachment to these feelings can lead to suffering and dissatisfaction.
 7. Unworldly feelings are associated with spiritual progress and liberation. These feelings arise from the practice of mindfulness, meditation, and the path to enlightenment. They include feelings of inner peace, contentment, equanimity, and the joy that comes from spiritual insights.
- Label the feelings without judgment or attachment. Simply note whether the feeling is pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral; bodily, mental, worldly or unworldly.
 - Cultivate equanimity (upekkha) by maintaining a balanced and non-reactive attitude toward all feelings, whether pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral, whether they are bodily or mental. Understand that attachment to pleasant feelings and aversion to unpleasant ones can lead to suffering. Equanimity is a state of mind that merely observes feelings without clinging or aversion.
 - Stay present and non-judgmental by avoiding labeling or categorizing the feelings as good or bad. Instead, simply acknowledge them as they are.
 - Observe that feelings are impermanent (anicca); they arise, change, and pass away.
 - Contemplate non-self (anatta) characteristic of feelings, that there is no fixed and enduring self in these feelings.
 - The insights of impermanence and not-self characteristics of feelings are the conditions for the mind to let go of attachment and aversion to feelings.
 - Establish clear comprehension (sampajañña) of arising and vanishing with regard to feelings. This practice involves observing the feelings with full awareness and understanding, without reacting to them impulsively. When a pleasant feeling arises, avoid getting attached or craving it. When an unpleasant feeling arises, avoid aversion and resistance. Cultivate equanimity by not being swayed by your feelings.
 - Remain focussed on feelings in themselves. Sustain mindfulness (sati) and concentrate (samādhi) only on the presence of feelings.
 - Reflect on the causes and effects of feelings, the conditions that give rise to the feelings and the resulting experiences. Understand that feelings are often the result of various factors, including views, perceptions, thoughts, and external circumstances.
 - Cultivate compassion (karunā) and loving-kindness (metta) toward yourself and others. Recognize that every mind experiences feelings, and these feelings are a universal part of the human experience.

The contemplation of feelings provides understanding (paññā) into the nature of suffering (dukkha) and thereby, aides with attaining liberation (nibbāna) from the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth (saṃsāra). The practice produces insight (vipassanā) into the nature of reality and a peaceful and equanimous manner of living.

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10 Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta: The Foundations of Mindfulness

32. “And how, bhikkhus, does a bhikkhu abide contemplating feelings as feelings?¹⁵² Here, when feeling a pleasant feeling, a bhikkhu understands: ‘I feel a pleasant feeling’; when feeling a painful feeling, he understands: ‘I feel a painful feeling’; when feeling a neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling, he understands: ‘I feel a neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling.’ When feeling a worldly pleasant feeling, he understands: ‘I feel a worldly pleasant feeling’; when feeling an unworldly pleasant feeling, he understands: ‘I feel an unworldly pleasant feeling’; when feeling a worldly painful feeling, he understands: ‘I feel a worldly painful feeling’; when feeling an unworldly painful feeling, he understands: ‘I feel an unworldly painful feeling’; when feeling a worldly neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling, he understands: ‘I feel a worldly neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling’; when

feeling an unworldly neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling, he understands: 'I feel an unworldly neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling.'

33. "In this way he abides contemplating feelings as feelings internally, or he abides contemplating feelings as feelings externally, or he abides contemplating feelings as feelings both internally and externally. Or else he abides contemplating in feelings their nature of arising, or he abides contemplating in feelings their nature of vanishing, or he abides contemplating in feelings their nature of both arising and vanishing.¹⁵³ Or else mindfulness that 'there is feeling' is simply established in him to the extent necessary for bare knowledge and mindfulness. And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. That is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating feelings as feelings.

Notes: 152 Feeling (vedanā) signifies the affective quality of experience, bodily and mental, either pleasant, painful, or neither, i.e., neutral feeling.

153 The conditions for the arising and vanishing of feeling are the same as those for the body (see n.144) except that food is replaced by contact, since contact is the condition for feeling (see MN 9.42).

The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya

translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

IV.III.25 (5) Knowledge

"Bhikkhus, before my enlightenment, while I was still a bodhisatta, not yet fully enlightened, it occurred to me: "What now is feeling? What is the origin of feeling? What is the way leading to the origination of feeling? What is the cessation of feeling? What is the way leading to the cessation of feeling? What is the gratification in feeling? What is the danger? What is the escape?"

"Then, bhikkhus, it occurred to me: "There are, bhikkhu, these three feelings: pleasant feeling, painful feeling, neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling. This is called feeling. With the arising of contact there is the arising of feeling. Craving is the way leading to the origination of feeling. With the cessation of contact there is the cessation of feeling. This Noble Eightfold Path is the way leading to the cessation of feeling; that is, right view ... right concentration.

"The pleasure and joy that arise in dependence on feeling: this is the gratification in feeling. That feeling is impermanent, suffering, and subject to change: this is the danger in feeling. The removal and abandonment of desire and lust for feeling: this is the escape from feeling."

"These are feelings': thus, bhikkhus, in regard to things unheard before, there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, true knowledge, and light.

"This is the origin of feeling': thus, bhikkhus, in regard to things unheard before, there arose in me vision ... and light.

"This is the way leading to the origination of feeling': thus, bhikkhus, in regard to things unheard before, there arose in me vision ... and light.

"This is the cessation of feeling': thus, bhikkhus, in regard to things unheard before, there arose in me vision ... and light.

"This is the way leading to the cessation of feeling': thus, bhikkhus, in regard to things unheard before, there arose in me vision ... and light.

"This is the gratification in feeling' ... 'This is the danger in feeling' ... 'This is the escape from feeling': thus, bhikkhus, in regard to things unheard before, there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, true knowledge, and light."

- C. Contemplation of Mind (citta sañña) observes, investigates, and understands the various states of mind. The practice observes the arising and passing of thoughts, mental states, and thought patterns, level of concentration (samādhi) and presence of defilements (kilesa).
- Observe the states and contents of mind with mindfulness (sati). Avoid judging the contents and states of mind as good or bad but to observe them with equanimity (upekkhā). Label and categorize the contents and states of mind as follows.

- Discriminate between wholesome (kusala) and unwholesome (akusala) mental states. Wholesome states include loving-kindness (metta), compassion (karunā), generosity (dāna), and wisdom (paññā); while unwholesome states encompass greed (lobha), hatred (dosa), and delusion (moha).
- Be aware of whether the mind is contracted due to sloth and torpor (thīnamiddha) or distracted due to restlessness and remorse (uddhaccakukkucca). These are hindrances (nīvaraṇā) that impede the development of concentration (samādhi) and insight (vipassanā).
- Discern whether the mind is exalted due to deep meditative absorption (jhāna) or unexalted due to ordinary sense consciousness. Consider whether the state of mind has surpassed the ordinary sense consciousness or remains unsurpassed. Jhāna are states of concentrated mind that surpass sense consciousness.
- Evaluate the level of concentration (samādhi) in meditation. Is the mind highly concentrated, or is it still scattered and unconcentrated?
- Reflect on whether the mind is liberated from the defilements (kilesa) such as greed, hatred, and delusion, or if it still bound by these mental impurities.
- Observe the mind without getting caught up in or attached to the contents of mind. Recognize that thoughts and emotions are impermanent, they come and go. When getting carried away by a particular thought or emotion, gently note it and return attention to the awareness of the mind itself with clear comprehension (sampajañña) of the arising and vanishing of the contents of mind; and sustain mindfulness of the presence of mind. Let go of attachment and aversion to mental phenomena.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya

translation by Bhikkhu Bodhi

10 Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta: The Foundations of Mindfulness

34. “And how, bhikkhus, does a bhikkhu abide contemplating mind as mind?¹⁵⁴ Here a bhikkhu understands mind affected by lust as mind affected by lust, and mind unaffected by lust as mind unaffected by lust. He understands mind affected by hate as mind affected by hate, and mind unaffected by hate as mind unaffected by hate. He understands mind affected by delusion as mind affected by delusion, and mind unaffected by delusion as mind unaffected by delusion. He understands contracted mind as contracted mind, and distracted mind as distracted mind. He understands exalted mind as exalted mind, and unexalted mind as unexalted mind. He understands surpassed mind as surpassed mind, and unsurpassed mind as unsurpassed mind. He understands concentrated mind as concentrated mind, and unconcentrated mind as unconcentrated mind. He understands liberated mind as liberated mind, and unliberated mind as unliberated mind.¹⁵⁵
35. “In this way he abides contemplating mind as mind internally, or he abides contemplating mind as mind externally, or he abides contemplating mind as mind both internally and externally. Or else he abides contemplating in mind its nature of arising, or he abides contemplating in mind its nature of vanishing, or he abides contemplating in mind its nature of both arising and vanishing.¹⁵⁶ Or else mindfulness that ‘there is mind’ is simply established in him to the extent necessary for bare knowledge and mindfulness. And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. That is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating mind as mind.

Notes: 154 Mind (citta) as an object of contemplation refers to the general state and level of consciousness. Since consciousness itself, in its own nature, is the bare knowing or cognizing of an object, the quality of any state of mind is determined by its associated mental factors, such as lust, hate, and delusion or their opposites, as mentioned by the sutta.

155 The paired examples of citta given in this passage contrast states of mind of wholesome and unwholesome, or developed and undeveloped character. An exception, however, is the pair “contracted” and “distracted,” which are both

unwholesome, the former due to sloth and torpor, the latter due to restlessness and remorse. MA explains “exalted mind” and “unsurpassed mind” as the mind pertaining to the level of the jhānas and immaterial meditative attainments, and “unexalted mind” and “surpassed mind” as the mind pertaining to the level of sense-sphere consciousness. “Liberated mind” must be understood as a mind temporarily and partly freed from defilements through insight or the jhānas. Since the practice of satipaṭṭhāna pertains to the preliminary phase of the path aimed at the supramundane paths of deliverance, this last category should not be understood as a mind liberated through attainment of the supramundane paths.

156 The conditions for the arising and vanishing of mind are the same as those for the body except that food is replaced by mentality-materiality, since the latter is the condition for consciousness.

- D. Contemplation of Mind Objects (Dhammā sañña) are reflections on the teachings (Dhamma) of the Buddha. The five teachings to be contemplated are the following:
- The Five Hindrances (nīvaraṇā),
 - The Five Clinging Aggregates (pañcupādānakkhandhā),
 - The Six Sense Bases (saḷāyatana),
 - The Seven Enlightenment Factors (satta bojjhaṅgā), and
 - The Four Noble Truths (ariya catusacca).
- The Five Hindrances (nīvaraṇā) are investigated for their presence or absence in the mind. The hindrances are obstacles to the cultivation of mindfulness (sati) and insight (vipassanā), and effort (vīrya) is exerted to be free from them.
- Determine with mindfulness for the presence or absence, arising and abandoning, and no future arising of the following hindrances:
 8. sensual desires (kāmacchanda),
 9. ill will (vyāpāda),
 10. sloth and torpor (thīna-middha),
 11. restlessness and remorse (uddhaccakukkucca), and
 12. doubt (vicikicchā).
 - Apply heightened mindfulness to the mental states. Recognize when any of the Five Hindrances arise in the mind, and whether they are present or absent in the mind. Acknowledge the hindrances without judgment or self-criticism. Simply note their presence.
 - Observe the arising and abandoning of these hindrances in the mind. Contemplate how they come into existence and how they fade away. Notice that they arise due to specific triggers or conditions and naturally dissipate when those conditions change or when effort is applied to intensify mindfulness and insight.
 - Contemplate the possibility of preventing these hindrances from arising in the future. Understand the causes and conditions that give rise to each hindrance and work to eliminate or minimize those causes. For example:
 - To overcome desire, contemplate impermanence and the unsatisfactory nature of desires.
 - To counter ill-will, practice loving-kindness (metta) meditation to cultivate a mind of goodwill.
 - To combat sloth and torpor, put forth effort in mindfulness or engage in energizing practices.
 - To ease restlessness and worry, practice calming meditation (samatha) and acceptance.
 - To resolve doubt, seek clarification through study, discussion, or guidance from an experienced practitioner.

Overcoming the Five Hindrances is a gradual process, and patience, perseverance and endurance are necessary. The aim of the spiritual path is to purify the mind of these hindrances, that results in subtle states of concentration (samādhi) and insight

(vipassanā). See the September 2023 Newsletter for a detailed discussion on how to practice with the Five Hindrances.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya
translation by Bhikkhu Bodhi

10 Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta: The Foundations of Mindfulness

36. “And how, bhikkhus, does a bhikkhu abide contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects?

¹⁵⁷ Here a bhikkhu abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects in terms of the five hindrances.¹⁵⁸ And how does a bhikkhu abide contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects in terms of the five hindrances? Here, there being sensual desire in him, a bhikkhu understands: ‘There is sensual desire in me’; or there being no sensual desire in him, he understands: ‘There is no sensual desire in me’; and he also understands how there comes to be the arising of unarisen sensual desire, and how there comes to be the abandoning of arisen sensual desire, and how there comes to be the future non-arising of abandoned sensual desire.’

“There being ill will in him... There being sloth and torpor in him... There being restlessness and remorse in him... There being doubt in him, a bhikkhu understands: ‘There is doubt in me’; or there being no doubt in him, he understands: ‘There is no doubt in me’; and he understands how there comes to be the arising of unarisen doubt, and how there comes to be the abandoning of arisen doubt, and how there comes to be the future non-arising of abandoned doubt.

37. “In this way he abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects internally, or he abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects externally, or he abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects both internally and externally. Or else he abides contemplating in mind-objects their nature of arising, or he abides contemplating in mind-objects their nature of vanishing, or he abides contemplating in mind-objects their nature of both arising and vanishing. Or else mindfulness that ‘there are mind-objects’ is simply established in him to the extent necessary for bare knowledge and mindfulness. And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. That is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects in terms of the five hindrances.

Notes: ¹⁵⁷ The word rendered here as “mind-objects” is the polymorphous dhammā. In this context dhammā can be understood as comprising all phenomena classified by way of the categories of the Dhamma, the Buddha’s teaching of actuality. This contemplation reaches its climax in the penetration of the teaching at the heart of the Dhamma — the Four Noble Truths.

¹⁵⁸ The five hindrances (pañcanīvaraṇā) are the main inner impediments to the development of concentration and insight. Sensual desire arises through attending unwisely to a sensually attractive object and is abandoned by meditation on a foul object (as in §10 and §§14–30); ill will arises through attending unwisely to a repugnant object and is abandoned by developing loving-kindness; sloth and torpor arise by submitting to boredom and laziness and are abandoned by arousing energy; restlessness and remorse arise through unwisely reflecting on disturbing thoughts and are abandoned by wisely reflecting on tranquillity; doubt arises through unwisely reflecting on dubious matters and is abandoned by study, investigation, and inquiry. The hindrances are fully eradicated only by the supramundane paths.

○ The Five Clinging Aggregates (pañcupādānakkhandhā) are the components that make up the experience of self and the world, and are also the contents of mind. Unenlightened individuals cling to the aggregates which is the cause for suffering.

• Contemplate for understanding the following aggregates.

13. Material form (rūpa khanda) is the physical aspect of existence, the body and the external world perceived through the senses.

14. Feeling (vedanā khandha) is the sensations that are experienced in response to sensual stimuli. Feelings can be pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral.
 15. Perception (saññā khandha) is recognition and labeling of the sense objects that also include mental phenomena. Perception identifies and categorizes objects based on past knowledge and conditioning.
 16. Mental formations (saṅkhāra khandha) include thoughts, emotions, volitions, and any mental construct. Mental formations encompasses everything that arises in the mind, including desires, intentions, and reactions.
 17. Sense consciousness (viññāṇa khandha) is the awareness or cognizance of sensory experiences.
- Contemplate how ignorance, attachment, and aversion result in clinging to the aggregates. Ignorance of the nature of reality, attachment to pleasant feelings and experiences, and aversion to unpleasant feelings and experiences. Unenlightened individuals identify with these aggregates, believing, "I am my body," "I am my thoughts," or "I am my feelings." This identification leads to suffering because the aggregates are impermanent and subject to change.
 - Investigate the impermanence (anicca) of the aggregates. Nothing in this world, including the five aggregates, remains fixed or unchanging. They are in a constant state of flux, arising and passing away. Understand that clinging to these impermanent aggregates is a source of suffering. The greater the clinging to the aggregates, the greater is the suffering when the aggregates change and disintegrate.
 - Contemplate the unsatisfactory (dukkha) nature of clinging to the aggregates. Unenlightened individuals attach themselves to the aggregates and experience suffering because the aggregates cannot provide lasting happiness or fulfillment. Realize that suffering is not just physical pain but also the underlying dissatisfaction and restlessness that come from attachment to these ever-changing elements.
 - Meditate on the doctrine of not-self (anatta). Understand that the aggregates are not a stable, unchanging self or soul. The aggregates are impersonal, conditioned (saṅkhārā) phenomena. Realize that there is no permanent, unchanging self within these aggregates.
 - Regularly practice mindfulness meditation to observe the aggregates as they arise and pass away in experience. Use mindfulness to investigate (dhammavicaya) the nature of clinging, impermanence, suffering, and not-self.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya
translation by Bhikkhu Bodhi

10 Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta: The Foundations of Mindfulness

38. "Again, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects in terms of the five aggregates affected by clinging.¹⁵⁹ And how does a bhikkhu abide contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects in terms of the five aggregates affected by clinging? Here a bhikkhu understands: 'Such is material form, such its origin, such its disappearance; such is feeling, such its origin, such its disappearance; such is perception, such its origin, such its disappearance; such are the formations, such their origin, such their disappearance; such is consciousness, such its origin, such its disappearance.'
39. "In this way he abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects internally, externally, and both internally and externally... And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. That is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects in terms of the five aggregates affected by clinging.

Note: 159 The five aggregates affected by clinging (pañc'upādānakkhandhā) are the five groups of factors comprising the individual personality.

The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya
translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

III.I.22.26 (5) Gratification (1)

“So long, bhikkhus, as I did not directly know as they really are the gratification, the danger, and the escape in the case of these five aggregates subject to clinging, I did not claim to have awakened to the unsurpassed perfect enlightenment in this world with its devas, Māra, and Brahmā, in this generation with its ascetics and brahmins, its devas and humans. But when I directly knew all this as it really is, then I claimed to have awakened to the unsurpassed perfect enlightenment in this world with ... its devas and humans.

“The knowledge and vision arose in me: ‘Unshakable is my liberation of mind; this is my last birth; now there is no more renewed existence.’”

- The Six Sense Bases (saḷāyatana) are composed of the pair, Six Internal (ajjhattika) and Six External (bāhira) Sense Bases. The Six Sense Bases are the organs or faculties and their respective objects through which the world is experienced, and are the doors through which contact is made with sensory stimuli, generating experiences and perceptions.

The Six Internal (ajjhattika) Sense Bases, or Sense Faculties (indriya) are the following:

- i. eye (cakkhu),
- ii. ear (sota),
- iii. nose (ghāna),
- iv. tongue (jivhā),
- v. body (kāya), and
- vi. mind (mano).

The Six External (bāhira) Sense Bases or sense objects are the following:

- i. visible forms (rūpā āyatana),
- ii. sounds (sotā āyatana),
- iii. odors (ghānā āyatana),
- iv. flavors (rasā āyatana),
- v. tangibles (kāyā āyatana), and
- vi. mental objects (dhammā āyatana).

The Six Sense Bases (saḷāyatana) therefore, consist of the following:

1. eye & visible forms (visual perception),
2. ear & sounds (auditory perception),
3. nose & odors (olfactory perception),
4. tongue & flavors (gustatory perception),
5. body & tangibles (tactile perception), and
6. mind & mental objects (mental perception).

The contemplation of the Six Sense Bases, the means for sensory experiences, develops insight (vipassanā) into the nature of suffering (dukkha) and the impermanence (anicca) of all phenomena.

- Reflect on the Six Sense Bases with mindfulness and concentration.
 7. Investigate the nature of visual perception. Consider how the eye perceives various forms and colors, and realize that what is seen is impermanent and subject to change.
 8. Investigate the nature of auditory perception. Contemplate how sounds come and go.
 9. Investigate olfactory perception. Be aware of how smells arise and pass away.
 10. Investigate gustatory perception. Contemplate how tastes come and go during eating.
 11. Investigate tactile perception. Pay attention to sensations in the body, such as touch, pressure, heat, and cold. Recognize that these sensations are constantly changing and are impermanent.
 12. Investigate mental perception. Consider how thoughts, emotions, and mental states arise and cease in the mind. Be aware of the ever-changing nature of mental experiences.

- Contemplate each sense base, emphasize the impermanence of the experiences associated with it. Recognize that nothing in the sensory world is permanent, and clinging to these impermanent experiences leads to suffering.
- Discern the arising of fetters (saṃyojana) in dependence on the Six Sense Bases, the abandonment of the arisen fetters, and the future non-arising of these fetters. There are ten fetters or mental and emotional attachments or obstacles tying beings to the cycle of birth, old age, sickness, death, and rebirth (saṃsāra). The ten fetters are the following:
 11. personality belief (sakkāya diṭṭhi),
 12. doubt (vicikicchā),
 13. clinging to rites and rituals (sīlabbata parāmāsa),
 14. sensuous desire (kāma rāga),
 15. ill will (vyāpāda),
 16. craving for existence in the Form World, fine material existence (rūpa rāga),
 - a. craving for existence in the Formless World, immaterial existence (arūpa rāga),
 17. conceit (māna),
 18. restlessness (uddhacca), and
 19. ignorance (avijjā).

Fetters arise in dependence on the Six Sense Bases through the experience of sensory stimuli and the reaction to them with craving (taṇhā), attachment (rāga) or aversion (vyāpāda). The abandonment of fetters is accomplished through the practice and cultivation of mindfulness (sati) and insight (vipassana).

- Observe the arising and passing away of sensory experiences without reacting emotionally, and recognize the impermanent (anicca), unsatisfactory (dukkha), and selfless (anatta) nature of all phenomena. Through consistent meditation (bhāvanā), investigation (dhammavicaya) and mindfulness (sati), the fetter's grip on the mind is gradually weakened. The development of wholesome (kusala) mental qualities like wisdom (paññā), compassion (karunā), and equanimity (upekkhā), will also counteract the fetters.
- Avoid the future non-arising of fetters by training the mind in accordance to the Noble Eightfold Path (ariya aṭṭhaṅgika magga) that is directed towards liberation from suffering. By following and cultivating this path, composed of ethical conduct (sīla), concentration (samādhi), and wisdom (paññā), the fetters are weakened and uprooted. Ultimately, with insight and realization of the Four Noble Truths (ariya catusacca), there will be liberation (nibbāna) and the cessation of fetters.

The purpose of the contemplation of the Six Sense Bases is to develop equanimity (upekkhā) and detachment (virāga) from the sensory world. The process of observing the impermanence of the sense bases, allows for the relinquishment of attachment and aversion to them. Instead, cultivate a sense of equanimity and detachment.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya
translation by Bhikkhu Bodhi

10 Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta: The Foundations of Mindfulness

40. "Again, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects in terms of the six internal and external bases.¹⁶⁰ And how does a bhikkhu abide contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects in terms of the six internal and external bases? Here a bhikkhu understands the eye, he understands forms, and he understands the fetter that arises dependent on both; and he also understands how there comes to be the arising of the unarisen fetter, and how there comes to be the abandoning of the arisen fetter, and how there comes to be the future non-arising of the abandoned fetter.

"He understands the ear, he understands sounds... He understands the nose, he understands odours... He understands the tongue, he understands flavours... He understands the body, he understands tangibles... He understands the mind, he understands mind-objects, and he understands the fetter that arises dependent on both;

and he also understands how there comes to be the arising of the unarisen fetter, and how there comes to be the abandoning of the arisen fetter, and how there comes to be the future non-arising of the abandoned fetter.

41. "In this way he abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects internally, externally, and both internally and externally... And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. That is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects in terms of the six internal and external bases.

Note: 160 The internal bases are, as shown, the six sense faculties; the external bases, their respective objects. The fetter that arises dependent upon the pairs may be understood by way of the ten fetters ... or more simply as attraction (greed), aversion (hatred), and the underlying delusion.

The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya

translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

IV.I.35.13 (1) Before My Enlightenment (1)

"So long, bhikkhus, as I did not directly know as they really are the gratification, the danger, and the escape in the case of these six internal sense bases, I did not claim to have awakened to the unsurpassed perfect enlightenment in this world with its devas, Māra, and Brahmā, in this generation with its ascetics and brahmins, its devas and humans. But when I directly knew all this as it really is, then I claimed to have awakened to the unsurpassed perfect enlightenment in this world with ... its devas and humans.

"The knowledge and vision arose in me: 'Unshakable is my liberation of mind; this is my last birth; now there is no more renewed existence.'"

- The Seven Enlightenment Factors (*satta bojjhaṅgā*) are important mental faculties for awakening (*bodhi*). These factors are not separate but interconnected and mutually supportive. Establish the awareness of the presence or absence, the arising, and the culmination and complete development, of the following seven factors:
 1. Mindfulness (*sati*),
 2. Investigation of Dhamma (*dhammavicaya*),
 3. Energy (*vīrya*),
 4. Joy (*pīti*),
 5. Tranquility (*passaddhi*),
 6. Concentration (*sāmādhi*), and
 7. Equanimity (*upekkhā*).
- 1. Mindfulness (*sati*) is the foundation of the Seven Enlightenment Factors. Mindfulness is cultivated to develop awareness and insight into the nature of the mind and reality, is a condition for successful meditation, and is necessary to achieve liberation from suffering (*dukkha*).

Mindfulness is non-judgmental attention to the present moment, and full awareness of the contents and states of mind, as well as the external environment. This mental faculty observes thoughts, emotions, and bodily sensations without attachment or aversion, and acknowledges the contents and states of mind without clinging or trying to push them away. This faculty develops a non-reactive awareness of the contents and states of mind.

Mindfulness conditions the attitude of acceptance and equanimity (*upekkhā*) towards whatever arises in the mind and body. Mindful equanimity is a state of mind that does not react impulsively to pleasant or unpleasant experiences but merely observes the arising and passing away of sensations. Mindfulness is also a condition for clear comprehension (*sampajañña*) or understanding the nature of conditioned (*saṅkhārā*) reality which has the characteristics of impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and the absence of a permanent self (*anatta*).

Mindfulness is a deliberate and intentional mental faculty that is cultivated through practice, and is not passive daydreaming or being lost in thought. To be

mindful is to have awareness and knowledge of what is being done and why, it is contrary to a mind on automatic pilot.

- The practice of mindfulness is cultivated in formal meditation by focusing attention on the present moment. A meditation anchor (kasiṇa) is used to help direct and concentrate the mind. Examples of a meditation anchor is the breath, bodily sensations, thoughts, or other sensory experiences. A common form of meditation is mindfulness of breathing (ānāpānasati) which develops subtle states of concentration (sāmādhī) and will also strengthen mindfulness.
 - Maintain sustained attention and awareness of whatever arises in the mind and body without judgment.
 - The benefit in maintaining consistent daily meditation sessions is to receive continuous rewards from practice. When daily meditation practice is paused the momentum is interrupted and the flow of benefits will be diluted.
 - Mindfulness is not limited to formal meditation sessions. Mindfulness may be practiced informally in everyday life. The faculty is developed by being fully mindful, present, and aware of the details of activities, whether it's walking, eating, working, or whatever.
 - Mindfulness of the Four Foundations: body, feelings, mind, and mind objects is to observe these four aspects of experience in order to develop insight (vipassanā) and heightened awareness of the nature of conditioned (saṅkhārā) reality. This awareness leads to wisdom (paññā), compassion (karuṇā), and liberation from suffering (nibbāna).
2. Investigation of Dhamma (dhammavicaya) analyzes and contemplates the nature of reality, the mind, and the teachings (Dhamma) of the Buddha. This factor involves a thorough analysis of the Dhamma and the mind's experiences in light of those teachings. Investigation is an important aspect of the path to enlightenment because it goes beyond mere intellectual understanding and engages in an experiential inquiry. The investigation involves asking questions, challenging assumptions, and experiencing the truth of the Dhamma through contemplation.
- Investigate, study and practice the Four Noble Truths (ariya catusacca) for understanding and realization. This involves exploring the nature of suffering (dukkha), its causes (samudaya), the possibility of its cessation (nirodha), and the path leading to the cessation of suffering (magga).
 - Contemplate the Three Characteristics of Existence (tilakkhaṇa). Reflect on the impermanence (anicca) and ever-changing nature of all phenomena, the nature of suffering (dukkha), and the absence of a permanent self (anatta).
 - Study the causes and effects reported in Dependent Origination (paṭicca samuppāda). Reflect on the interconnections of all phenomena and how the mind's intentions (kamma) result in future outcomes. For a discussion of interconnectedness, see the discussion of not-self (anatta) above.
 - Analyze the Five Clinging Aggregates (pañcupādānakkhandhā) by dissecting the components of human existence (form, feeling, perception, mental formations, and sense consciousness) to understand their impermanent (anicca) and not-self (anatta) nature.
 - Contemplate the above mentioned Dhamma as well as other teachings taught by the Buddha to gain insight (vipassanā) into the nature of reality and to realize liberation from suffering (nibbāna).
3. Energy (vīrya) is cultivated by maintaining diligence, enthusiasm and effort in practice. This mental faculty enthusiastically engages in the cultivation of wholesome (kusala) mental faculties and virtuous (sīla) activities. Continuous effort is exerted to overcome unskillful habits and hindrances (nīvaraṇā), such as laziness (kosajja), doubt (vicikicchā), ill will (vyāpāda), restlessness (uddhacca), and indulging in sensuality (kāma) and harmfulness (dosa).

- Energy can be aroused with strong feelings of saṃvega and the practice of the Charnel Ground Contemplations (paṭikkūla manasikāra) outlined above. Saṃvega is a pāli term that refers to a deep sense of spiritual urgency or existential dismay. The emotion of saṃvega is a profound and overwhelming feeling of disillusionment with the ordinary pursuits and concerns of life, which causes the mind to seek an understanding of the nature of existence and the path to liberation from suffering (nibbāna). Saṃvega arises with reflection on the impermanence (anicca) and unsatisfactory nature (dukkha) of worldly experiences, including the pursuit of material possessions, sensory pleasures, social status, and the Eight Worldly Concerns (lokadhamma) mentioned above.
4. Joy (pīti) arises as a result of mindfulness (sati) and concentration (samādhi), and is one of the factors that leads to subtle states of meditation (bhāvanā). Mindful of the present moment - observing thoughts, feelings, and sensations without judgment, attachment or aversion - the mind will then experience the joy in the freedom of bare awareness. As concentration grows in subtlety, the mind experiences joy in direct proportion to the level of absorption in the chosen object or anchor of meditation.
- Living an ethical life (sīla) is a foundation for not only the spiritual path towards enlightenment but is also a condition for the development of joy. Behaving in ways that are compassionate, kind, and aligned with the training precepts, conditions are created for a wakeful and joyful mind. The basic Five Moral Precepts are:
 5. abstain from destroying living beings (pāṇātipātā veramaṇī),
 6. abstain from stealing or taking that which is not freely given (adinnādānā veramaṇī),
 7. abstain from sexual misconduct (kamesu micchacara veramaṇī),
 8. abstain from false speech (musāvāda veramaṇī),
 9. abstain from intoxicants that cause carelessness and cloud the mind (surāmeraya-majja-pamādatthāna veramaṇī).
 - The act of giving (dāna) without attachment or expectation of return will lead to a sense of inner joy and satisfaction. Generosity is a wholesome (kusala) and meritorious (puñña) action.
 - Cultivating gratitude (kataññu) for the present moment and for the positive aspects of life will generate joy. Recognize and appreciate the good things in life, no matter how small, will uplift the mind.
 - Loving-kindness (metta) meditation is to generate feelings of love and goodwill toward the mind that initiates metta and to the other mind of interest. The practice of metta will generate a sense of joy and benevolence towards all beings.
 - Contentment (santuṭṭhi) with what is currently available and a reduction in desires for material possessions and trivial worldly ambitions will lead to a sense of inner joy. The less a mind is driven by craving and attachment, the more will the mind experience contentment and joy.
 - Contemplate the teachings (Dhamma) of the Buddha and the nature of impermanence (anicca), suffering (dukkha), and the path to liberation will inspire a sense of joy as the mind gains insight (vipassanā) into the truth of existence.
 - Association with wise and virtuous friends (kalyana-mittata), spiritually minded, supportive and wise individuals, is uplifting and will contribute to the development of joy.
5. Tranquility, serenity or calmness (passaddhi) is one of the mental factors that contribute to the purification of mind and spiritual progress. Tranquility refers to the calm and peaceful state of mind that arises when the unwholesome (akusala) mental states become composed, settled, and free from agitation, and is cultivated through the practice of calm abiding meditation (samatha).
- Tranquility is developed by calming the mind through the reduction of distractions and hindrances (nīvaraṇā), and letting go of the turbulence of unwholesome (akusala) thoughts and emotions. In the course of meditation practice, the

experience of subtle levels of tranquility will develop, which will lead to a heightened form of concentration (samādhi) called absorption (jhāna). Jhāna is characterized by an intensify sense of tranquility, joy, and equanimity.

Tranquility, along with insight (vipassana), is essential for spiritual progress. The combination of these two faculties will develop wisdom (paññā) and ultimately to liberation from suffering (nibbāna).

6. Concentration (sāmādhi) is the mental faculty that has the characteristics of focus and one-pointedness of mind (ekaggata). As concentration develops with the practice of meditation, there will be an increase of wakefulness and mental stability.
 - Tranquility meditation (samatha) develops concentration. The practice is to focus and direct attention to a meditation anchor (kasina) or object while letting go of distractions and hindrances (nīvaraṇā). Common objects of meditation include the breath (ānāpānasati), a visual object (such as a candle flame or an image), a mantra, or a mental image like a colored disc.
7. Equanimity (upekkhā) is the mental faculty that is a non-reactive even-minded awareness, a state of mental and emotional equilibrium. Equanimity is the ability to stay centered and undisturbed by the ups and downs of life.
 - The practice of mindfulness meditation develops the capacity to observe experiences without getting caught up in them emotionally. Equanimity is the state of mind that neither clings to nor rejects experiences.
 - Practice non-reactive observation of the mind's attachment to pleasurable experiences and aversion to unpleasant ones. Cultivate equanimity by observing the impermanence (anicca) of all contents of mind without reacting with attachment or aversion.
 - When behavior is in harmony with ethical principles (sīla), it becomes easier to maintain equanimity because the mind is not constantly dealing with the remorse and guilt that can arise from unwholesome (akusala) actions.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya
translation by Bhikkhu Bodhi

10 Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta: The Foundations of Mindfulness

42. "Again, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects in terms of the seven enlightenment factors. And how does a bhikkhu abide contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects in terms of the seven enlightenment factors? Here, there being the mindfulness enlightenment factor in him, a bhikkhu understands: 'There is the mindfulness enlightenment factor in me'; or there being no mindfulness enlightenment factor in him, he understands: 'There is no mindfulness enlightenment factor in me'; and he also understands how there comes to be the arising of the unarisen mindfulness enlightenment factor, and how the arisen mindfulness enlightenment factor comes to fulfillment by development.

"There being the investigation-of-states enlightenment factor in him¹⁶²... There being the energy enlightenment factor in him... There being the rapture enlightenment factor in him... There being the tranquillity enlightenment factor in him... There being the concentration enlightenment factor in him... There being the equanimity enlightenment factor in him, a bhikkhu understands: 'There is the equanimity enlightenment factor in me'; or there being no equanimity enlightenment factor in him, he understands: 'There is no equanimity enlightenment factor in me'; and he also understands how there comes to be the arising of the unarisen equanimity enlightenment factor, and how the arisen equanimity enlightenment factor comes to fulfillment by development.

43. "In this way he abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects internally, externally, and both internally and externally... And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. That is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects in terms of the seven enlightenment factors.

Note: 162 “Investigation of states” (dhammavicaya) means the scrutiny of the mental and physical phenomena presented to the meditator’s mind by mindfulness.

- The Four Noble Truths (ariya catusacca) is a fundamental teaching of the Buddha that is to be studied and practiced for understanding reality and to realize freedom from suffering. The following are the four truths.
 1. The noble truth of suffering (dukkha) is the dissatisfaction and unsatisfactoriness of life caught up in the round of rebirths (saṃsāra). Dukkha includes physical and mental suffering, as well as the suffering of change (anicca) and the suffering inherent in conditioned (saṅkhārā) existence. See the February 2023 Newsletter for a detailed discussion of this truth.
 2. The noble truth of the origin of suffering (dukkha samudaya) is craving (taṇhā) and clinging (upādāna). Craving refers to the mind’s desires, attachments, and aversions, which keep us bound to the cycle of suffering in saṃsāra. See the March 2023 Newsletter for a detailed discussion of this truth.
 3. The noble truth of the cessation of suffering (dukkha nirodha) is the end of dukkha. There is the possibility to attain liberation from dukkha by extinguishing craving and clinging. This state of liberation is called nibbāna. See the April 2023 Newsletter for a detailed discussion of this truth.
 4. The noble truth of the way leading to the cessation of suffering (dukkha nirodhagāminī paṭipadā) is the Noble Eightfold Path (ariya aṭṭhaṅgika magga), consisting of eight interconnected factors:
 - i. Right View (sammā diṭṭhi),
 - ii. Right Intention (sammā saṅkappa),
 - iii. Right Speech (sammā vācā),
 - iv. Right Action (sammā kammanta),
 - v. Right Livelihood (sammā ājiva),
 - vi. Right Effort (sammā vāyāma),
 - vii. Right Mindfulness (sammā sati), and
 - viii. Right Concentration (sammā samādhi).

Training in the Noble Eightfold Path cultivates morality (sīla), concentration (samādhi) and wisdom (paññā), which when developed completely, leads to liberation (nibbāna). See the May 2023 Newsletter for a detailed discussion of this truth.

The practice with the Four Noble Truths is to observe experiences.

- When there is an experience of dukkha (First Noble Truth), acknowledge it and investigate its nature.
- When there is an experience of craving or attachment (Second Noble Truth), observe it without judgment.
- As progress is made in practice and there are experiences of peace, contentment, or the absence of dukkha (Third Noble Truth), recognize these moments and contemplate their significance.
- Maintain a continuous and disciplined structure of practice that is aligned with the principles of the Noble Eightfold Path (Fourth Noble Truth).

Developing insight (vipassanā) of the Four Noble Truths is a gradual process. Consistency in mindfulness meditation practice is a condition for understanding and experiencing insights.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya
translation by Bhikkhu Bodhi

10 Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta: The Foundations of Mindfulness

44. “Again, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects in terms of the Four Noble Truths. And how does a bhikkhu abide contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects in terms of the Four Noble Truths? Here a bhikkhu understands as it actually is: ‘This is suffering’; he understands as it actually is: ‘This is the origin of

- suffering'; he understands as it actually is: 'This is the cessation of suffering'; he understands as it actually is: 'This is the way leading to the cessation of suffering.'
45. "In this way he abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects internally, or he abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects externally, or he abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects both internally and externally. Or else he abides contemplating in mind-objects their nature of arising, or he abides contemplating in mind-objects their nature of vanishing, or he abides contemplating in mind-objects their nature of both arising and vanishing. Or else mindfulness that 'there are mind-objects' is simply established in him to the extent necessary for bare knowledge and mindfulness. And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. That is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects in terms of the Four Noble Truths.

The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya

translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

V.XII.56.11 (1) Setting in Motion the Wheel of the Dhamma

"So long, bhikkhus, as my knowledge and vision of these Four Noble Truths as they really are in their three phases and twelve aspects was not thoroughly purified in this way,³⁸² I did not claim to have awakened to the unsurpassed perfect enlightenment in this world with its devas, Māra, and Brahmā, in this generation with its ascetics and brahmins, its devas and humans. But when my knowledge and vision of these Four Noble Truths as they really are in their three phases and twelve aspects was thoroughly purified in this way, then I claimed to have awakened to the unsurpassed perfect enlightenment in this world with its devas, Māra, and Brahmā, in this generation with its ascetics and brahmins, its devas and humans. The knowledge and vision arose in me: 'Unshakable is the liberation of my mind. This is my last birth. Now there is no more renewed existence.'"

Note 382: The three phases (tiparivaṭṭa) are: (i) the knowledge of each truth (saccañāṇa), e.g., "This is the noble truth of suffering"; (ii) the knowledge of the task to be accomplished regarding each truth (kiccañāṇa), e.g., "This noble truth of suffering is to be fully understood"; and (iii) the knowledge of accomplishment regarding each truth (katañāṇa), e.g., "This noble truth of suffering has been fully understood." The twelve modes (dvādasākāra) are obtained by applying the three phases to the four truths.

November 2023 - Peace (santi)

The essential teaching of the Buddha is to relieve the mind of suffering and experience peace. Peace is the prize that is won by practicing the teachings of the Buddha. The pāli word “santi” means peace or tranquility of mind, a state of mental and emotional calmness and clarity. Peace is freedom from suffering (dukkha), enduring contentment and a mind at ease.

An obstacle to peace is the ignorant mind that has wrong views and inaccurate perceptions which considers a “self” to be any of the impermanent five aggregates (pañcakkhandhā): material form (rūpa khandha) and the contents of mind: mental formations (saṅkhāra khandha), feelings (vedanā khandha), perceptions (saññā khandha), and sense consciousness (viññāṇa khandha). Material form includes the physical body and material possessions. Mental formations include thoughts and emotions. The mind that desires, attaches to, or identifies with anything that is impermanent experiences suffering due to the insubstantiality and decaying nature of all things. Where there is suffering there is no peace.

Peace is experienced by a mind that lets go of the five aggregates by recognizing that the body and contents of mind are in fact impermanent and not a self. The nature of self, if there is such an entity, cannot be impermanent or lack control over itself. Therefore, the five aggregates cannot be a self. The peaceful mind lets go of the impermanent things (the five aggregates) and identifies instead with bare, primordial or pure consciousness which is not distorted by sense organs, sense objects, sense consciousness, and sensual pleasures. Pure consciousness, endowed with loving kindness (metta) and wisdom (paññā), is unconditioned, stable, permanent, and not a self; the consciousness is not personal - does not belong to you or any individual, and has no boundaries, but is the fabric or ground of reality. The state of a peaceful mind is fully conscious with mindfulness (sati), concentration (samādhi), loving kindness (metta) and wisdom (paññā).

Buddhadhamma by Bhikkhu P. A. Payutto

Chapter 6 Nibbāna: the Supreme Peace

Santi is peace, the absence of agitation and affliction, the end of turmoil; this state of mind is serene, deep, cool, settled, self-reliant, able to fully experience the fruits of practice, and ready to be employed for action.

Regardless of whether one stills desire by way of gratification or one abstains from gratifying unhealthy desires by empowering wholesome qualities and applying wisdom, the resulting stillness and peace (santi) itself constitutes happiness. Happiness is peace (santi-sukha).

Noteworthy obstacles to peace are addiction to excitement and selfishness. The addiction to excitement is the endless pursuit for stimulation, for an adrenaline rush, feelings of euphoria, physiological and mental arousal. Selfishness is the behavior which focuses on the needs, desires, and interests of the personality or ego, without significant consideration for the needs, desires, or well-being of others; prioritizing the ego’s personal gain, advantage, or gratification over the needs or concerns of others. The ego is composed of and defined by the five aggregates mentioned above.

Excitement obstructs peace with activities that result in stress, anxiety, and restlessness.

- Excitement triggers the body’s stress response, releasing stress hormones like cortisol and adrenaline. The physiological response to excitement, such as increased heart rate and adrenaline, result in feelings of tension, anxiety, and with difficulty in relaxing. Excitement without adequate relaxation will cause chronic stress that prevents peace of mind.
- Excitement brings a flurry of thoughts, ideas, and plans, leading to overthinking and overstimulation. An overactive mind is racing with excitement that makes it difficult to quiet thoughts and find peace in the present moment.
- Excitement causes the mind to have scattered thoughts, and difficulty with concentration and meditation. A large expenditure of energy is used by the mind when constantly jumping from one exciting thought to another that may result in depression and loss of peace.

- Constant excitement creates a cycle where the mind seeks more excitement to maintain the initial high, leading to a dependency on sources for euphoria. This dependency will hinder the development of peace and contentment.
- Excitement is short-lived, and when the thrilling moment passes, the mind experiences a sense of lack. The mind addicted to excitement is ever seeking and chasing after the next exciting experience.
- Excitement interferes with the ability to sleep peacefully. Lack of rest leads to irritability and decreased peace.

Selfishness obstructs peace of mind by creating internal conflict, damaging relationships, and nurturing unwholesome mind states. Selfishness is the mode of the ego which views itself as independent from others and the world, and more important and valuable than any other sentient being. Selfishness nurtures the ego and obstructs the cultivation of wholesome mental faculties. Selfishness obstructs spiritual development by resisting the training in ethical behavior that results in the inability to achieve subtle levels of meditation and wisdom.

The attainment of peace is achieved by removing the ego as lord and master over the mind and to reassign the role of the ego to be an instrument and servant of the wisdom faculty. The mind will experience freedom from the ego by cultivating empathy, gratitude, healthy meaningful relationships, and to engage in acts of kindness, generosity, and selflessness. Developing a sense of connection with others and considering their well-being will lead to a harmonious and peaceful existence.

- Selfish behavior causes strained relationships with others. When the mind prioritizes the ego's needs and desires over those of others, the result is resentment, conflict, and disruption in communication. Healthy relationships built on mutual respect and consideration are necessary for peace.
- Acting selfishly may provide immediate gratification, but it will also lead to feelings of guilt and regret later on. Knowing that unwholesome actions have caused harm or disadvantaged others will weigh heavily on the mind's conscience and disturb the mind's peace.
- Selfish individuals are isolated because others will not want to be around someone who consistently puts their own interests above the needs of others. Loneliness and lack of social support can contribute to anxiety and a lack of peace.
- Constantly striving for personal gain and advantage will create a high-stress environment. The pressure to maintain and fulfill the mind's desires will produce anxiety, worry, and lack of peace.
- The pursuit of selfish goals brings shallow or short-term satisfaction. Materialistic or self-centered gains may provide a temporary sense of fulfillment, but they will not lead to deep, lasting happiness or peace.
- Selfishness involves a lack of empathy towards others. When the mind disregard or minimize the feelings and needs of others, the mind will become emotionally disconnected and find it challenging to relate to or understand the perspectives of others.
- Selfishness produces a mind that compares itself with others. The competitive state of mind craves superiority over others and any sense of inferiority will result in envy, jealousy, and a perpetual sense of inadequacy, disrupting the mind's peace.
- The focus on personal gain and self-interest will hinder the ability to find meaning and purpose beyond the ego.

The experience of peace is accomplished by training in the Noble Eightfold Path (ariya aṭṭhaṅgika magga) which will ultimately lead to complete and total liberation from suffering (nibbāna). The Noble Eightfold Path was discussed in the May 2023 Newsletter and includes the following path factors:

1. Right View (sammā-ditṭhi),
2. Right Intention (sammā-saṅkappa),
3. Right Speech (sammā-vācā),
4. Right Action (sammā-kammanta),
5. Right Livelihood (sammā-ājīva),
6. Right Effort (sammā-vāyāma),
7. Right Mindfulness (sammā-sati), and
8. Right Concentration (sammā-samādhi).

Ethical conduct (sīla), concentration (samādhi) and cultivating wisdom (paññā), the threefold division that comprises the Noble Eightfold Path, are necessary conditions for developing peace.

- Ethical conduct is the avoidance of causing harm to oneself and to others by way of speech and action. Right Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood are the path factors for ethical behavior.
- Concentration is cultivated with tranquility meditation (samatha) discussed in the September 2023 Newsletter and is one of two types of meditation (bhāvanā) taught by the Buddha. The other type of meditation is insight meditation (vipassanā) discussed in the October 2023 Newsletter. Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration are the path factors that assist in developing concentration.
- Wisdom is cultivated by investigating the nature of reality by using insight meditation (vipassanā) and practicing the Dhamma, the teachings of the Buddha. Right View and Right Intention are the path factors that help develop wisdom.

War is the opposite of peace. The personality or the egoic consciousness is always at war. The ego's function is to survive, physically and emotionally, and to accomplish the mission of survival war is made on the environment and on other sentient beings. Therefore, to bring peace to the mind the ego must be subjugated to wisdom. In other words, the ego must be dethroned from lordship over the mind and take on a new role as an instrument or servant to wisdom. The training of the mind to be liberated from the ego is accomplished by practicing the Noble Eightfold Path.

The purpose and meaning of life is to attain a profound and lasting peace that transcends the ups and downs of existence, to escape from the cycle of rebirth (saṃsāra) and suffering (dukkha), and is achieved by realizing nibbāna. Nibbāna is characterized by wisdom (paññā), compassion (karunā), equanimity (upekkhā), an unshakeable understanding of the true nature of reality, and supreme peace.

Peace is discussed in this essay under five categories:

- I. Inner Peace (citta santi),
 - II. Ethical Peace (sīla santi),
 - III. Social Peace (sāmaggī santi),
 - IV. Peace Through Wisdom (paññā santi), and
 - V. Peace of nibbāna.
- I. Inner Peace (citta santi) is a mind (citta) that is tranquil, calm, stable, contented, and free from suffering. Peace is achieved through the cultivation of mindfulness (sati), wisdom (paññā), and compassion (karunā).

The root cause of suffering is ignorance (avijjā) of the impermanent nature of the world, physical body and contents of mind: thoughts, perceptions, feelings, and sense consciousness. The ignorant mind misperceives the world and mental contents to be permanent, thereby the mind identifies and attaches to these constructs. The mind that attaches to anything is plagued with craving (taṇhā) and clinging (upādāna), which in turn leads to suffering (dukkha).

Mindfulness (sati) and clear comprehension (sampajañña) of the true nature of the world and contents of mind is required to overcome suffering. Mindfulness is the practice of paying close attention to the present moment with bare awareness. Clear comprehension, a synonym for wisdom, is the knowing that all contents of mind are impermanent (anicca). Mindfulness and clear comprehension purifies the mind of ignorance and wrong views (micchādiṭṭhi) with the understanding that all contents of mind are impermanent (anicca), suffering (dukkha) and not-self (anattā). This understanding or wisdom prevents the mind from identifying and getting caught up with any contents of mind. The mind purified by wisdom is able to let go of craving and clinging and thereby achieve inner peace.

- Inner peace is achieved by training the mind to be calm, tranquil, stable, silent and still; and is the opposite of mental agitation and restlessness. The training in the Noble Eightfold Path (ariya aṭṭhaṅgika magga) reduces and eventually eliminates the proliferation and identification with the impermanent contents of mind, cultivates equanimity (upekkhā) and balance amidst life's ups and downs. Inner peace is achieved by training the mind to be less reactive and more resilient in the face of life's challenges.
- The recognition of impermanence (anicca) is an important aspect for achieving inner peace. Understanding that all things are transient and subject to change produces a non-reactive acceptance of conditioned existence.

- The practice of mindfulness (sati) meditation (bhāvanā) is a condition for achieving inner peace. Mindfulness is awareness of the contents of mind in the present moment. The awareness is a condition for letting go of attachments and cravings. Meditation cultivates inner peace by calming the the “monkey” mind that races from thought to thought. Tranquility meditation (samatha) develops concentration (samādhi) and is used for insight meditation (vipassanā), both forms of meditation calms the mind of restlessness.
 - The serene mind is a necessary condition for insight into the impermanence and insubstantiality of all things, and for achieving liberation from suffering (nibbāna). Suffering arises from the mind's attachments, cravings, and aversions to that which is impermanent. Inner peace is the means to transcend suffering by letting go of these mental defilements (kilesa) and to experience contentment and equanimity. A calm mind attains liberation from the cycle of rebirth (saṃsāra) and suffering (dukkha).
 - Inner peace is not a passive state of mind, but is active in achieving clarity of perception and insight (vipassanā). The tranquil mind is a condition for understanding the true nature of existence and in gaining wisdom (paññā).
 - Inner Peace is nurtured through training the mind in accordance with the Dhamma. Following ethical precepts (sīla), practicing concentration (samādhi), and developing wisdom (paññā) are components of Dhamma.
 - Understanding the causes and conditions that give rise to relentless desires and fears, is an important aspect of attaining inner peace. Investigating the causes and conditions of unwholesome states of mind requires an examination of the contents of mind that will disclose their impermanence, suffering and not-self characteristics.
 - Selfishness is an obstacle to cultivating inner peace because obsession with one's own welfare prevents connecting, bonding and loving others, which has the effect of disturbing the mind.
 - Cultivating compassion (karunā) and loving-kindness (metta) towards oneself and others is a condition for achieving inner peace. By extending benevolence and goodwill to all beings, the mind experiences calm and connectedness with others. Serving others and generosity is a way to develop compassion and to connect with that which is larger than the ego; namely, true love. Serving others removes the focus on the ego's desires, fears and problems. Inner peace is experienced in direct proportion to the degree of liberation from the ego.
- II. Ethical Peace (sīla santi) is attained through the training in virtuous behaviour (sīla), a condition that results in a tranquil and happy mind, and is also a foundation for spiritual practice. Living a life in accordance with the Five Precepts (pañca sīla) cultivates and maintains ethical peace. Training in the precepts curbs the ego's harmful and unwholesome behavior towards oneself and others, resulting in a peaceful society. Observing ethical conduct is necessary for developing a mind that is calm, clear, mindful, concentrated and conducive to investigation of the Dhamma and meditation practice.

The Five Precepts are based on the principle of not harming oneself or others. The mind that is trained not to cause harm will be compassionate, kind, and be mindful of the impact that speech and actions have on others. The Five Precepts (pañca sīla) are the following:

1. pāṇātipātā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi
I undertake the precept to refrain from taking the life of any living creature.
 - The precept emphasizes non-killing and respecting the sanctity of all sentient beings.
 - Promote compassion and kindness towards all of life, and develop a sense of interconnectedness with every sentient being.
2. adinnādānā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi
I undertake the precept to refrain from taking that which is not given.
 - The precept encourages honesty and integrity, promoting respect for others' property and possessions.
 - Cultivate contentment with the possessions that one has.
 - Understand the needs of others and practice generosity.
3. kāmesu micchācāra veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi
I undertake the precept to refrain from sexual misconduct.

- The precept encourages responsible conduct in relationships, promoting faithfulness, fidelity, and respect.
 - Kindness and consideration for the feelings and well-being of others will result in self-worth, self-respect, self-esteem, and compassion for others.
4. musāvādā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi
I undertake the precept to refrain from lying.
- The precept promotes honesty and truthfulness, discouraging lying, deceit, and slander.
 - Develop respect for truth. Truthfulness is a foundation for trust and understanding in any relationship.
 - Truthfulness develops a clear and open mind, resulting in compassion and understanding of others.
5. surāmeraya majja pamādaṭṭhānā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi
I undertake the precept to refrain from consuming intoxicating drink and drugs which lead to carelessness.
- The precept promotes clarity of mind, mindfulness, and self-control by abstaining from substances that cloud wise discernment and hinder spiritual progress.
 - Avoid substances that impair mindfulness, unwholesome and unethical behavior, the mind then will be clear, mindful and uphold the above four precepts. A clear mind is essential for practicing compassion, kindness, and generosity.
- Consistently observing the ethical precepts will have the following benefits.
- Training in the Five Precepts conditions the mind to have such wholesome qualities as compassion, kindness and generosity. The mind that is conditioned by these wholesome qualities will result in peace and happiness.
 - Ethical conduct does not produce actions that result in feelings of guilt and remorse. The absence of guilt contributes to a mind at peace, self-respect and self-esteem. Guilt is an obstacle to meditation.
 - Ethical behavior promotes harmonious relationships with others by not engaging in actions that cause harm. Such noble behavior minimizes interpersonal conflicts and contributes to peace, trust and harmony within society.
 - Ethical conduct purifies the mind of unwholesome intentions and actions. When actions are aligned with virtuous principles, the mind becomes less cluttered with unwholesome emotions and distractions, resulting in a mind that is tranquil.
 - Training in the precepts exercises and strengthens the Noble Eightfold Path factors of mindfulness, energy and concentration, as they are used to monitor thoughts, speech, and actions. The development of the path factors are conditions that result in the realization of nibbāna.
 - Following ethical precepts generates wholesome kamma directed to a favorable rebirth and contributes to spiritual progress.
 - The Five Precepts develops self-control and discipline. The ability to control the mind's impulses and avoid harmful actions will produce a stable and peaceful mind.
 - The Five Precepts provides a moral compass for the mind to distinguish between what is wholesome and unwholesome, skillful and unskillful, good and evil, and to make choices that are aligned with the Dhamma.
 - Adhering to the Five Precepts will reduce such unwholesome emotions as anger, hatred, and greed. Unwholesome emotions cause unwholesome and harmful actions. Purifying the mind of unwholesome emotions will generate the following wholesome emotions: compassion, kindness, forgiveness, patience, and generosity. Wholesome emotions allows the mind to connect with others in peace, love and happiness.

Ethical peace is an essential aspect of the path to enlightenment as it provides the foundation for the development of concentration (samādhi) and wisdom (paññā), which are the other two pillars of Buddhist practice. Through the cultivation of ethical peace, the mind makes progress towards nibbāna, liberation from suffering, and to escape from the cycle of birth, ageing, sickness, death, and rebirth (saṃsāra).

III. Social Peace (sāmaggī santi) is achieved with harmonious social relationships and community living. Practicing loving-kindness (metta) and compassion (karunā) helps foster social peace by promoting understanding, empathy, and goodwill among individuals.

The pāli word for social peace is sāmaggī. Sāmaggī is the behavior of people joining together in harmony for mutual well-being, without conflict, violence and injustice. The peace is based on mutual respect, cooperation, understanding, compassion and non-violence.

Social harmony is a condition for the member's well-being in the community. Harmony is achieved with tolerance of each other's differences and forgiving of each other's mistakes; and is realized when the members of the community work together to create a world where everyone feels welcome and respected.

Life is an interconnected and interdependent network where actions (kamma) have consequences for each individual. Suffering (dukkha) is caused by ignorance, greed and ill will. Through the cultivation of wisdom, compassion, and detachment, individuals are able to reduce their own suffering and the suffering of others.

Social peace is a condition for the spiritual development of individuals and societies. In a peaceful society, people are free to pursue their spiritual aspirations without fear or persecution. People are also more likely to be tolerant and understanding of others, and to work together for the common good.

The following are practical guidelines to help foster social peace.

- Train in ethical conduct by following the above mentioned Five Precepts (pañca sīla), which are basic moral guidelines that promote non-violence, honesty, and compassion.
- Respect all sentient beings regardless of their species, race, religion, or social status.
- Cultivate tolerance and understanding of others' beliefs and practices, and to understand that people have different needs and perspectives.
- Develop compassion for all sentient beings and serve others in need.

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

6.12 (2) Cordiality (2)

“Bhikkhus, there are these six principles of cordiality that create affection and respect and conduce to cohesiveness, non-dispute, concord, and unity. What six?”

- (1) “Here, a bhikkhu maintains bodily acts of loving-kindness toward his fellow monks both openly and privately. This is a principle of cordiality that creates affection and respect and conduces to cohesiveness, non-dispute, concord, and unity.
- (2) “Again, a bhikkhu maintains verbal acts of loving-kindness toward his fellow monks both openly and privately. This, too, is a principle of cordiality that creates affection and respect....
- (3) “Again, a bhikkhu maintains mental acts of loving-kindness toward his fellow monks both openly and privately. This, too, is a principle of cordiality that creates affection and respect....
- (4) “Again, a bhikkhu shares without reservation any righteous gains that have been righteously obtained, including even the contents of his alms bowl, and uses such things in common with his virtuous fellow monks. This, too, is a principle of cordiality that creates affection and respect....
- (5) “Again, a bhikkhu dwells both openly and privately possessing in common with his fellow monks virtuous behavior that is unbroken, flawless, unblemished, unblotched, freeing, praised by the wise, ungrasped, leading to concentration. This, too, is a principle of cordiality that creates affection and respect....
- (6) “Again, a bhikkhu dwells both openly and privately possessing in common with his fellow monks a view that is noble and emancipating, which leads out, for one who acts upon it, to the complete destruction of suffering. This, too, is a principle of cordiality that creates affection and respect....

“These, bhikkhus, are the six principles of cordiality that create affection and respect and conduce to cohesiveness, to non-dispute, to concord, and to unity.”

IV. Peace Through Wisdom (paññā santi) is experienced through insight meditation (vipassanā) and with the study of the Dhamma, and is important for reducing and eventually eliminating the defilements (kilesa) of mind. Insight into the true nature of conditioned existence has the result of a

satisfying and permanent peace that transcends worldly concerns. Wisdom (paññā) enables the mind to respond to life's challenges with equanimity (upekkhā), understanding, and compassion (karunā), and develops peace within the mind and in the world.

The defilements (kilesa) or obstacles of mind are derived from the Three Unwholesome Roots (akusala mūla):

1. delusion (moha) = ignorance (avijjā),
2. greed (lobha), and
3. hatred (dosa).

The three unwholesome roots cause the cycle of repeated birth, ageing, sickness, death, and rebirth (saṃsāra) and also the suffering (dukkha) experienced within saṃsāra.

Wisdom (paññā) is a key quality that must be developed to attain liberation and ultimately reach a state of permanent peace and contentment. Wisdom is an understanding of the nature of conditioned existence, the impermanent and interconnected nature of all things, and the fundamental principles of suffering (dukkha), its origins, its cessation, and the path leading to its cessation, known as the Four Noble Truths (ariya catusacca). Wisdom is also the knowledge and experience of what lies beyond conditioned existence, nibbāna.

To attain peace through wisdom, the mind is trained by practicing ethical conduct (sīla), mindfulness (sati), various forms of meditation (bhāvanā), and with the study of Dhamma. Through these practices, insight (vipassanā) is realized into the Three Characteristics of Existence (tilakkhaṇa); the mind is liberated from the defilements (kilesa) of greed, ill will, craving, clinging and delusions; and ultimately attain a state of complete peace and liberation from suffering, nibbāna.

Wisdom may be understood to be an experiential realization of the Four Noble Truths and the Three Characteristics of Existence.

The Four Noble Truths (ariya catusacca) are the following:

1. Noble Truth of Suffering (dukkha) - see the February 2023 Newsletter for a discussion of this truth,
2. Noble Truth of the Cause of Suffering (samudaya) - see the March 2023 Newsletter for a discussion of this truth,
3. Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering (nirodha) - see the April 2023 Newsletter for a discussion of this truth, and
4. Noble Truth of the Path to the Cessation of Suffering (magga) - see the May 2023 Newsletter for a discussion of this truth.

The Three Characteristics of Existence (tilakkhaṇa) are the following:

1. Impermanence (anicca),
2. Unsatisfactoriness or suffering (dukkha), and
3. Not-self or the absence of a permanent, unchanging self (anatta).

Through the development of wisdom, the mind is purified of defilements, attains complete peace, and is liberated from the cycle of birth, ageing, sickness, death, and rebirth (saṃsāra).

- True peace, both inner and outer, will be achieved through an experiential realization of the nature of existence and the causes of suffering.
- The cultivation of wisdom not only leads to liberation (nibbāna) of mind but also will contribute to the well-being and harmony of the world.
- The understanding and acceptance of the fact that change and decay is a natural part of life will result in the reduction of suffering when things don't go as planned or when the mind experiences unpleasant circumstances.
- Understanding of the interconnectedness of all things will reduce judgement and criticisms of others.
- Cultivation of compassion for all sentient beings - including oneself, and the understanding of conditioned existence and what lies beyond, will result in a mind that does not suffer from frustration, anger and resentment.
- When the mind is able to let go of attachments to all impermanent things and stop identifying with the ego, then the mind will not suffer from unfulfilled desires, anxiety and fear.

V. Peace of nibbāna is the ultimate goal of spiritual practice, the liberation from suffering, enlightenment (bodhi) or awakening from conventional existence, and is the highest form of peace. See the April 2023 Newsletter for a discussion on nibbāna. The following are some notable characteristics of nibbāna:

- Liberation from the endless cycle of birth, aging, sickness, death, and rebirth (saṃsāra) that perpetuates suffering (dukkha).
- Complete cessation of suffering (dukkha); the extinguishing of the fires of greed (lobha), hatred (dosa), delusion (moha), and the mental defilements (kilesa) that cause suffering and bind the mind to saṃsāra; and is the end of craving (taṇhā) and clinging (upādāna) to the impermanent, conditioned, and insubstantial components of existence.
- Unconditioned, uncreated, and unoriginated, beyond conditioned existence.
- Transcends the ordinary world of impermanence, not subject to arising, change, or decay; transcends suffering and beyond all worldly concerns.
- Profound peace, freedom, supreme bliss, tranquility, and happiness that is beyond the limitations of worldly pleasures and pains.
- Realization of the Four Noble Truths (ariya catusacca) and the realization of the true nature of conditional existence: impermanence (anicca), unsatisfactoriness (dukkha), and not-self (anatta) nature of all phenomena.
- Ineffable, beyond words and concepts, and must be directly known.

The path to realizing nibbāna is in training the mind by practicing the Noble Eightfold Path (ariya aṭṭhaṅgika magga) listed above and discussed in the May 2023 Newsletter. Through diligent practice and complete development of the path factors, the mind realizes nibbāna, experiences liberation and freedom from suffering, and perfect peace.

The following sutta teaches that peace is experienced with a mind that is free from craving and attachment. When the mind lets go of desires, fears, and expectations, the mind is no longer at the mercy of the world. The mind is able to accept things as they are and experience peace.

The Suttanipata: An Ancient Collection of the Buddha's Discourses Together with Its Commentaries
translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

IV.10 BEFORE THE BREAKUP (PURĀBHEDA SUTTA)

848. “How does he see, how does he behave,
the one who is said to be ‘peaceful’?
When asked by me, O Gotama,
describe the supreme person.” (1)

849. “Devoid of craving before the breakup,”
(said the Blessed One),
“not dependent on the past,
not to be reckoned in the middle,
for him there are no preferences. (2)

850. “He is without anger,
unafraid, not boastful, not regretful,
of speaking with reflection, not restless:
he is truly a muni controlled in speech. (3)

851. “He is without attachment to the future;
he does not sorrow over the past.
As a seer of seclusion in the midst of contacts,
he is not led astray among views. (4)

852. “Withdrawn, not a schemer,

without longing, not miserly,
courteous, not [morally] repulsive,
not intent on slander. (5)

853. “Not swept up by enjoyments,
and not swollen with arrogance;
gentle, gifted with ingenuity, not credulous,
not growing dispassionate. (6)

854. “He does not train from a desire for gain,
nor is he irritated over lack of gain.
Not hostile, because of craving
he does not hanker after tastes. (7)

855. “Equanimous, ever mindful,
in the world he does not conceive himself
to be equal, or superior, or inferior:
for him there are no swellings. (8)

856. “He has no dependencies —
having known the Dhamma, he is independent.
No craving is found in him
for existence or nonexistence. (9)

857. “I call him ‘peaceful’
who is indifferent to sensual pleasures.
In him no knots are found;
he has crossed over attachment. (10)

858. “He has no sons or cattle,
nor does he possess fields or land.
In him there is nothing to be found
as either taken up or rejected. (11)

859. “That by which they might speak of him —
worldlings as well as ascetics and brahmins —
is not esteemed by him;
therefore he is not stirred up by words. (12)

860. “Devoid of greed, without miserliness,
the muni does not speak [of himself]
as among superiors, or equals, or inferiors.
Not given to mental construction,
he does not enter upon mental constructs. (13)

861. “One who takes nothing in the world as his own,
and who does not sorrow over what is absent,
who does not enter upon things:
he is truly said to be ‘peaceful.’” (14)

December 2023 - Buddhist Community (parisā)

The Buddhist Community (parisā) are individuals who have taken refuge in the Triple Gem, also called the Three Jewels (triratana): the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Saṅgha. Taking refuge is a formal declaration and commitment to follow the path laid out by three core elements:

1. Buddha (Buddha ratana), the first jewel, is the fully enlightened teacher. Taking refuge in the Buddha is to acknowledge that liberation from suffering (dukkha), the realization of nibbāna, is possible because the historical Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama, and his disciples demonstrated that enlightenment can be experienced.
2. Dhamma (Dhamma ratana), the second jewel, is the truth and teachings of the Buddha. Taking refuge in the Dhamma is to accept and be committed to the path of practice taught by the Buddha which leads to nibbāna.
3. Saṅgha (Saṅgha ratana), the third jewel, is the āryasaṅgha, the community of noble disciples who have attained any of the four stages of enlightenment. The āryasaṅgha are Noble Disciples (ariya puggala) who may be monastics or lay individuals. The Saṅgha serves as a source of inspiration, instruction, and a reminder of the possibility of realizing enlightenment. Taking refuge in the Saṅgha is a support for training the mind while following the path. The four stages of enlightenment are:
 1. Streamwinner (sotāpanna),
 2. Once returner (sakadāgāmi),
 3. Non-returner (anāgāmi), and
 4. Perfected One (arahant).

Taking refuge in the Triple Gem serves as supporting conditions while training and purifying the mind in order to realize nibbāna. The ceremony of formally taking refuge is an expression of commitment to assimilate the wisdom of the Buddha, the teachings of the Dhamma, and the example of the Noble Saṅgha. This is the initial step for becoming a disciple of the Buddha and a committed follower of the Dhamma.

Ceremony for Taking the Three Refuges:

Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa

Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa

Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa

Homage to the Blessed, Noble, and Perfectly Enlightened One.

Homage to the Blessed, Noble, and Perfectly Enlightened One.

Homage to the Blessed, Noble, and Perfectly Enlightened One.

Buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi

Dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi

Saṅghaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi

To the Buddha I go for refuge.

To the Dhamma I go for refuge.

To the Saṅgha I go for refuge.

Dutiyampi buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi

Dutiyampi dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi

Dutiyampi saṅghaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi

For the second time, to the Buddha I go for refuge.

For the second time, to the Dhamma I go for refuge.

For the second time, to the Saṅgha I go for refuge.

Tatiyampi buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi

Tatiyampi dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi

Tatiyampi saṅghaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi

For the third time, to the Buddha I go for refuge.

For the third time, to the Dhamma I go for refuge.

For the third time, to the Saṅgha I go for refuge.

The Buddhist Community (parisā) consists of four assemblies:

1. Bhikkhus (monks) are ordained male monastics.
2. Bhikkhunis (nuns) are ordained female monastics.
3. Upasakas (laymen) are men who are not ordained.
4. Upasikas (laywomen) are women who are not ordained.

The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Digha Nikaya translated by Maurice O’C Walshe

16 Mahāparinibbāna Sutta: The Great Passing

3.7. Soon after Ānanda had left, Māra the Evil One came to the Lord, stood to one side, and said: ‘Lord, may the Blessed Lord now attain final Nibbāna, may the Well-Farer now attain final Nibbāna. Now is the time for the Blessed Lord’s final Nibbāna. Because the Blessed Lord has said this: “Evil One, I will not take final Nibbāna till I have monks and disciples who are accomplished, trained, skilled, learned, knowers of the Dhamma, trained in conformity with the Dhamma, correctly trained and walking in the path of the Dhamma, who will pass on what they have gained from their Teacher, teach it, declare it, establish it, expound it, analyse it, make it clear; till they shall be able by means of the Dhamma to refute false teachings that have arisen, and teach the Dhamma of wondrous effect.”

3.8. ‘And now, Lord, the Blessed Lord has such monks and disciples. May the Blessed Lord now attain final Nibbāna, may the Well-Farer now attain final Nibbāna. Now is the time for the Blessed Lord’s final Nibbāna. And the Blessed Lord has said: “I will not take final Nibbāna till I have nuns and female disciples who are accomplished, . . . till I have laymen-followers, . . . till I have laywomen-followers . . .” (as verse 3.7). May the Blessed Lord now take final Nibbāna . . . And the Blessed Lord has said: “Evil One, I will not take final Nibbāna till this holy life has been successfully established and flourishes, is widespread, well-known far and wide, well-proclaimed among mankind everywhere.” And all this has come about. May the Blessed Lord now attain final Nibbāna, may the Well-Farer now attain final Nibbāna. Now is the time for the Blessed Lord’s final Nibbāna.’

The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Digha Nikaya translated by Maurice O’C Walshe

29 Pāsādika Sutta: The Delightful Discourse

15. ‘However, there are senior teachers among the monks, who are experienced, trained, skilled, who have attained peace from bondage, able to proclaim the true Dhamma, able to refute by means of the Dhamma any opposing doctrines that may arise and, having done so, give a grounded exposition of Dhamma. And there are middle-ranking monks who are disciplined and experienced, there are novices who are disciples, there are senior, middle-ranking and novice nuns who are disciples, there are white-robed lay followers, male and female, celibate and non-celibate, and the holy life I proclaim prospers and flourishes, is widespread, widely-known, proclaimed far and wide, well-proclaimed among humans.

Bhikkhus and Bhikkhunis have renounced the worldly life to follow the teachings of the Buddha and are responsible for practicing and propagating the Dhamma. They live in supportive communities called the Bhikkhu Saṅgha and the Bhikkhuni Saṅgha, known as the Conventional Saṅgha (sammati saṅgha). The lineage of bhikkhunis in the Theravada tradition has been interrupted, but efforts have been made in modern times to re-establish this lineage.

The Conventional Saṅgha was originally established by Gautama Buddha in the fifth century BCE in order to provide a means for those who wish to practice free from the restrictions and responsibilities of the household life. Monks and nuns live according to a code of discipline (vinaya) that incorporates ethical conduct (sīla). The Saṅgha is perceived to be a field of merit, a source of spiritual support and guidance for the lay followers. Some of the functions of the Conventional Saṅgha is to preserve the Buddha’s original teachings and to provide spiritual support for the lay community. In a broader sense, the term Saṅgha encompasses all those who are striving for spiritual awakening, nibbāna.

The Noble Saṅgha (āryasaṅgha), also called the Ideal Saṅgha and the Community of Disciples (sāvaka saṅgha) is the third of the Three Refuges (triratana), are Noble Ones (ariya puggala) who have

attained any of the four stages of enlightenment, whether or not they are members of the Conventional Saṅgha. In accordance to the Theravāda tradition, lay people can realize all the stages of enlightenment but upon realizing nibbāna, full enlightenment, the Noble One will either die that day or ordain to live the rest of their lives as a monastic. A post-canonical Pāli text, the Milindapañha, says that lay life is not livable for an enlightened person.

The Debate of King Milinda translation of Milindapañha by Bhikkhu Pesala
Chapter 10, 19. Dhamma is Best

If a layman attains arahant-ship, only two destinations await him; either he must enter the Order that very day or else he must attain parinibbāna.

Note: parinibbāna is 'full nibbāna' at the death of the fully enlightened individual.

The nine attributes (saṅghaguna) of the Noble Saṅgha are:

1. practicing well or the good way (suppaṭipanno),
2. practicing the straight or upright way (ujjappaṭipanno),
3. practicing the true, knowledgeable way or insightfully (ñāyappaṭipanno), and
4. practicing the proper way or with integrity (sāmīcippaṭipanno).
5. worthy of gifts (āhuneyyo),
6. worthy of hospitality (pāhuneyyo),
7. worthy of offerings (dakkhiṇeyyo),
8. worthy of reverential salutation or respect (añjalikaraṇīyo), and
9. is the unsurpassed field of merit for the world (anuttaraṃ puññakkhettaṃ lokassa).

The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

11.3 (3) The Crest of the Standard

'The Saṅgha of the Blessed One's disciples is practising the good way, practising the straight way, practising the true way, practising the proper way; that is, the four pairs of persons, the eight types of individuals—this Saṅgha of the Blessed One's disciples is worthy of gifts, worthy of hospitality, worthy of offerings, worthy of reverential salutation, the unsurpassed field of merit for the world.' For when you recollect the Saṅgha, bhikkhus, whatever fear or trepidation or terror you may have will be abandoned.

Monastics do work but not for monetary or material gain, their work is to cultivate wholesome qualities of mind in themselves and in others. The following sutta illustrates this principal, where a farmer criticizes the Buddha for failing to produce food and living off the work of others. The Buddha teaches that his work is to train the mind. Just as crops are cultivated in the field, wholesome qualities are cultivated in the field of mind.

The Suttanipata: An Ancient Collection of the Buddha's Discourses Together with Its Commentaries translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

1.4 KASIBHĀRADVĀJA (KASIBHĀRADVĀJA SUTTA)

also found at The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi; 7.11 (1) Kasi Bhāradvāja

Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was dwelling among the Magadhans at Dakkhināgiri near the brahmin village Ekanālā. Now on that occasion five hundred plows had been yoked for the brahmin Kasibhāradvāja at the time of sowing.

Then in the morning the Blessed One dressed, took his bowl and robe, and went to the place where the brahmin Kasibhāradvāja was working. Now on that occasion the brahmin Kasibhāradvāja's food distribution was taking place. The Blessed One then approached the food distribution and stood to one side. The brahmin Kasibhāradvāja saw the Blessed One standing for alms and said to him: "I plow and sow, ascetic, and having plowed and sown, I eat. You too, ascetic, must plow and sow, and having plowed and sown, you can eat."

"I too, brahmin, plow and sow, and having plowed and sown, I eat."

“But we do not see Master Gotama’s yoke or plow or plowshare or goad or oxen, yet Master Gotama says this: ‘I too, brahmin, plow and sow, and having plowed and sown, I eat.’”

Then the brahmin Kasibhāradvāja addressed the Blessed One in verse:

76. “You claim to be a plowman,
but we do not see your plowing.
When asked, tell us about your plowing,
so that we can understand your plowing.” (1)

77. “Faith is the seed, austerity the rain;
wisdom is my yoke and plow.
Moral shame is the pole, mind the yoke strap,
mindfulness my plowshare and goad. (2)

78. “Guarded in body, guarded in speech,
controlled in food and belly,
I use truth for weeding,
and gentleness is my release. (3)

79. “Energy is my beast of burden
carrying one toward security from bondage;
it goes ahead without turning back
to the place where one does not sorrow. (4)

80. “In such a way this plowing is done
which bears the deathless as its fruit.
Having plowed with this kind of plowing,
one is released from all suffering.” (5)

Then the brahmin Kasibhāradvāja had milk rice poured into a large bronze dish and presented it to the Blessed One, saying: “Let Master Gotama eat the milk rice! You are a plowman, since you plow with a plowing that bears the deathless as its fruit.”

[The Blessed One:]

81. “Food over which verses have been recited is not to be eaten by me;
this, brahmin, is not the principle of those who see.

The buddhas reject food over which verses have been recited;
there being such a principle, brahmin, this is their conduct. (6)

82. “Serve with other food and drink
the consummate one, the great rishi,
one with influxes destroyed, with regret stilled,
for he is the field for one seeking merit.” (7)

“Then, Master Gotama, should I give this milk rice to someone else?”

“I do not see anyone in this world, brahmin, with its devas, Māra, and Brahmā, in this population with its ascetics and brahmins, its devas and humans, who could eat and properly digest this milk rice except the Tathāgata or a disciple of the Tathāgata. Therefore, brahmin, discard the milk rice where there is little vegetation or dispose of it in water where there are no living beings.”

Then the brahmin Kasibhāradvāja disposed of that milk rice in water where there were no living beings. When the milk rice was thrown into the water, it sizzled and hissed and gave off steam and smoke. Just as a plowshare, heated all day and then placed in water, sizzles and hisses and gives off steam and smoke, so too that milk rice, when thrown into the water, sizzled and hissed and gave off steam and smoke.

Then the brahmin Kasibhāradvāja, agitated, with hair bristling, approached the Blessed One, prostrated himself with his head at the Blessed One’s feet, and said to the Blessed One: “Excellent, Master Gotama! Excellent, Master Gotama! Master Gotama has made the Dhamma clear in many ways, as though he were turning upright what had been overturned, revealing what was hidden, showing the way to one who was lost, or holding up a lamp in the darkness so those with good eyesight can see forms. I go for refuge to Master Gotama, to the Dhamma, and to the Sangha of bhikkhus. May I receive the going forth under Master Gotama, may I receive full ordination.”

Then the brahmin Kasibhāradvāja received the going forth under the Blessed One, he received full ordination. And not long after his full ordination, dwelling alone, withdrawn, heedful, ardent, and

resolute, the Venerable Bhāradvāja soon realized for himself with direct knowledge, in this very life, that unsurpassed consummation of the spiritual life for the sake of which clansmen rightly go forth from the household life into homelessness, and having entered upon it, he dwelled in it. He directly knew: “Finished is birth, the spiritual life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more coming back to any state of being.” And the Venerable Bhāradvāja became one of the arahants.

Upasakas and Upasikas are lay followers dedicated to practicing the Dhamma. They support the Conventional Saṅgha through various means, such as offering alms, providing material support, practicing generosity and service; they have families and engage in secular work.

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

4.60 (10) The Layperson’s Proper Practice

Then the householder Anāthapiṇḍika approached the Blessed One.... The Blessed One said to him:

“Householder, a noble disciple who possesses four qualities is practicing the way proper to the layperson, a way that brings the attainment of fame and leads to heaven. What four?”

“Here, householder, a noble disciple serves the Saṅgha of bhikkhus with robes; he serves the Saṅgha of bhikkhus with almsfood; he serves the Saṅgha of bhikkhus with lodgings; he serves the Saṅgha of bhikkhus with medicines and provisions for the sick.

“Householder, a noble disciple who possesses these four qualities is practicing the way proper to the layperson, a way that brings the attainment of fame and leads to heaven.”

When the wise practice the way
proper for the layperson, they serve
the virtuous monks of upright conduct
with robes, almsfood, lodgings, and medicines:

for them both by day and night
merit always increases;
having done excellent deeds,
they pass on to a heavenly state.

The virtue of lay followers is pure when observing the Five Precepts (pañca-sīla) and Right Livelihood (sammā ājiva).

The Ceremony for Receiving the Five Precepts:

1. Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi
I undertake the precept to refrain from taking the life of any living creature.
2. Adinnādānā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi
I undertake the precept to refrain from taking that which is not given.
3. Kamesu micchacara veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi
I undertake the precept to refrain from sexual misconduct
4. Musāvādā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi
I undertake the precept to refrain from lying.
5. Surāmeraya majja pamādaṭṭhānā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi
I undertake the precept to refrain from consuming intoxicating drink and drugs which lead to carelessness.

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

8.25 (5) Mahānāma

On one occasion the Blessed One was dwelling among the Sakyans at Kapilavatthu in the Banyan Tree Park. Then Mahānāma the Sakyian approached the Blessed One, paid homage to him, sat down to one side, and said to him:

“In what way, Bhante, is one a lay follower?”

“When, Mahānāma, one has gone for refuge to the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Saṅgha, in that way one is a lay follower.”

“In what way, Bhante, is a lay follower virtuous?”

“When, Mahānāma, a lay follower abstains from the destruction of life, from taking what is not given, from sexual misconduct, from false speech, and from liquor, wine, and intoxicants, the basis for heedlessness, in that way a lay follower is virtuous.”

“In what way, Bhante, is a lay follower practicing for his own welfare but not for the welfare of others?”

(1) “When, Mahānāma, a lay follower is himself accomplished in faith but does not encourage others to accomplish faith; (2) when he is himself accomplished in virtuous behavior but does not encourage others to accomplish virtuous behavior; (3) when he is himself accomplished in generosity but does not encourage others to accomplish generosity; (4) when he himself wants to see bhikkhus but does not encourage others to see bhikkhus; (5) when he himself wants to hear the good Dhamma but does not encourage others to hear the good Dhamma; (6) when he himself retains in mind the teachings he has heard but does not encourage others to retain the teachings in mind; (7) when he himself examines the meaning of the teachings that have been retained in mind but does not encourage others to examine their meaning; (8) when he himself has understood the meaning and the Dhamma and practices in accordance with the Dhamma, but does not encourage others to do so: it is in this way, Mahānāma, that a lay follower is practicing for his own welfare but not for the welfare of others.

“In what way, Bhante, is a lay follower practicing for his own welfare and for the welfare of others?”

(1) “When, Mahānāma, a lay follower is himself accomplished in faith and also encourages others to accomplish faith; (2) when he is himself accomplished in virtuous behavior and also encourages others to accomplish virtuous behavior; (3) when he is himself accomplished in generosity and also encourages others to accomplish generosity; (4) when he himself wants to see bhikkhus and also encourages others to see bhikkhus; (5) when he himself wants to hear the good Dhamma and also encourages others to hear the good Dhamma; (6) when he himself retains in mind the teachings he has heard and also encourages others to retain the teachings in mind; (7) when he himself examines the meaning of the teachings that have been retained in mind and also encourages others to examine their meaning; (8) when he himself understands the meaning and the Dhamma and then practices in accordance with the Dhamma, and also encourages others to practice in accordance with the Dhamma: it is in this way, Mahānāma, that a lay follower is practicing for his own welfare and also for the welfare of others.”

Right Livelihood does not employ the following five occupations:

1. trading in weapons (satthavaṇijjā),
2. trading in living beings (sattavaṇijjā),
3. trading in meat (maṃsavaṇijjā),
4. trading in intoxicants (majjavaṇijjā), and
5. trading in poisons (visavaṇijjā).

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

5.177 (7) Trades “Bhikkhus, a lay follower should not engage in these five trades. What five? Trading in weapons, trading in living beings, trading in meat, trading in intoxicants, and trading in poisons. A lay follower should not engage in these five trades.”

The Buddhist Community is an interconnected spiritual community where the members are spiritual friends (kalyāṇa-mitta) who support each other on the path towards nibbāna, liberation from suffering (dukkha). The Buddhist Community, also called the Fourfold Saṅgha, allows for the perpetuation of the teachings (Dhamma) and practices of the Buddha. Monks and nuns are responsible for preserving the Dhamma, while laymen and laywomen provide material support and

participate in the practice, helping to ensure the continuity of the tradition. This division allows for mutual dependence and collaboration between the monastic and lay communities in the pursuit of spiritual development and the propagation of the Dhamma.

The intimate relationship between the Conventional Saṅgha and the lay community is a supportive condition for all members of the Buddhist Community in their aspirations for enlightenment. Monastics rely on the lay community for their material needs, while the lay community relies on monastics for spiritual guidance and teachings. This interdependence serves several purposes:

1. The lay community's practice of generosity (dāna), a fundamental virtue (sīla) that helps purify the mind of selfishness, is performed by supporting the Conventional Saṅgha with food, shelter, robes, medicine, and other requisites. The practice of generosity generates merit (puñña), and cultivates loving-kindness (metta) and compassion (karunā), which are conditions for progress on the path to nibbāna.

Monastics live a life of simplicity and renunciation in order to detach themselves from material possessions, worldly concerns and to focus on their spiritual development. The dependence on the lay community helps monastics cultivate gratitude (kataññu), contentment (santuṭṭhi), and humility.

2. Monastics dedicate their lives to studying and practicing the Dhamma. The support from the lay community allows the monastics to focus on their spiritual development and teaching others. In return, the lay community receives guidance, teachings, inspiration, and support on their own path towards training and purifying the mind.
3. The relationship between the Conventional Saṅgha and the lay community promotes harmony, interdependence and interconnectedness, and mutual support, where both groups assist each other on the path to nibbāna, perfect peace. The monastics provide spiritual guidance, teachings, and blessings, while the lay community supports the monastics materially. This symbiotic relationship strengthens the Buddhist community as a whole.
4. The lay community helps to ensure the preservation, continuity and transmission of the Dhamma by providing for the material needs of the Conventional Saṅgha. The interdependent relationship enables monastics to dedicate their time to studying, practicing, and sharing the Dhamma and their experiences with others.
5. Both monastics and laypeople contemplate the impermanent nature of material possessions, and in doing so are free from attachment (rāga), and thereby are liberated from the associated suffering.

The Buddha's teachings are considered universal and applicable to all and anyone who is interested and willing to learn and practice the Dhamma may join the Buddhist Community. The following are some qualities of the Buddhist Community:

- Welcomes all people, regardless of their caste or social status, gender, politics, or financial situation.
- Harmony and cooperation among its members.
- Provides mutual support and encouragement to its members on their spiritual journey towards nibbāna.
- Encourages respect for all sentient beings.
- Cultivates loving-kindness and compassion for all suffering beings.

The symbiotic and harmonious relationship between the Conventional Saṅgha and the lay community is rooted in loving-kindness, compassion, generosity, wisdom (paññā), and the shared aspiration for spiritual development. The relationship supports both the material and spiritual well-being of all individuals in the Buddhist Community.

January 2024 - Perfection of Giving (dāna pāramī)

The perfections (pāramīs) are a set of ten virtues that are cultivated in order to progress on the path to nibbāna, liberation from suffering (dukkha). The Buddhavaṃsa, a late addition to the Pāli Canon, explains that the Ten Perfections are mastered over many life times by the bodhisattva, a Buddha-to-be, in order to realize the attainment of a Buddha. The Ten Perfections (pāramīs) are:

1. Giving (dāna pāramī),
2. Virtue (sīla pāramī),
3. Renunciation (nekkhamma pāramī),
4. Wisdom (paññā pāramī),
5. Energy (virīya pāramī),
6. Patience (khanti pāramī),
7. Truthfulness (saccā pāramī),
8. Determination (adhiṭṭhāna pāramī),
9. Loving-kindness (mettā pāramī), and
10. Equanimity (upekkhā pāramī).

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

Note 763

Abhiññāvosaṇapāramippatta. MA explains as the attainment of arahantship. This may be the only sense that the word pāramī bears in the four Nikāyas. In the later Theravāda literature, beginning perhaps with such works as the Buddhavaṃsa, this word comes to signify the perfect virtues that a bodhisatta must fulfill over many lives in order to attain Buddhahood.

Bhadantacariya Buddhaghosa writes in The Path of Purification: Visuddhimagga, Chapter IX, that through developing the Four Divine Abodes (brahmavihāra), also called Sublime Abodes, the mind will cultivate the Ten Perfections. The Four Divine Abodes are:

1. loving-kindness (metta),
2. compassion (karunā),
3. altruistic joy (muditā), and
4. equanimity (upekkhā).

The Path of Purification: Visuddhimagga by Bhadantacariya Buddhaghosa

IX.124. ... For the Great Beings' minds retain their balance by giving preference to beings' welfare, by dislike of beings' suffering, by desire for the various successes achieved by beings to last, and by impartiality towards all beings. And to all beings they give gifts, which are a source of pleasure, without discriminating thus: "It must be given to this one; it must not be given to this one." And in order to avoid doing harm to beings they undertake the precepts of virtue. They practice renunciation for the purpose of perfecting their virtue. They cleanse their understanding for the purpose of non-confusion about what is good and bad for beings. They constantly arouse energy, having beings' welfare and happiness at heart. When they have acquired heroic fortitude through supreme energy, they become patient with beings' many kinds of faults. They do not deceive when promising "We shall give you this; we shall do this for you." They are unshakably resolute upon beings' welfare and happiness. Through unshakable loving-kindness they place them first [before themselves]. Through equanimity they expect no reward. Having thus fulfilled the [ten] perfections, these [divine abidings] then perfect all the good states classed as the ten powers, the four kinds of fearlessness, the six kinds of knowledge not shared [by disciples], and the eighteen states of the Enlightened One. This is how they bring to perfection all the good states beginning with giving.

Nyanatiloka Thera in Buddhist Dictionary: Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines provides clarification to the above writing by Buddhaghosa.

Buddhist Dictionary: Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines by Nyanatiloka Thera

p. 247-249

These qualities [the perfections - pāramīs] were developed and brought to maturity by the Bodhisatta in his past existences, and his way of practising them is illustrated in many of the Birth Stories (Jātaka), of which, however, only the verses are regarded as canonical.

In Vism IX, 124 it is said that through developing the four sublime states (brahmavihāra: loving kindness, compassion, altruistic joy, equanimity), one may reach these ten perfections ...

“As the Great Beings (mahā-satta; a synonym often found in the Mahāyāna scriptures for Bodhisatta (q.v.), i.e., ‘Enlightenment Being or Being destined for Buddhahood) are concerned about the welfare of living beings, not tolerating the suffering of beings, wishing long duration to the higher states of happiness of beings, and being impartial and just to all beings, therefore:

- (1) They give alms (dāna) to all beings so that they may be happy, without investigating whether they are worthy or not.
- (2) By avoiding to do them any harm, they observe morality (sīla).
- (3) In order to bring morality to perfection, they train themselves in renunciation (nekkhamma).
- (4) In order to understand clearly what is beneficial and injurious to beings, they purify their wisdom (pañña).
- (5) For the sake of the welfare and happiness of others they constantly exert their energy (viriya).
- (6) Though having become heroes through utmost energy, they are nevertheless full of forbearance (khanti) towards the manifold failings of beings.
- (7) Once they have promised to give or do something, they do not break their promise (‘truthfulness’; sacca).
- (8) With unshakeable resolution (adhiṭṭhāna) they work for the weal and welfare of beings.
- (9) With unshakeable kindness (mettā) they are helpful to all.
- (10) By reason of their equanimity (upekkhā) they do not expect anything in return”.

The Ten Perfections are not isolated virtues but an interwoven fabric, interconnected and mutually supportive, each contributing to the cultivation of wholesome qualities necessary for training the mind to be peaceful and free of suffering.

- Each perfection supports, reinforces and enhances each other, they are not developed in isolation, and all ten perfections are developed simultaneously. Practicing a specific perfection leads to the development of others.

For example, practicing generosity (dāna) support the development of loving-kindness (mettā). Loving-kindness kindles the practice of generosity and patience (khanti). As the practice of generosity increases, so will the qualities of patience and loving-kindness increase, and vice versa.

Wisdom (pañña) is essential in understanding the appropriate ways to practice generosity and ethical conduct (sīla). Similarly, cultivating patience (khanti) will aid in the development of wisdom and generosity.

Ethical conduct and truthfulness (sacca) support the development of wisdom (pañña). Without training the mind in ethical behaviour, pursuing and valuing truth, it will be difficult to experience insights into the characteristics of conventional and ultimate reality. Patience also supports the development of wisdom by allowing the mind to calmly observe and understand experiences without immediate reactivity.

During formal meditation, there is a simultaneous practice and development of generosity, patience, determination, and mindfulness.

The development and mastery of the perfections is a gradual progression, deepening and maturing over time. For example, as the understanding of wisdom deepens, it will strengthen determination (adhiṭṭhāna) to practice the Noble Eightfold Path (ariya aṭṭhaṅgika magga) with increasing consistency.

- There is usually a sequential emphasis on certain perfections over others. In a particular period or phase or lifetime, the mind is comfortable or confident to develop certain perfections in a concentrated manner and not feel comfortable cultivating other perfections in such a serious way. For example, the mind might be inclined to emphasize the cultivation of generosity and ethical conduct before the mind is prepared to fully concentrate on the development of wisdom and determination.

- The development of the perfections are assisted by integrating them into daily activities and relationships with mindfulness (sati). The training of the mind is enhanced with continuous practice and development of the perfections outside of formal meditation.

The Ten Perfections are qualities that are developed to the utmost by anyone striving for nibbāna.

The subject of this newsletter is on the **Perfection of Giving (dāna pāramī)**. The next nine newsletters will discuss the remaining perfections.

The Dhammapada: The Buddha's Path of Wisdom translated by Acharya Buddharakkhita

177 Truly, misers fare not to heavenly realms; nor, indeed, do fools praise generosity. But the wise person rejoices in giving, and by that alone does he become happy here-after.

223 Overcome the angry by non-anger; overcome the wicked by goodness; overcome the miser by generosity; overcome the liar by truth.

The Pāli word for giving is “dāna”. The word for generosity, the attitude of giving, is “cāga”. The word cāga also has the meaning of “letting go” or “relinquishment”. Generosity is the mind's tendency or inclination towards the act of giving, and generosity is strengthened by the acts of giving. Generosity weakens the root defilements (kilesa) of greed (lobha) and hatred (dosā), and conditions the mind to eradicate ignorance (avijjā), thereby realize nibbāna, liberation from suffering (dukkha). In discussing the act of giving, generosity is also implied, and vice versa.

The Perfection of Giving is the first perfection and it is the practice of sharing, and having a generous attitude. The attitude of generosity is a condition that reduces craving (taṇhā) for and attachment to possessions. The elimination of craving is the Third Noble Truth, the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering (nirodha), the realization of nibbāna.

Generosity is crucial for freeing the mind from selfishness, the main characteristic of the egoic personality. The ego never has enough; craves more wealth, possessions, fame, and power; suffers from a sense of lack; and fears what it does have is eroding, and will be lost or stolen. The narrow view of the ego, that promotes selfishness, prevents connecting and bonding with others in a authentic and mutually beneficial manner by erecting defensive and offensive mechanisms. The ego's wrong view of itself as a being apart and isolated from others are the causes for the negative emotional states of loneliness, sadness and depression. The egoic consciousness is discussed in the January 2023 Newsletter: Egoic consciousness, the false self.

Giving without attachment or expecting anything in return, not only counters the ego's fears of lack and selfishness but is also conducive to connecting with others. The emotional experience of not being complete or whole results in the longing for loving authentic relationships. Loving authentic relationships are obstructed by the fears, defensive and offensive mechanisms that are generated by the ego. The training of the mind to be generous relaxes the ego's grip over the mind, allowing for the courage and strength to be open and vulnerable, which is necessary in order to form loving authentic relationships.

Generosity must be balanced with wisdom due to the current state of humanity: minds manipulated and driven by the egoic consciousness. Therefore, discernment is necessary to prevent others from taking advantage of the generous mind. Generosity requires understanding to give effectively and discernment to know when, how, and to whom to give. Wisdom ensures that generosity is directed towards worthy causes and not motivated by attachment or desire for reward.

- Understand the mind's motivation for generosity. Is the intention to give produced by the egoic personality which expects something in return, such as material possessions or recognition? Or is the intention selfless, coming from the wisdom that understands the workings of kamma and the love that joins with others?
- Choose the right time, place, and recipient for generosity. Discernment and investigation is used to practice generosity without causing harm to anyone, including oneself. Also, wisdom is used to prevent the recipient from becoming dependent on your generosity.
- Generosity encourages letting go of attachments, virtue (sīla) provides a structure and support for wholesome action, and wisdom prevents the misuse of given resources.
- Wisdom realizes that all beings are interconnected and interdependent. No being or phenomenon exists independently or in isolation.

- Everything is interrelated and influenced by a complex web of causes and conditions.
- The Buddha taught that all beings have been relatives to one another at some lifetime within the cycle of birth, ageing, sickness, death, and rebirth (saṃsāra).
- Actions (kamma) have consequences not just for the individual but also impact the wider network of beings. Positive and negative actions influence the collective consciousness and shape the experiences of all sentient beings.

The practice of generosity should not cause undue suffering for oneself, give often and what is appropriate without threatening physical and emotional safety, nor peace of mind.

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

5.148 (8) A Good Person

...

“Bhikkhus, there are these five gifts of a good person. What five? He gives a gift out of faith; he gives a gift respectfully; he gives a timely gift; he gives a gift unreservedly; he gives a gift without injuring himself or others.

“(1) Because he has given a gift out of faith, wherever the result of that gift is produced, he becomes rich, with great wealth and property, and he is handsome, attractive, graceful, possessing supreme beauty of complexion. (2) Because he has given a gift respectfully, wherever the result of that gift is produced, he becomes rich, with great wealth and property, and his sons and wives, slaves, servants, and workers are obedient, lend an ear, and apply their minds to understand. (3) Because he has given a timely gift, wherever the result of that gift is produced, he becomes rich, with great wealth and property, and timely benefits come to him in abundance. (4) Because he has given a gift unreservedly, wherever the result of that gift is produced, he becomes rich, with great wealth and property, and his mind inclines to the enjoyment of the five kinds of fine sensual pleasures. (5) Because he has given a gift without injuring himself or others, wherever the result of that gift is produced, he becomes rich, with great wealth and property, and no damage comes to his property from any source, whether from fire, floods, kings, thieves, or displeasing heirs. These are the five gifts of a good person.”

Generosity is an important condition for reducing and eventually eliminating the ego’s power and control over the mind, and allowing pure consciousness, wisdom and loving-kindness to radiate and brighten the mind. The generous heart is joyful because there is a joining and bounding with others that leaves no room in the mind for loneliness or depression.

Generosity may be performed in various ways, such as offering material support, food, clothing, shelter, medicine or financial resources to those in need, as well as giving one’s time, knowledge, and emotional support.

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

4.57 (7) Suppavāsā

...

“Suppavāsā, a female noble disciple who gives food gives the recipients four things. What four? She gives life, beauty, happiness, and strength. (1) Having given life, she partakes of life, whether celestial or human. (2) Having given beauty, she partakes of beauty, whether celestial or human. (3) Having given happiness, she partakes of happiness, whether celestial or human. (4) Having given strength, she partakes of strength, whether celestial or human. Suppavāsā, a female noble disciple who gives food gives the recipients these four things.”

When one gives well-prepared food,
pure, delicious, and flavorful,
to the upright ones who are
exalted and of excellent conduct,
that offering, which links merit with merit,
is praised as very fruitful

by the world-knowers.⁷⁴²

Those recollecting such generosity
dwell in the world inspired by joy.
Having removed the stain of miserliness and its root,
blameless, they go to the heavenly abode.

Note 742: Mp identifies the “world-knowers” (lokavidūna) with the Buddhas.

The sharing of food, material things and money do help people in this life but the benefits are temporary due to the impermanent nature of materiality, their loss and decay. However, the sharing of Dhamma has long lasting benefits that will continue into future lives and will also lead to the ending of the cycle of all rebirths (saṃsāra). The gift of Dhamma (Dhammadāna) is timeless and invaluable in its ability to bring permanent peace, happiness and liberation from suffering (dukkha), nibbāna.

The Dhammapada: The Buddha’s Path of Wisdom translated by Acharya Buddhārakkhita
354. The gift of the Dhamma excels all gifts; the taste of the Dhamma excels all tastes; the delight in the Dhamma excels all delights; the craving-freed vanquishes all suffering.

The acts of generosity is a way to accumulate wholesome kamma and to cultivate qualities like kindness, compassion, and selflessness. Generosity is one of the Three Pillars of Dhamma, necessary practices which support the path to nibbāna. The Three Pillars of Dhamma or Grounds for Making Merit (puñña kiriya vatthu) are:

1. Generosity (dāna),
2. Moral restraint (sīla), and
3. Meditation (bhāvanā).

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi
8.36 (6) Activity

“Bhikkhus, there are these three bases of meritorious activity. What three? The basis of meritorious activity consisting in giving; the basis of meritorious activity consisting in virtuous behavior; and the basis of meritorious activity consisting in meditative development.

The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Digha Nikaya translated by Maurice O’C Walshe

33 Sangīti Sutta: The Chanting Together

...

(38) ‘Three grounds based on merit: that of giving, of morality, of meditation (dānamayaṃ puñña-kiriya-vatthu, sīlamayaṃ puñña-kiriya-vatthu, bhāvanāmaya puñña-kiriya-vatthu).

Buddhadhamma by Bhikkhu P. A. Payutto
Chapter 11 Happiness

In Buddhism, the essential aim of performing wholesome deeds or making merit – whether this be through generosity (dāna), moral conduct (sīla), or cultivating the mind (bhāvanā) – is not to receive a reward in the form of sense pleasure, say of wealth, fame, respect, an entourage of followers, or rebirth in a heavenly realm. The true purpose of wholesome actions is to support spiritual development and to access true, lasting happiness, which leads to a reduction of mental defilement, a disengagement from evil, and an elimination of craving – the source of suffering. The person engaging in good actions thus experiences deeper, more refined forms of happiness – up to the happiness of Nibbāna – which bring peace and wellbeing to the individual and to society:

Mahāniddeśa (Khuddakanikāya)

I. 424-5.

Not for happiness tarnished by defilement, not for future birth, does a sage give gifts. Indeed, a sage gives gifts for the end of defilement, for the absence of future birth.

Not for happiness tarnished by defilement, not for future birth, does a sage develop the jhānas. Indeed, a sage develops the jhānas for the end of defilement, for the absence of future birth.

Aiming for the state of peace (i.e. Nibbāna), inclining in this direction, devoted to this state, a sage gifts gifts. Sages set Nibbāna as the goal, just as rivers head for the heart of the ocean.

The Buddha frequently taught the Dhamma to lay people as a Gradual Discourse (anupubbikathā). Talk on giving (dāna kathā) is the initial subject of the instruction because it is the foundation and seed of spiritual development. The Gradual Discourse is as follows:

1. talk on giving (dāna kathā),
2. talk on virtue (sīla kathā),
3. talk on heavenly pleasures (sagga kathā),
4. talk on the dangers of sensual pleasure (kāmānaṃ ādīnava kathā),
5. talk on the benefits of renunciation (nekkhamma kathā), and
6. talk on The Four Noble Truths (cattāri ariya-saccāni kathā).

A discussion on Progressive Instruction and Gradual Training is found in the June 2023 Newsletter.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

56 Upāli Sutta: To Upāli

...

18. Then the Blessed One gave the householder Upāli progressive instruction, that is, talk on giving, talk on virtue, talk on the heavens; he explained the danger, degradation, and defilement in sensual pleasures and the blessing of renunciation. When he knew that the householder Upāli's mind was ready, receptive, free from hindrances, elated, and confident, he expounded to him the teaching special to the Buddhas: suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path. Just as a clean cloth with all marks removed would take dye evenly, so too, while the householder Upāli sat there, the spotless immaculate vision of the Dhamma arose in him: "All that is subject to arising is subject to cessation."⁵⁸⁸ Then the householder Upāli saw the Dhamma, attained the Dhamma, understood the Dhamma, fathomed the Dhamma; he crossed beyond doubt, did away with perplexity, gained intrepidity, and became independent of others in the Teacher's Dispensation.⁵⁸⁹ ...

Notes:

588 MA: Vision of the Dhamma (dhammacakkhu) is the path of stream-entry. The phrase "All that is subject to arising is subject to cessation" shows the mode in which the path arises. The path takes cessation (Nibbāna) as its object, but its function is to penetrate all conditioned states as subject to arising and cessation.

589 The "Dhamma" referred to here is the Four Noble Truths. Having seen these truths for himself, he has cut off the fetter of doubt and now possesses the "view that is noble and emancipating and (which) leads the one who practises in accordance with it to the complete destruction of suffering" (MN 48.7).

The Buddha taught four qualities that bond people together of which generosity was the first listed in The Four Bases of Sympathy (saṅgahavatthu):

1. generosity (dāna),
2. speak kind words (peyyavajja),
3. render service for the benefit of others (atthacariya), and
4. treat everyone equally, impartiality and behave properly in all circumstances (samānattatā).

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

4.32 (2) Sustaining

"Bhikkhus, there are these four means of sustaining a favorable relationship. What four? Giving, endearing speech, beneficent conduct, and impartiality.⁶⁸⁷ These are the four means of sustaining a favorable relationship."

Note 687: ... The four saṅgahavatthu are means by which one can attract others and sustain a relationship with them characterized by friendliness and respect. The four in Pāli are dāna, peyyavajja, atthacariyā, samānattatā. ...

Mp: "Some people are to be sustained by a gift, so a gift should be given to them. Others expect endearing speech, so they should be addressed with pleasant words. Beneficent conduct is a talk on increasing goodness; these people should be told, 'You should do this, you shouldn't do that. You should associate with this person, not with that person.' Impartiality is being the same in happiness and suffering. This means sitting together with them, living together, and eating together."

Generosity is included among the essential attributes of the good, superior or true person (sappurisa). On the breakup of the body, an inferior person (asappurisa) will be reborn in hell or the animal world, while a good person will be reborn among the devās (heavenly beings) or excellent human beings. The following are the qualities of a good person.

1. A good person has faith in the Buddha, has shame in immoral actions, has fear in immoral actions, learned, energetic, has mindfulness and wisdom.
2. A good person has friends and companions who possess the same qualities of a good person.
3. A good person does not think of their own detriment, to the detriment of others or to the detriment of both.
4. A good person does not counsel to their own detriment, to the detriment of others or to the detriment of both.
5. A good person abstains from false speech, abstains from malicious speech, abstains from harsh speech, abstains from idle chatter.
6. A good person abstains from killing living beings, abstains from taking what is not given, abstains from sexual misconduct.
7. A good person holds views like these: There is what is given, what is offered, what is sacrificed, there is fruit or result of good or bad actions, there is this world, there is other world, there is mother, there is father, there are spontaneously reborn beings, there are good and virtuous recluses or brahmins in the world who have realised for themselves through direct knowledge and proclaim this world and the other world.
8. A good person gives a gift with proper attention, gives it with his own hands, gives it with respect, gives it not as if throwing it away, gives it with the view that something will come of it.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

110 Cūḷaparuṇṇama Sutta: The Shorter Discourse on the Full-Moon Night

...

12. "And how does an untrue man [asappurisa] give gifts as an untrue man? Here an untrue man gives a gift carelessly, gives it not with his own hand, gives it without showing respect, gives what is to be discarded, gives it with the view that nothing will come of it. That is how an untrue man gives gifts as an untrue man.

13. "That untrue man — thus possessed of bad qualities, who thus associates as an untrue man, wills as an untrue man, counsels as an untrue man, speaks as an untrue man, acts as an untrue man, holds views as an untrue man, and gives gifts as an untrue man — on the dissolution of the body, after death, reappears in the destination of untrue men. And what is the destination of untrue men? It is hell or the animal world.

...

23. "And how does a true man [sappurisa] give gifts as a true man? Here a true man gives a gift carefully, gives it with his own hand, gives it showing respect, gives a valuable gift, gives it with the view that something will come of it. That is how a true man gives gifts as a true man.

24. "That true man — thus possessed of good qualities, who thus associates as a true man, wills as a true man, counsels as a true man, speaks as a true man, acts as a true man, holds views as a true man, and gives gifts as a true man — on the dissolution of the body, after death, reappears in the destination of true men. And what is the destination of true men? It is greatness among the gods or greatness among human beings."

The August 2022 Newsletter: The Practice of Generosity (dāna) provides additional discussion. The sutta excerpts listed below provide teachings by the Buddha on the practice of generosity.

The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

3.24 (4) Archery

At Sāvathī. Sitting to one side, King Pasenadi of Kosala said to the Blessed One:

“Venerable sir, where should a gift be given?”

“Wherever one’s mind has confidence, great king.”

“But, venerable sir, where does what is given become of great fruit?”

“This is one question, great king, ‘Where should a gift be given?’ and this another, ‘Where does what is given become of great fruit?’ What is given to one who is virtuous, great king, is of great fruit, not so what is given to an immoral person. ...

“So too, great king, when a person has gone forth from the household life into homelessness, no matter from what clan, if he has abandoned five factors and possesses five factors, then what is given to him is of great fruit. What five factors have been abandoned? Sensual desire has been abandoned; ill will has been abandoned; sloth and torpor have been abandoned; restlessness and remorse have been abandoned; doubt has been abandoned. What five factors does he possess? He possesses the aggregate of virtue of one beyond training, the aggregate of concentration of one beyond training, the aggregate of wisdom of one beyond training, the aggregate of liberation of one beyond training, the aggregate of the knowledge and vision of liberation of one beyond training. He possesses these five factors. Thus what is given to one who has abandoned five factors and who possesses five factors is of great fruit.²⁵⁵

Note: 255 The five factors abandoned are the five hindrances (pañca nīvaraṇā); the five factors possessed are the five aggregates of one beyond training (pañca asekhaṅkhandhā), the asekha being the arahant.

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

5.35 (5) The Benefits of Giving

“Bhikkhus, there are these five benefits of giving. What five?”

(1) One is dear and agreeable to many people.

(2) Good persons resort to one.

(3) One acquires a good reputation.

(4) One is not deficient in the layperson’s duties.

(5) With the breakup of the body, after death, one is reborn in a good destination, in a heavenly world.

These are the five benefits in giving.”

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

7.52 (9) Giving

...

“Bhante, why is it that one gift is not of great fruit and benefit while the other is?”

(1) “Here, Sāriputta, someone gives a gift with expectations, with a bound mind, looking for rewards; he gives a gift, [thinking]: ‘Having passed away, I will make use of this.’ He gives that gift to an ascetic or a brahmin: food and drink; clothing and vehicles; garlands, scents, and unguents; bedding, dwellings, and lighting. What do you think, Sāriputta? Might someone give such a gift?”

“Yes, Bhante.”

“In that case, Sāriputta, he gives a gift with expectations, with a bound mind, looking for rewards; he gives a gift, [thinking]: ‘Having passed away, I will make use of this.’ Having given such a gift, with the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in companionship with the devas [ruled by]

the four great kings. Having exhausted that kamma, psychic potency, glory, and authority, he comes back and returns to this state of being.

(2) “But, Sāriputta, someone does not give a gift with expectations, with a bound mind, looking for rewards; he does not give a gift, [thinking]: ‘Having passed away, I will make use of this.’ Rather, he gives a gift, [thinking]: ‘Giving is good.’...

(3) “He does not give a gift, [thinking]: ‘Giving is good,’ but rather he gives a gift, [thinking]: ‘Giving was practiced before by my father and forefathers; I should not abandon this ancient family custom.’...

(4) “He does not give a gift, [thinking]: ‘Giving was practiced before ... I should not abandon this ancient family custom,’ but rather he gives a gift, [thinking]: ‘I cook; these people do not cook. It isn’t right that I who cook should not give to those who do not cook.’...

(5) “He does not give a gift, [thinking]: ‘I cook ... to those who do not cook,’ but rather he gives a gift, [thinking]: ‘Just as the seers of old—that is, Aṭṭhaka, Vāmaka, Vāmadeva, Vessāmitta, Yamataggi, Aṅgīrasa, Bhāradvāja, Vāseṭṭha, Kassapa, and Bhagu—held those great sacrifices, so I will share a gift.’...

(6) “He does not give a gift, [thinking]: ‘Just as the seers of old ... held those great sacrifices, so I will share a gift,’ but rather he gives a gift, [thinking]: ‘When I am giving a gift my mind becomes placid, and elation and joy arise.’...

(7) “He does not give a gift, [thinking]: ‘When I am giving a gift my mind becomes placid, and elation and joy arise,’ but rather he gives a gift, [thinking]: ‘It’s an ornament of the mind, an accessory of the mind.’ He gives that gift to an ascetic or a brahmin: food and drink; clothing and vehicles; garlands, scents, and unguents; bedding, dwellings, and lighting. What do you think, Sāriputta? Might someone give such a gift?”

“Yes, Bhante.”

“In that case, Sāriputta, he does not give a gift with expectations, with a bound mind, looking for rewards; he does not give a gift, [thinking]: ‘Having passed away, I will make use of this.’ He does not give a gift, [thinking]: ‘Giving is good.’ He does not give a gift, [thinking]: ‘Giving was practiced before by my father and forefathers; I should not abandon this ancient family custom.’ He does not give a gift, [thinking]: ‘I cook; old ... held those great sacrifices, so I will share a gift.’ He does not give a gift, [thinking]: ‘When I am giving a gift my mind becomes placid, and elation and joy arise.’ But rather, he gives a gift, [thinking]: ‘It’s an ornament of the mind, an accessory of the mind.’ Having given such a gift, with the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in companionship with the devas of Brahmā’s company. Having exhausted that kamma, psychic potency, glory, and authority, he does not come back and return to this state of being.

“This, Sāriputta, is the reason why a gift given by someone here is not of great fruit and benefit. And this is the reason why a gift given by someone here is of great fruit and benefit.”

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi
6.37 (7) Giving

...

And how is an offering possessed of six factors? Here, the donor has three factors and the recipients have three factors.

“What are the three factors of the donor? (1) The donor is joyful before giving; (2) she has a placid, confident mind in the act of giving; and (3) she is elated after giving. These are the three factors of the donor.

“What are the three factors of the recipients? Here, (4) the recipients are devoid of lust or are practicing to remove lust; (5) they are devoid of hatred or are practicing to remove hatred; (6) they are devoid of delusion or are practicing to remove delusion. These are the three factors of the recipients.

... it is not easy to measure the merit of such an offering ... rather, it is reckoned simply as an incalculable, immeasurable, great mass of merit.”

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

8.54 (4) Dīghajāṇu

...

“There are, Byagghapajja, these four [other] things that lead to a clansman’s welfare and happiness in future lives. What four? Accomplishment in faith, accomplishment in virtuous behavior, accomplishment in generosity, and accomplishment in wisdom.

...

(7) “And what is accomplishment in generosity? Here, a clansman dwells at home with a heart devoid of the stain of miserliness, freely generous, openhanded, delighting in relinquishment, one devoted to charity, delighting in giving and sharing. This is called accomplishment in generosity.

February 2024 - Perfection of Virtue (sīla pāramī)

The perfections (pāramīs) are a set of ten virtues that are cultivated in order to progress on the path to nibbāna, liberation from suffering (dukkha). An overview of the Ten Perfections are presented in the January 2024 Newsletter: The Perfection of Giving (dāna pāramī). The Ten Perfections (pāramīs) are:

1. Giving (dāna pāramī),
2. Virtue (sīla pāramī),
3. Renunciation (nekkhamma pāramī),
4. Wisdom (paññā pāramī),
5. Energy (vīrya pāramī),
6. Patience (khanti pāramī),
7. Truthfulness (saccā pāramī),
8. Determination (adhiṭṭhāna pāramī),
9. Loving-kindness (mettā pāramī), and
10. Equanimity (upekkhā pāramī).

The subject of this newsletter is on the Perfection of Virtue (sīla pāramī). The Perfection of Giving (dāna pāramī) is discussed in the January 2024 Newsletter. The next eight newsletters will discuss the remaining perfections.

The meaning of the Pāli word "sīla" is morality or ethical conduct.

- Morality are the principles of what is right or wrong, good or bad, in human behavior. Morality is the code of conduct that result in wholesome actions (kamma) and behavior that avoids unwholesome actions.
 - Ethics is a systematic way of examining and understanding moral principles. Ethics guides individuals in making decisions by evaluating what actions are morally right or wrong.
 - Virtue are qualities or traits of character that are morally good or desirable, such as the ten perfections. The cultivation of virtues is the purpose for ethical behavior.
- In this newsletter the terms 'ethics' and 'morality' are used interchangeably.

Therefore, "sīla pāramī" is the Perfection of Virtue that embodies ethical behavior. The development of moral conduct is the foundation and initial practice for developing self-control and restraint of the senses. Ethical behavior is the first and foremost among wholesome actions and is the bases for a calm quiet mind and concentration. The calm quiet concentrated mind is a condition for the development of wisdom (paññā) and compassion (karunā). The development of wisdom purifies the mind of defilements (kilesa) which in turn, liberates the mind from suffering (dukkha) and to realize nibbāna.

Training in moral conduct and moral restraint aids in the reduction of suffering, both for oneself and others, by not causing harm but instead, to have loving-kindness (mettā) and compassion (karunā).

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi
note 108

MT: Non-cruelty, avihiṃsā which is a synonym for compassion [karunā] is the root of all virtues, especially the root-cause of morality.

The individual, relationships and society will suffer when moral principals are not followed. The following are some repercussions of not adhering to ethical conduct.

- Without a moral compass, the mind will be in conflict and emotional turmoil, experiencing guilt, remorse, shame, and a lack of peace.
- Neglecting morality could lead to actions that harm others physically, emotionally, or socially. The absence of the training in morality will have a negative impact on the community, there will be an erosion of cultural values, a decline in ethical standards that encourages a culture of dishonesty, corruption, and exploitation.

- Without honouring moral principles, relationships with others will be damaged by competitiveness, exploitation, and aggression. Lack of moral conduct will lead to dishonesty, betrayal, and harm, eroding trust and causing emotional distress in the individuals that form relationships.
 - Not adhering to moral principles will result in a loss of respect from peers, family, and members of society. Others will perceive individuals without moral integrity as unreliable, untrustworthy, or unethical, which results in loss of reputation.
 - Engaging in unethical behavior will lead to unwholesome kamma, resulting in future suffering and unfavorable circumstances.
 - The mind would not be able to trust itself nor would others be able to have trust and respect in a person without moral scruples. Without trust, personal and professional relationships would be affected adversely, resulting in isolation or difficulties in collaboration.
 - A lack of moral development will hinder the purification of mind and hinder progress towards nibbāna.
 - Continual disregard for moral values will desensitize the mind to ethical concerns, resulting in a lack of loving-kindness, compassion, and a diminished sense of responsibility towards others.
- Bhikkhu Bodhi defines virtue or moral discipline (sīla) in the following passage.

The Essential Meaning of Sila by Bhikkhu Bodhi

The Pali word for moral discipline, sila, has three levels of meaning: (1) inner virtue, i.e., endowment with such qualities as kindness, contentment, simplicity, truthfulness, patience, etc.; (2) virtuous actions of body and speech which express those inner virtues outwardly; and (3) rules of conduct governing actions of body and speech designed to bring them into accord with the ethical ideals. These three levels are closely intertwined and not always distinguishable in individual cases. But if we isolate them, sila as inner virtue can be called the aim of the training in moral discipline, sila as purified actions of body and speech the manifestation of that aim, and sila as rules of conduct the systematic means of actualizing the aim. Thus sila as inner virtue is established by bringing our bodily and verbal actions into accord with the ethical ideals, and this is done by following the rules of conduct intended to give these ideals concrete form.

Using Bhikkhu Bodhi's definition for moral discipline (sīla), the following is the threefold meaning.

1. Inner virtue is a mind endowed with the ten perfections (pāramī) which are a necessary condition for training the mind to realize nibbāna.
2. Wholesome kamma are virtuous actions of mind, body, and speech, and aides in purifying the mind of defilements (kilesa).
3. Training in the precepts (sikkhāpada) are the rules of conduct governing actions of body and speech that prevent unwholesome kamma from arising and actualize wholesome kamma. Each precept contains two aspects: a negative aspect, which is a rule of restraint, and a positive aspect, which is a virtue to be cultivated.

The precepts are principles of training the mind in ethical conduct (sīla) that are undertaken freely by the individual without coercion from a supernatural power or governing authority. The precepts assist in developing such mental faculties as energy (vīrya), mindfulness (sati), and concentration (samādhi), as well as the virtues of the Ten Perfections (dāna pāramī). There are Four Categories of Precepts (sikkhāpada).

VI. Five Precepts (pañcasīla) are the ethical guidelines for which lay disciples of the Buddha train their mind. These precepts are the bases from which the other categories of precepts are derived.

1. Refrain from killing sentient beings.
 - This precept is about respect for all forms of life, recognizing and honoring the value of living beings. All sentient beings are to be protected because life is precious.
 - A being is a constantly changing combination of physical and mental elements that arise and cease due to causes and conditions, and are therefore, not separate from the world. As the physical and mental elements change, the being itself changes. Beings act as a condition that affect other beings, beings are interconnected, and do not exist independently or in isolation. Harming a being has an affect on other beings and the environment.

- The protection of beings by not harming them produces wholesome qualities of mind, such as loving-kindness, compassion, sympathy and empathy.
 - The principle of non-violence (ahiṃsā) emphasizes the importance of causing no harm to any being. The principle of non-violence contributes to the mind's inner peace and health, in addition to allowing others the freedom to also be at peace, and free from worry and fear.
 - When the body does not engage in harming others, the mind does not experience guilt, remorse, and agitation, which results in a peaceful and calmer mind.
 - Wholesome kamma is produced with the intention to not cause harm and instead, to protect all forms of life. The wholesome kamma contributes to the mind's progress towards liberation from suffering and perfect peace.
 - Unwholesome kamma is not produced when there is no intention to cause harm. Unwholesome kamma results in unfortunate future states of existence.
 - Respecting the sacredness of life encourages a mindful attitude towards the environment and ecosystems, promoting a sense of responsibility towards preserving nature.
 - Practicing non-violence helps to achieve harmonious relationships in communities by promoting peaceful coexistence and reduction in conflicts, and contributes to a more compassionate and understanding society.
 - Refraining from killing living creatures is assisted by the Ten Perfections (pāramī) thereby, the perfections are further developed by exercising the virtues.
 - The training in this precept gives the assurance that sentient beings will not be intentionally harmed, living beings are safe and secure thereby, the moral mind offers the gift of fearlessness to others.
2. Refrain from taking that which is not given.
 - This precept is about respecting the possessions of others, and the value of what others own.
 - The precept also cultivates contentment and satisfaction with our own possessions, and reduces the unwholesome desire for what others possess.
 - Training in the precept develops honesty, a wholesome quality of mind.
 - Respect of ownership develops trust within communities. When people trust that their belongings won't be taken without permission, the result is a harmonious environment where individuals feel secure and respected.
 - Wholesome mental kamma is the intention to not take what is not freely given, thereby unwholesome kamma is avoided.
 - The mind trains in the wholesome practice of generosity which is produced from loving-kindness and compassion rather than the unwholesome activity of coercion or theft.
 - The training in this precept gives the assurance that the possessions of others will not be stolen, their belongings are safe, thereby, the moral mind offers the gift of fearlessness to others.
 3. Refrain from sexual misconduct.
 - This precept is about pursuing wholesome marital fidelity in order to maintain harmonious relations based on trust and mutual respect. Respect for the boundaries and well-being, autonomy and dignity of individuals in the relationship, will result in healthy and consensual relationships.
 - Discipline of restraining the appetite for multiple partners and practicing mindfulness in relationships, aides in developing a sense of responsibility and accountability.
 - Avoiding unwholesome actions that are harmful, such as infidelity or exploiting others for personal gain will result in a mind at peace. By abstaining from unwholesome actions that lead to suffering for oneself and others, the mind grows in stability and concentration.
 - The precept contributes to a harmonious society that encourages trust and stability within communities by promoting healthy relationships and by reducing conflicts arising from misconduct.
 - The training in this precept gives the assurance that there will be no transgression on the spouse or partner, personal relationships are safe and secure thereby, the moral mind offers the gift of fearlessness to others.
 4. Refrain from lying.

- This precept is about cultivating truthfulness, which has the affect that the mind can trust itself and others can trust you. The practice of speaking the truth develops integrity and trust in relationships, the environment thus created is harmonious and supportive.
 - Lying leads to a tangled web of deceit, causing mental stress and confusion. Honesty promotes a clear conscience and a peaceful state of mind which supports mental health and tranquility.
 - Upholding truthfulness demonstrates respect for others by honoring their right to know and understand reality as it is. Truthfulness promotes communication that is sincere and authentic, helpful for developing meaningful relationships.
 - Lying creates unwholesome kamma which causes suffering in this life and future lives.
 - Truthfulness produces wholesome kamma which results in the liberation from suffering. Truthfulness is an essential ingredient of the path to nibbāna because it conditions the development of wisdom.
 - The training in this precept gives the assurance that others are confident that they will hear the truth from the moral mind: the speech is trustworthy and reliable, thereby, the moral mind offers the gift of fearlessness to others.
5. Refrain from intoxicating drinks and drugs which lead to carelessness. The actual translation of the training rule is to abstain from fermented and distilled intoxicants which are the basis for heedlessness.

An intoxicant is something that causes the mind to become excited or confused, and prevent mindfulness and control over speech and actions. The Vietnamese Zen Master, Thich Nhat Hanh taught this precept to include mindful consumption, that is, to abstain from unhealthy food, unhealthy entertainment and unhealthy conversations which are intoxicants to body and mind.

- This precept is about the avoidance of intoxicants in order to preserve the training in the above four precepts by maintaining mental clarity, heedfulness, mindfulness and awareness. The consumption of intoxicants may result in loss of wisdom and clarity of mind which will then result in disregarding the training in the above four precepts.
- Avoiding intoxicants results in clear-mindedness, which aids in understanding the mind's inner world and the external world, and results in making informed decisions with mindfulness in daily life.
- Intoxicants impair judgment and may lead to actions that cause harm or suffering. The avoidance of intoxicants will help prevent harm, both to oneself and to others, the clear and sharp mind promotes safety and peace.
- The avoidance of intoxicants will enable the mind to better focus on the training towards purification of mind. The precept supports the development of discipline and mindfulness, which are necessary conditions for the development of wisdom.
- Avoiding intoxicating substances will contribute to physical health. Substance abuse results in health issues, and by abstaining, the mind and body will experience a healthier life physically, mentally, and emotionally.
- This precept promotes responsible behavior and understanding of the consequences that unwholesome actions have on both the mind, relationships and the community. The practice of abstaining from intoxicants will produce a mind that is compassionate and responsible.
- The training in this precept gives the assurance that the crimes and transgressions that result from intoxication will not be committed by the moral mind, living beings are safe and secure, thereby, the gift of fearlessness is given to others.

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya

translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

8.39 (9) Streams

... "There are, bhikkhus, these five gifts, great gifts, primal, of long standing, traditional, ancient, unadulterated and never before adulterated, which are not being adulterated and will not be adulterated, not repudiated by wise ascetics and brahmins. What five?

(4) “Here, a noble disciple, having abandoned the destruction of life, abstains from the destruction of life. By abstaining from the destruction of life, the noble disciple gives to an immeasurable number of beings freedom from fear, enmity, and affliction. He himself in turn enjoys immeasurable freedom from fear, enmity, and affliction. This is the first gift, a great gift, primal, of long standing, traditional, ancient, unadulterated and never before adulterated, which is not being adulterated and will not be adulterated, not repudiated by wise ascetics and brahmins. This is the fourth stream of merit ... that leads to what is wished for, desired, and agreeable, to one’s welfare and happiness.

(5)–(8) “Again, a noble disciple, having abandoned the taking of what is not given, abstains from taking what is not given ... abstains from sexual misconduct ... abstains from false speech ... abstains from liquor, wine, and intoxicants, the basis for heedlessness. By abstaining from liquor, wine, and intoxicants, the basis for heedlessness, the noble disciple gives to an immeasurable number of beings freedom from fear, enmity, and affliction. He himself in turn enjoys immeasurable freedom from fear, enmity, and affliction. This is the fifth gift, a great gift, primal, of long standing, traditional, ancient, unadulterated and never before adulterated, which is not being adulterated and will not be adulterated, not repudiated by wise ascetics and brahmins. This is the eighth stream of merit ... that leads to what is wished for, desired, and agreeable, to one’s welfare and happiness.

“These, bhikkhus, are the eight streams of merit, streams of the wholesome, nutriments of happiness—heavenly, ripening in happiness, conducive to heaven—that lead to what is wished for, desired, and agreeable, to one’s welfare and happiness.”

When an individual, for one reason or another, find it challenging to train in all of the above five precepts then that individual should train in the precepts that can be accomplished, and form the intention to train in the remaining precepts when circumstances permit.

- To train in the precepts, the mind must form the intention to follow the precepts. What matters most is the sincerity of the mind’s intention and the commitment to improve in the training.
- Awareness of thoughts, speech, and actions is the condition that results in conscious choices that are aligned with the precepts.
- Start training at the level the mind is at morally. Practice the precepts that can be accomplished and gradually progress to the more challenging precepts.
- Rather than aiming for perfection immediately, set realistic and achievable goals to improve the minds’ observance of the precepts.
- Seek support from a Buddhist community to maintain and improve upon the training.
- Recognize that everyone faces challenges, and the practice is about growth and understanding. Therefore, be compassionate towards oneself and others.
- Investigate past speech and past actions in order to learn if they were in alignment with the precepts. Regular introspection helps in understanding where improvements are required.
- If avoiding intoxicants is challenging, then focus on reducing their consumption. Moderation is a starting point towards eventual abstinence.

VII. Eight Precepts (aṭṭhasīla) are the ethical guidelines observed during special religious occasions or a commitment to a more ascetic lifestyle. These training precepts are observed by postulants who have aspirations to fully ordain in the monastic Saṅgha.

1. Refrain from killing living creatures. See the above Five Precepts for an explanation.
2. Refrain from taking that which is not given. See the above Five Precepts for an explanation.
3. Refrain from any intentional sexual activity.
 - Abstaining from all sexual activity will free up mental and emotional energy, allowing the mind to concentrate on cultivating wholesome kamma, the perfections, and purification of mind.
 - Abstinence helps to maintain emotional stability by avoiding the complexities or emotional entanglements that may arise from intimate relationships.
 - Practicing abstinence will develop self-control, and strengthen willpower in different aspects of life.
 - Choosing to abstain removes the pressure associated with dating or seeking sexual relationships, allowing the mind to focus on the cultivation of virtues and wholesome mental faculties without distractions or obstructions.

4. Refrain from lying. See the above Five Precepts for an explanation.
 5. Refrain from intoxicating drinks and drugs which lead to carelessness. See the above Five Precepts for an explanation.
 6. Refrain from eating at inappropriate times.
 - Observing specific times for eating cultivates restraint, discipline and mindfulness. The mind cultivates mindfulness of actions, thoughts, and habits related to consumption, and a greater sense of self-control.
 - By eating at appropriate times, the mind trains in contentment and simplicity. This practice also encourages gratitude for the food, and reduces the tendency toward overindulgence or attachment and clinging to sensual pleasures. This training precept helps to cultivate the understanding of impermanence and non-attachment.
 - By refraining from eating at inappropriate times, there will be minimal disturbances to others who offer or prepare meals.
 7. Refrain from entertainment, beautification, and adornment.
 - This precept aides in cultivating renunciation (nekkhamma) and the pursuit of a simpler, and mindful way of life. The mind that is comfortable with simplicity will be peaceful and concentrated on purification in order to realize nibbāna.
 - Refraining from entertainment, beautification, and adornment encourages the mind to find contentment and happiness with refine states of mind rather than seeking external sources.
 - Avoiding engagement in entertainment, beautification, and adornment will help reduce attachment to material possessions and superficial desires. By letting go of these attachments, the mind will experience freedom and peace.
 - By abstaining from excessive attention on outward appearances or indulgence in entertainment, the mind will instead direct attention toward developing virtues, the ten perfections.
 - Avoiding entertainment and beautification will reduce distractions that can hinder progress in training the mind. The mind is then able to dedicate more time and energy to meditation, study, and contemplation.
 - Refraining from beautification and adornment promotes humility by letting go of the need to enhance the body's appearance for desires motivated by the selfish and conceited ego. The practice encourages acceptance of the body's appearance as it is in reality.
 8. Refrain from lying on a high or luxurious sleeping place.
 - By choosing not to sleep on high or luxurious beds, the mind practices humility and renunciation, letting go of attachments to comfort and extravagance. The precept cultivates contentment with simple and modest living conditions.
 - Refraining from luxurious sleeping places aides in reducing attachments to material possessions and comforts. The precept of letting go of attachments supports the development of inner virtues, the ten perfections. The precept also emphasizes moderation and simplicity, which results in contentment and tranquility.
 - Choosing simpler sleeping arrangements promotes a sense of equality among members of society. By forgoing opulent sleeping places, the mind accepts a lifestyle that is relatable to others, regardless of their social or economic status.
 - Sleeping on a less lavish bed encourages physical and mental restraint; the mind refrains from indulgence in physical comfort and supports a disciplined approach to daily living rooted in simplicity.
 - Sleeping on a modest bed encourages mindfulness and gratitude for basic necessities. The mind is aware of and grateful for the simple comforts that are available.
 - Renouncing luxurious sleeping arrangements allows the mind to concentrate on purification. The precept reduces distractions arising from concerns for physical comfort, enabling greater concentration during meditation and contemplation.
- VIII. Ten Precepts (dasasīla) are the ethical guidelines observed by novices who have aspirations to fully ordain in the monastic Saṅgha and are rooted in the monastic code known as the Vinaya. The Vinaya sets forth rules and guidelines for monastic conduct and is designed to support the training of mind and ethical behavior.

1. Refrain from killing living creatures. See the above Five Precepts for an explanation.
 2. Refrain from taking that which is not given. See the above Five Precepts for an explanation.
 3. Refrain from any intentional sexual activity. See the above Eight Precepts for an explanation.
 4. Refrain from lying. See the above Five Precepts for an explanation.
 5. Refrain from intoxicating drinks and drugs which lead to carelessness. See the above Five Precepts for an explanation.
 6. Refrain from eating at inappropriate times. See the above Eight Precepts for an explanation.
 7. Refrain from dancing, singing, music, and going to see entertainments. See the above Eight Precepts for an explanation.
 8. Refrain from wearing garlands, using perfumes, and beautifying the body with cosmetics. See the above Eight Precepts for an explanation.
 9. Refrain from lying on a high or luxurious sleeping place. See the above Eight Precepts for an explanation.
 10. Refrain from accepting gold and silver (money).
 - Attachment to material possessions and wealth are obstacles to training the mind.
 - This precept is a training in renunciation and detachment. Monastics train to detach themselves from material possessions, which develops freedom from worldly desires.
 - By relying on basic necessities provided by the lay community (food, clothing, shelter, and medicine), monastics embrace simplicity in their lifestyle, reducing distractions in order to focus on the training of mind.
 - Not being tied to wealth helps in developing an attitude of equanimity, treating all offerings equally and avoiding favoritism or attachment to specific donors.
 - This precept strengthens the relationship between the monastic community and lay supporters, creating a sense of interdependence and encourages the practice of generosity among laypeople.
 - By relinquishing attachment to wealth and possessions, monastics direct their energy and time towards meditation, study, contemplation, and training the mind in cultivating the ten perfections, that assists in progressing on the path to nibbāna.
- IX. Monastic precepts are defined in the Basket of Discipline (Vinaya Piṭaka). The Three Baskets (tripiṭaka) are the components of the Pāli Canon consisting of the following:
1. Basket of Discipline (Vinaya Piṭaka),
 2. Basket of Discourses (Sutta Piṭaka), and
 3. Basket of Higher Doctrine (Abhidhamma Piṭaka).
- The Basket of Discipline (Vinaya Piṭaka) outlines the rules and guidelines for monastics. The Vinaya Piṭaka consists of:
- Suttavibhaṅga: Pāṭimokkha and commentary.
The Pāṭimokkha defines 227 precepts held by fully ordained monks (bhikkhus) and 311 precepts held by fully ordained nuns (bhikkhunis). These rules cover various aspects of conduct, including rules regarding celibacy, proper speech, handling of material possessions, proper comportment, and regulations for communal living.
 - Khandhaka: gives numerous supplementary rules on various topics.
 - Parivāra: analyses of rules.
- The Perfection of Virtue (sīla pāramī) is balanced and assisted by the other perfections.
- Perfection of Virtue is balanced by the Perfection of Effort (vīrya pāramī), as it takes effort and diligence (appamāda) to maintain moral conduct consistently.
For example, a mind that abstains from unwholesome actions might encounter challenges or temptations that could compromise ethical behavior. The virtue of effort offers the determination needed to resist these temptations, thereby maintaining the integrity of virtuous conduct.
 - Perfection of Virtue is balanced by the Perfection of Wisdom (paññā pāramī), as wisdom provides the understanding of the causes and consequences of actions, allowing for skillful application of virtue. Without wisdom, the training in virtue will become rigid and dogmatic, mere rule-following, devoid of insight and motivation. Wisdom illuminates the reasons behind ethical conduct, allowing the mind to cultivate genuine virtue.

There is a mutual relationship between wisdom and virtue. Where there is wisdom there is virtue and where there is virtue there is wisdom, wisdom purifies virtue and virtue purifies wisdom. In addition, virtue forms the foundation for mental development (bhāvanā) and insight (vipassanā).

- Perfection of Virtue is balanced by the Perfection of Loving-kindness (mettā pāramī), as loving-kindness provides the emotional foundation for virtue. Loving-kindness cultivates compassion (karunā), understanding (paññā), and goodwill towards all beings, motivating the mind to act ethically out of a genuine concern for others' well-being; and prevents virtue from becoming self-righteous or judgmental. Loving-kindness also encourages the understanding of interconnectedness and reinforces the wholesome consequences of virtuous actions.
- Perfection of Virtue is balanced by the Perfection of Equanimity (upekkhā pāramī), as equanimity maintains emotional balance in the face of life's inevitable challenges. Equanimity prevents virtue from becoming rigid or judgmental, allowing the mind to respond to situations with clarity and composure, even when faced with difficult choices or temptations. Equanimity also encourages a balanced and accepting attitude towards all experiences, preventing virtue from being swayed by attachment or aversion.
- Perfection of Virtue is balanced by the Perfection of Patience (khanti pāramī), as patience is necessary for persevering on the path of virtue. Patience enables the mind to withstand obstacles, setbacks, and criticism without losing commitment to ethical conduct. Patience allows virtue to endure even in challenging circumstances, promoting unwavering dedication to moral principles.
- Perfection of Virtue is balanced by the Perfection of Generosity (dāna pāramī), as generosity complements virtue by encouraging the giving of one's time, resources, and skills in order to benefit others. This outward expression of virtue fosters interconnectedness and reinforces the wholesome kammic consequences of ethical actions. Generosity also helps cultivate detachment from material possessions, a key aspect of virtue.

Morality is part of the Threefold Training (sikkhā) and a division of the Noble Eightfold Path (ariya aṭṭhaṅgika magga) that aims at purifying the mind of defilements (kilesa) in order to realize nibbāna. The Threefold Training and the three divisions of the Noble Eightfold Path are:

1. morality (sīla),
2. concentration (samādhi), and
3. wisdom (paññā).

Ethical conduct may also be described as the training of body and mind in the Ten Courses of Wholesome Kamma (kusalakammaṭṭha), which are listed as follows:

Bodily Actions

1. abstain from killing living beings (pāṇātipātā veramaṇī);
2. abstain from taking what is not given (adinnādānā veramaṇī);
3. abstain from wrong conduct in regard to sense pleasures - sexual desires, intoxicants, gambling, etc. (kāmesu micchācārā veramaṇī);

Verbal Actions

4. abstain from false speech (musāvādā veramaṇī);
5. abstain from slanderous, malicious, tale bearing speech (pisuṇāya vacāya veramaṇī);
6. abstain from harsh speech (pharusāya vācāya veramaṇī);
7. abstain from idle chatter, gossiping, useless speech (samphappalāpā veramaṇī);

Mental Actions

8. free from covetousness (anabhijjhā);
9. free from ill will (abyāpāda); and
10. hold right views, free from wrong views (sammādiṭṭhi).

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya

translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

10.176 (10) Cunda

... "Impurity by body, Cunda, is threefold. Impurity by speech is fourfold. Impurity by mind is threefold.

"And how, Cunda, is impurity by body threefold?"

(1) "Here, someone destroys life. He is murderous, bloody-handed, given to blows and violence, merciless to living beings.

(2) "He takes what is not given. He steals the wealth and property of others in the village or forest.

(3) "He engages in sexual misconduct. He has sexual relations with women who are protected by their mother, father, mother and father, brother, sister, or relatives; who are protected by their Dhamma; who have a husband; whose violation entails a penalty; or even with one already engaged.2167

"It is in this way that impurity by body is threefold.

"And how, Cunda, is impurity by speech fourfold?

(4) "Here, someone speaks falsehood. If he is summoned to a council, to an assembly, to his relatives' presence, to his guild, or to the court, and questioned as a witness thus: 'So, good man, tell what you know,' then, not knowing, he says, 'I know,' or knowing, he says, 'I do not know'; not seeing, he says, 'I see,' or seeing, he says, 'I do not see.' Thus he consciously speaks falsehood for his own ends, or for another's ends, or for some trifling worldly end.

(5) "He speaks divisively. Having heard something here, he repeats it elsewhere in order to divide [those people] from these; or having heard something elsewhere, he repeats it to these people in order to divide [them] from those. Thus he is one who divides those who are united, a creator of divisions, one who enjoys factions, rejoices in factions, delights in factions, a speaker of words that create factions.

(6) "He speaks harshly. He utters such words as are rough, hard, hurtful to others, offensive to others, bordering on anger, un conducive to concentration.

(7) "He indulges in idle chatter. He speaks at an improper time, speaks falsely, speaks what is unbeneficial, speaks contrary to the Dhamma and the discipline; at an improper time he speaks such words as are worthless, unreasonable, rambling, and unbeneficial.

"It is in this way that impurity by speech is fourfold. "And how, Cunda, is impurity by mind threefold?

(8) "Here, someone is full of longing. He longs for the wealth and property of others thus: 'Oh, may what belongs to another be mine!'

(9) "He has a mind of ill will and intentions of hate thus: 'May these beings be slain, slaughtered, cut off, destroyed, or annihilated!'

(10) "He holds wrong view and has an incorrect perspective thus: 'There is nothing given, nothing sacrificed, nothing offered; there is no fruit or result of good and bad actions; there is no this world, no other world; there is no mother, no father; there are no beings spontaneously reborn; there are in the world no ascetics and brahmins of right conduct and right practice who, having realized this world and the other world for themselves by direct knowledge, make them known to others.'

"It is in this way that impurity by mind is threefold.

"These, Cunda, are the ten courses of unwholesome kamma.

Moral restraint is one of the Three Pillars of Dhamma, necessary practices which support the path to nibbāna. The Three Pillars of Dhamma or Grounds for Making Merit (puñña kiriya vatthu) are:

1. Generosity (dāna),
2. Moral restraint (sīla), and
3. Meditation (bhāvanā).

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

8.36 (6) Activity

"Bhikkhus, there are these three bases of meritorious activity. What three? The basis of meritorious activity consisting in giving; the basis of meritorious activity consisting in virtuous behavior; and the basis of meritorious activity consisting in meditative development.

The Buddha frequently taught the Dhamma to lay people as a Gradual Discourse (anupubbikathā). Talk on virtue (sīla kathā) is the second subject of the instruction because it is a necessary condition for training the mind towards nibbāna. The Gradual Discourse is as follows:

1. talk on giving (dāna kathā),
2. talk on virtue (sīla kathā),
3. talk on heavenly pleasures (sagga kathā),
4. talk on the dangers of sensual pleasure (kāmānaṃ ādīnava kathā),
5. talk on the benefits of renunciation (nekkhamma kathā), and
6. talk on The Four Noble Truths (cattāri ariya-saccāni kathā).

A discussion on Progressive Instruction and Gradual Training is found in the June 2023 Newsletter.

In the political sphere, moral restraint occurs as the second item in a list of Ten Virtues of the Ruler (dasavidha-rājadhamma). The word 'Ruler' in The Ten Virtues of the Ruler is replaced today by the term 'Government.' The Ten Virtues of the Ruler, therefore apply today to all those in the government, such as the president, ministers, political leaders, legislative and administrative officers, etc. The Ten Virtues of the Ruler (dasavidha-rājadhamma) are:

1. generosity (dāna),
2. moral restraint (sīla),
3. altruism (pariccāga),
4. honesty (ājjava),
5. gentleness (maddava),
6. self control (tapa),
7. non-anger (akkodha),
8. non-violence (ahiṃsā),
9. patience (khanti), and
10. uprightness (avirodhana).

Moral restraint is the second item of the Seven Kinds of Wealth (satta dhana), indicating that people's economic life ought to be based on morality. The Seven Kinds of Wealth (satta dhana) are:

- (1) faith (saddhā dhana),
- (2) virtuous behavior (sīla dhana),
- (3) moral shame (hiri dhana),
- (4) moral dread (ottappa dhana),
- (5) learning (suta dhana),
- (6) generosity (cāga dhana), and
- (7) wisdom (paññā dhana).

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

6 (6) Wealth in Detail

"Bhikkhus, there are these seven kinds of wealth. What seven? The wealth of faith, the wealth of virtuous behavior, the wealth of moral shame, the wealth of moral dread, the wealth of learning, the wealth of generosity, and the wealth of wisdom.

(1) "And what, bhikkhus, is the wealth of faith? Here, a noble disciple is endowed with faith. He places faith in the enlightenment of the Tathāgata thus: 'The Blessed One is an arahant ... the Enlightened One, the Blessed One.' This is called the wealth of faith.

(2) "And what is the wealth of virtuous behavior? Here, a noble disciple abstains from the destruction of life, abstains from taking what is not given, abstains from sexual misconduct, abstains from false speech, abstains from liquor, wine, and intoxicants, the basis for heedlessness. This is called the wealth of virtuous behavior.

(3) "And what is the wealth of moral shame? Here, a noble disciple has a sense of moral shame; he is ashamed of bodily, verbal, and mental misconduct; he is ashamed of acquiring bad, unwholesome qualities. This is called the wealth of moral shame.

(4) "And what is the wealth of moral dread? Here, a noble disciple dreads wrongdoing; he dreads bodily, verbal, and mental misconduct; he dreads acquiring bad, unwholesome qualities. This is called the wealth of moral dread.

(5) “And what is the wealth of learning? Here, a noble disciple has learned much, remembers what he has learned, and accumulates what he has learned. Those teachings that are good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, with the right meaning and phrasing, which proclaim the perfectly complete and pure spiritual life—such teachings as these he has learned much of, retained in mind, recited verbally, mentally investigated, and penetrated well by view. This is called the wealth of learning.

(6) “And what is the wealth of generosity? Here, a noble disciple dwells at home with a heart devoid of the stain of miserliness, freely generous, openhanded, delighting in relinquishment, one devoted to charity, delighting in giving and sharing. This is called the wealth of generosity.

(7) “And what is the wealth of wisdom? Here, a noble disciple is wise; he possesses the wisdom that discerns arising and passing away, which is noble and penetrative and leads to the complete destruction of suffering. This is called the wealth of wisdom.

“These, bhikkhus, are the seven kinds of wealth.”

The following sutta excerpts are teachings that further illustrate the importance of virtuous behavior.

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

10.1 (1) What Purpose?

... (1) “Bhante, what is the purpose and benefit of wholesome virtuous behavior?”

(2) “Ānanda, the purpose and benefit of wholesome virtuous behavior is non-regret.”

(3) “And what, Bhante, is the purpose and benefit of non-regret?”

“The purpose and benefit of non-regret is joy.”

(4) “And what, Bhante, is the purpose and benefit of joy?”

“The purpose and benefit of joy is rapture.”

(5) “And what, Bhante, is the purpose and benefit of rapture?”

“The purpose and benefit of rapture is tranquility.”

(6) “And what, Bhante, is the purpose and benefit of tranquility?”

“The purpose and benefit of tranquility is pleasure.”

(7) “And what, Bhante, is the purpose and benefit of pleasure?”

“The purpose and benefit of pleasure is concentration.”

(8) “And what, Bhante, is the purpose and benefit of concentration?”

“The purpose and benefit of concentration is the knowledge and vision of things as they really are.”

(9) “And what, Bhante, is the purpose and benefit of the knowledge and vision of things as they really are?”

“The purpose and benefit of the knowledge and vision of things as they really are is disenchantment and dispassion.”

(10) “And what, Bhante, is the purpose and benefit of disenchantment and dispassion?”

“The purpose and benefit of disenchantment and dispassion is the knowledge and vision of liberation.

“... Thus, Ānanda, wholesome virtuous behavior progressively leads to the foremost.”

The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Digha Nikaya translated by Maurice O’C. Walshe

16 Mahāparinibbāna Sutta: The Great Passing

1.24. ‘And, householders, there are these five advantages to one of good morality and of success in morality. What are they? In the first place, through careful attention to his affairs he gains much wealth. In the second place, he gets a good reputation for morality and good conduct. In the third place, whatever assembly he approaches, whether of Khattiyas, Brahmins, householders or ascetics, he does so with confidence and assurance. In the fourth place, he dies unconfused. In the fifth place, after death, at the breaking-up of the body, he arises in a good place, a heavenly world. These are the five advantages to one of good morality, and of success in morality.’

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

11.11 (1) Mahānāma (1)

... (9) "Again, Mahānāma, you should recollect your own virtuous behavior as unbroken, flawless, unblemished, unblotched, freeing, praised by the wise, ungrasped, leading to concentration. When a noble disciple recollects his virtuous behavior, on that occasion his mind is not obsessed by lust, hatred, or delusion; on that occasion his mind is simply straight, based on virtuous behavior. A noble disciple whose mind is straight gains inspiration in the meaning, gains inspiration in the Dhamma, gains joy connected with the Dhamma. When he is joyful, rapture arises. For one with a rapturous mind, the body becomes tranquil. One tranquil in body feels pleasure. For one feeling pleasure, the mind becomes concentrated. This is called a noble disciple who dwells in balance amid an unbalanced population, who dwells unafflicted amid an afflicted population. As one who has entered the stream of the Dhamma, he develops recollection of virtuous behavior.

March 2024 - Perfection of Renunciation (nekkhamma pāramī)

The perfections (pāramīs) are a set of ten virtues that are cultivated in order to progress on the path to nibbāna, liberation from suffering (dukkha). An overview of the Ten Perfections are presented in the January 2024 Newsletter: The Perfection of Giving (dāna pāramī). The Ten Perfections (pāramīs) are:

1. Giving (dāna pāramī),
2. Virtue (sīla pāramī),
3. Renunciation (nekkhamma pāramī),
4. Wisdom (paññā pāramī),
5. Energy (vīrya pāramī),
6. Patience (khanti pāramī),
7. Truthfulness (saccā pāramī),
8. Determination (adhiṭṭhāna pāramī),
9. Loving-Kindness (mettā pāramī), and
10. Equanimity (upekkhā pāramī).

The subject of this newsletter is on the Perfection of Renunciation (nekkhamma pāramī). The Perfection of Giving (dāna pāramī) is discussed in the January 2024 Newsletter and the Perfection of Virtue (sīla pāramī) is discussed in the February 2024 Newsletter. The next seven newsletters will discuss the remaining perfections.

Renunciation is the mind's wholesome intention to reject, disown or relinquish something unwholesome. The skilled and wholesome mind is committed to the training that leads to liberation from attachment to sensual desires and cravings because attachment to possessions and sensual pleasures result in suffering (dukkha) and detachment from them will result in freedom from suffering. Renunciation is letting go of whatever keeps the mind bound by the defilements (kilesa) of ignorance (avijjā), greed (lobha), and hatred (dosā); and relinquishes that which continues to cause suffering and existence in the cycle of birth, ageing, sickness, death, and rebirth (saṃsāra).

All things in the world, whether they be material or immaterial, are impermanent (anicca) and the mind that clings to or identifies with anything that is impermanent will suffer due to the item's changing, decaying and disappearing nature. Material items are the sense organs, objects of the senses and the associated pleasures; these items are impermanent, they are born, change and disappear. Immaterial items are views, concepts, opinions, thoughts, emotions, feelings, and perceptions; these items are also impermanent, they are born, change and disappear. The virtue of renunciation is cultivated by not clinging to or identifying with any material or immaterial item. Freedom from craving and clinging to that which is impermanent results in liberation from suffering and the realization of nibbāna.

Due to the impermanent nature of sensual pleasures and also due to the unwholesome mind's addiction to pleasures, the mind is never satisfied with available pleasures and is constantly searching for more and more pleasures. The sense of lack, not having enough pleasure causes the mind to perpetually search for greater pleasures. The temporary pleasurable experiences results in the urge to seek even more pleasures, and to try in vain to possess and protect those experiences. The experience of lack and fear of loss drives the mind to madness and suffers greatly. Renunciation is the antidote to the madness.

In addition to renouncing the addiction to sensual pleasures, the wholesome mind also renounces the concept of a self or ego which results in liberating wisdom that uproots the defilements. The Buddha defined a self as that which is permanent and not impermanent, and a self must also have complete control and power over that which is perceived to be a self. The teaching of not-self (anattā) is the understanding that the personality is composed of the Five Clinging Aggregates which are all impermanent and there is no complete control and power over the aggregates, therefore the aggregates are not a self. The Five Clinging Aggregates (pañcupādānakkhandhā) are the components that make up the experience of self and the world.

1. Material form (rūpa khandha) is the physical aspect of existence, the body and the external world perceived through the senses.
2. Feeling (vedanā khandha) is the sensations that are experienced in response to sensual stimuli. Feelings can be pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral.
3. Perception (saññā khandha) is recognition and labeling of the sense objects that also include mental phenomena. Perception identifies and categorizes objects based on past knowledge and conditioning.
4. Mental formations (saṅkhāra khandha) include thoughts, emotions, volitions, and any mental construct. Mental formations encompasses everything that arises in the mind, including desires, intentions, and reactions.
5. Sense consciousness (viññāṇa khandha) is the awareness or cognizance of sensory experiences.

There are three levels of renunciation.

1. External renunciation is a mind that lets go of, does not hold on to, objects of the senses, sensual pleasures, and possessions.
2. Internal renunciation is a mind free of craving, clinging, attachment and identification with external sense objects.
3. Liberating renunciation is a mind free of defilements and the wrong view (micchādiṭṭhi) related to the personality or ego as being a self, this wisdom (paññā) is developed through insight meditation (vipassanā). The mind that is in the process of purification of defilements will hold onto right views (sammādiṭṭhi) but not wrong views; right views are the raft that takes the mind across the river of saṃsāra, once on the other side, the raft (right views) is also let go of.

The practice of renunciation is not to deny the necessities for physical and emotional survival but rather to develop contentment and non-attachment towards the basic necessities. The cultivation of contentment is being satisfied with the possessions that one already has, and the understanding that peace and happiness doesn't come from accumulating material possessions or chasing after sensual pleasures. A simple and minimalist lifestyle may help in developing contentment with basic needs.

The development of mental and emotional detachment is the process of observing thoughts and emotions (contents of consciousness) without getting entangled in them through understanding their impermanent and not-self nature. Contents of consciousness, the Five Aggregates, are like clouds passing through the mind. When the clouds (contents) settle down, the radiant and luminosity of the sun (consciousness) will be able to appear without obstruction.

Sincerity and committing to the training of mind for the liberation from suffering is to prioritize the development of virtues defined by the Ten Perfections (pāramī) over material gain, fame, praise or sensual pleasures. By perfecting the virtue of renunciation, the mind grows in freedom from the cycle of suffering (saṃsāra) by gradually reducing the influence of craving, clinging and attachments. The perfection of renunciation is a condition that develops a mind that is tranquil, compassionate, and concentrated on the goal of liberation (nibbāna).

Renunciation is one of the three kinds of Right Intention (sammā-saṅkappa), the second link of the Noble Eightfold Path. Right Intention are wholesome thoughts, defined in negative terms:

1. thoughts of renunciation and detachments to sense pleasures (nekkhamma vitakka),
2. thoughts of non-ill will (abyāpāda vitakka), and
3. thoughts of non-cruelty (avihiṃsā vitakka).

Renunciation leads naturally to generosity, Right Intention defined in positive terms:

1. thoughts of generosity (dāna vitakka),
2. thoughts of loving-kindness (metta vitakka), wishing others well and
3. thoughts of providing protection to living beings and radiating compassion (karunā vitakka).

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

141 Saccavibhanga Sutta: The Exposition of the Truths

... 25. "And what, friends, is right intention? Intention of renunciation, intention of non-ill will, and intention of non-cruelty — this is called right intention.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

19 Dvedhāvitakka Sutta

... 3. "As I abided thus, diligent, ardent, and resolute, a thought of sensual desire arose in me. I understood thus: 'This thought of sensual desire has arisen in me. This leads to my own affliction, to others' affliction, and to the affliction of both; it obstructs wisdom, causes difficulties, and leads away from Nibbāna.' When I considered: 'This leads to my own affliction,' it subsided in me; when I considered: 'This leads to others' affliction,' it subsided in me; when I considered: 'This leads to the affliction of both,' it subsided in me; when I considered: 'This obstructs wisdom, causes difficulties, and leads away from Nibbāna,' it subsided in me. Whenever a thought of sensual desire arose in me, I abandoned it, removed it, did away with it.

... 6. "Bhikkhus, whatever a bhikkhu frequently thinks and ponders upon, that will become the inclination of his mind. If he frequently thinks and ponders upon thoughts of sensual desire, he has abandoned the thought of renunciation to cultivate the thought of sensual desire, and then his mind inclines to thoughts of sensual desire. If he frequently thinks and ponders upon thoughts of ill will... upon thoughts of cruelty, he has abandoned the thought of non-cruelty to cultivate the thought of cruelty, and then his mind inclines to thoughts of cruelty.

The Perfection of Renunciation (nekkhamma pāramī) is balanced and assisted by the other perfections.

- Renunciation (nekkhamma) is balanced by the perfection of patience (khanti) because patience allows the mind to endure and manage the challenges that arise when relinquishing attachments.
- Selflessness and letting go of impermanent phenomena, supreme states of the Noble Ones, are developed with the renunciation of attachments and the Perfection of Generosity (dāna pāramī). Renunciation is letting go and generosity is sharing, together they form a skill to tame the ignorant ego into submission, and to cultivate selflessness and not-self. The motivation in renunciation is to let go with nothing expected in return is also necessary to perfect generosity.
- Renunciation must be guided by the Perfection of Wisdom (paññā pāramī) in order to avoid aversion to the world. Renunciation is balanced with wisdom through the understanding that the wholesome mind can engage with the world without attachment or identification.

Without wisdom, renunciation may be driven by negative emotions like fear, frustration, or disappointment. Escape mentality is to push away the world without understanding the dangers inherent in the world. Aversion creates internal conflict, making renunciation difficult to maintain in the long run. The mind that lacks sufficient wisdom craves what it repels, leading to frustration and potential relapse.

- An unwise mind will reject all sensual pleasures, possessions, or relationships and try to exist in total isolation due to the wrong view that happiness and peace will be experienced when there is absolutely no relationship with anything or anyone; such a mind is paranoid and has a fear of the world. The wise mind will instead engage in the world with wisdom, partakes of sensual pleasures, possessions and relationships without craving, attachment, grasping, holding on or identifying with those items.

- An unwise mind that is experiencing challenges of daily life, stress, conflicts, and disappointments will attempt to escape from the suffering by withdrawing through radical renunciation and not engaging with life. The wise mind engages with both uncomfortable and comfortable feelings with the understanding that they arise, change and fall away due to impermanent conditions, and the wise mind does not hold onto or identify with any feelings.

- An unwise mind that is disappointed with failure to gain material possessions, fame or recognition will renounce the world in order to avoid depression associated with the loss of identifying with those items and the deterioration of the ego. The wise mind does not identify with material possessions, fame or recognition and is not disappointed when they fail to arise or when they disappear.

- The unwise mind does not understand the gradual process that is inherent of the path towards liberation from suffering, nibbāna, and will renounce the world too quickly and to a degree that results in an unhealthy and unbalanced mind, which is an obstacle in transversing the path. The wise mind

understands the training to be gradual, and knows when and what to renounce; the trainee will consult with spiritual friends who have experience with renunciation.

- The unwise mind will attempt to practice extreme asceticism and renounce the body, jeopardizing physical survival is a wrong understanding of renunciation. The wise mind understands the Buddha's teaching of the Middle Way and not train with extreme asceticism nor indulge in sensual gratification. The Middle Way is to balance renunciation with engagement in the world.

- The unwise mind that is seeking radical transformation or a dramatic break from their past, a desire for a profound shift in identity and lifestyle, will practice extreme renunciation. The wise mind rests in the understanding of not-self, stillness, silence, and peace, and does not seek any identity.

Renunciation is a conscious choice, releasing the mind from the grip of craving and clinging, resulting in freedom and liberation, based on understanding the impermanence and unsatisfactoriness of worldly phenomena, without denying and punishing the mind or withdrawing from the world.

With wisdom, the mind develops the Perfection of Equanimity (*upekkhā pāramī*), an evenness of mind towards pleasant and unpleasant experiences. Aversion gives way to understanding and compassion for the inevitable suffering inherent in existence.

The presence of wisdom enables the mind to understand the benefits of renunciation and also to know what, when and how to let go. The world is not seen as an enemy, but an opportunity for practicing wisdom and compassion. Cultivating wisdom is the guiding light for renunciation: wisdom transforms renunciation from a negative act of avoidance into a positive path towards liberation.

The following sutta passages are some teachings by the Buddha related to renunciation.

The Dhammapada: The Buddha's Path of Wisdom translated by Acharya Buddhārakkhita

181. Those wise ones who are devoted to meditation and who delight in the calm of renunciation – such ones, Supreme Buddhas, even the gods hold dear.

290. If by renouncing a lesser happiness one may realize a greater happiness, let the wise man renounce the lesser, having regard for the greater happiness.

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

6.63 (9) Penetrative

... (1) "When it was said: 'Sensual pleasures should be understood; the source and origin of sensual pleasures should be understood; the diversity of sensual pleasures should be understood; the result of sensual pleasures should be understood; the cessation of sensual pleasures should be understood; the way leading to the cessation of sensual pleasures should be understood,' for what reason was this said?

"There are, bhikkhus, these five objects of sensual pleasure: forms cognizable by the eye that are wished for, desired, agreeable, pleasing, connected with sensual pleasure, tantalizing; sounds cognizable by the ear ... odors cognizable by the nose ... tastes cognizable by the tongue ... tactile objects cognizable by the body that are wished for, desired, agreeable, pleasing, connected with sensual pleasure, tantalizing. However, these are not sensual pleasures; in the Noble One's discipline, these are called 'objects of sensual pleasure.' A person's sensual pleasure is lustful intention.

"They are not sensual pleasures, the pretty things in the world:

a person's sensual pleasure is lustful intention;
the pretty things remain just as they are in the world,
but the wise remove the desire for them.

"And what, bhikkhus, is the source and origin of sensual pleasures? Contact is their source and origin.

"And what is the diversity of sensual pleasures? Sensual desire for forms is one thing, sensual desire for sounds is another, sensual desire for odors still another, sensual desire for tastes still another, and sensual desire for tactile objects still another. This is called the diversity of sensual pleasures.

“And what is the result of sensual pleasures? One produces an individual existence that corresponds with whatever [sense pleasures] one desires and which may be the consequence either of merit or demerit.¹⁴¹³ This is called the result of sensual pleasures.

“And what is the cessation of sensual pleasures? With the cessation of contact there is cessation of sensual pleasures.

“This noble eightfold path is the way leading to the cessation of sensual pleasures, namely, right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.

“When, bhikkhus, a noble disciple thus understands sensual pleasures, the source and origin of sensual pleasures, the diversity of sensual pleasures, the result of sensual pleasures, the cessation of sensual pleasures, and the way leading to the cessation of sensual pleasures, he understands this penetrative spiritual life to be the cessation of sensual pleasures.

“When it was said: ‘Sensual pleasures should be understood ... the way leading to the cessation of sensual pleasures should be understood,’ it is because of this that this was said.

Note:1413: Mp: “One desiring celestial sensual pleasures, by fulfilling good conduct, is reborn in the deva world [and acquires] an individual existence that is a consequence of merit. By engaging in misconduct, one is reborn in the plane of misery [and acquires] an individual existence that is a consequence of demerit.”

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

9.41 (10) Tapussa

... (1) “Before my enlightenment, while I was just a bodhisatta, not yet fully enlightened, it occurred to me too: ‘Good is renunciation, good is solitude.’ Yet my mind did not launch out upon renunciation and become placid, settled, and liberated in it, though I saw it as peaceful. It occurred to me: ‘Why is it that my mind does not launch out upon renunciation and become placid, settled, and liberated in it, though I see it as peaceful?’ Then it occurred to me: ‘I have not seen the danger in sensual pleasures and have not cultivated that [insight]; I have not achieved the benefit in renunciation and have not pursued it. Therefore my mind does not launch out upon renunciation and become placid, settled, and liberated in it, though I see it as peaceful.’

“Then, Ānanda, it occurred to me: ‘If, having seen the danger in sensual pleasures, I would cultivate that [insight], and if, having achieved the benefit in renunciation, I would pursue it, it is then possible that my mind would launch out upon renunciation and become placid, settled, and liberated in it, since I see it as peaceful.’ Sometime later, having seen the danger in sensual pleasures, I cultivated that [insight], and having achieved the benefit in renunciation, I pursued it. My mind then launched out upon renunciation and became placid, settled, and liberated in it, since I saw it as peaceful.

“Sometime later, Ānanda, secluded from sensual pleasures ... I entered and dwelled in the first jhāna. While I was dwelling in this state, perception and attention accompanied by sensuality occurred in me and I felt it as an affliction. Just as pain might arise for one feeling pleasure only to afflict him, so too, when perception and attention accompanied by sensuality occurred in me, I felt it as an affliction.

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

5.200 (10) Escape

... (1) “Here, when a bhikkhu is attending to sensual pleasures, his mind does not launch out upon them, and become placid, settled, and focused on them. But when he is attending to renunciation, his mind launches out upon it and becomes placid, settled, and focused on it. His mind is well departed, well developed, well emerged, well liberated, and well detached from sensual pleasures. And he is freed from those taints, distressful and feverish, that arise with sensual pleasures as condition. He does not feel that kind of feeling. This is declared to be the escape from sensual pleasures.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

14 Cūḷadukkhakkhandha Sutta: The Shorter Discourse on the Mass of Suffering

... 4. “Even though a noble disciple has seen clearly as it actually is with proper wisdom that sensual pleasures provide little gratification, much suffering and despair, and that the danger in them is still more, as long as he still does not attain to the rapture and pleasure that are apart from sensual pleasures, apart from unwholesome states, or to something more peaceful than that, he may still be attracted to sensual pleasures.²⁰⁸ But when a noble disciple has seen clearly as it actually is with proper wisdom that sensual pleasures provide little gratification, much suffering and despair, and that the danger in them is still more, and he attains to the rapture and pleasure that are apart from sensual pleasures, apart from unwholesome states, or to something more peaceful than that, then he is no longer attracted to sensual pleasures.

Note 208: The “rapture and pleasure that are apart from sensual pleasures” are the rapture and pleasure pertaining to the first and second jhānas; the states “more peaceful than that” are the higher jhānas. From this passage it seems that a disciple may attain even to the second path and fruit without possessing mundane jhāna.

The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

55.37 (7) Mahānāma

... “Here, Mahānāma, a lay follower dwells at home with a mind devoid of the stain of stinginess, freely generous, open-handed, delighting in relinquishment, one devoted to charity, delighting in giving and sharing. In that way a lay follower is accomplished in generosity.”

April 2024 - Perfection of Wisdom (paññā pāramī)

The perfections (pāramīs) are a set of ten virtues that are cultivated in order to progress on the path to nibbāna, liberation from suffering (dukkha). An overview of the Ten Perfections are presented in the January 2024 Newsletter: The Perfection of Giving (dāna pāramī). The Ten Perfections (pāramīs) are:

1. Giving (dāna pāramī),
2. Virtue (sīla pāramī),
3. Renunciation (nekkhamma pāramī),
4. Wisdom (paññā pāramī),
5. Energy (vīrya pāramī),
6. Patience (khanti pāramī),
7. Truthfulness (saccā pāramī),
8. Determination (adhiṭṭhāna pāramī),
9. Loving-Kindness (mettā pāramī), and
10. Equanimity (upekkhā pāramī).

The subject of this newsletter is on the Perfection of Wisdom (paññā pāramī). The Perfection of Giving (dāna pāramī) is discussed in the January 2024 Newsletter, the Perfection of Virtue (sīla pāramī) is discussed in the February 2024 Newsletter, and the Perfection of Renunciation (nekkhamma pāramī) is discussed in the March 2024 Newsletter. The next six newsletters will discuss the remaining perfections.

Wisdom is the understanding of reality as taught in the Noble Four Truths (ariya catusacca). The Noble Truths are statements concerning the nature of existence and the path to liberation from suffering.

4. The Noble Truth of Suffering (dukkha) acknowledges the existence of suffering, the reality of dissatisfaction and unsatisfactoriness in the cycle of birth, aging, sickness, death and rebirth (saṃsāra). This truth is discussed in the February 2023 Newsletter.
5. The Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering (samudaya) is craving (taṇhā), attachment and identification with that which is impermanent. This truth is discussed in the March 2023 Newsletter.
6. The Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering (nirodha) is the elimination of the causes for suffering and the result is nibbāna, the escape from saṃsāra. This truth is discussed in the April 2023 Newsletter.
7. The Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering (magga) is training in the Noble Eightfold Path (ariya aṭṭhaṅgika magga) that leads to nibbāna. This truth is discussed in the May 2023 Newsletter.

The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

48.10 (10) Analysis (2)

“And what, bhikkhus, is the faculty of wisdom? Here, bhikkhus, the noble disciple is wise; he possesses wisdom directed to arising and passing away, which is noble and penetrative, leading to the complete destruction of suffering. He understands as it really is: ‘This is suffering.’ He understands as it really is: ‘This is the origin of suffering.’ He understands as it really is: ‘This is the cessation of suffering.’ He understands as it really is: ‘This is the way leading to the cessation of suffering.’ This is called the faculty of wisdom.

Wisdom is developed by insight (vipassanā) and is cultivated with observations and investigations of the arising and passing away of the Five Aggregates (pañca khandhā) and the conditional nature of the world.

The Five Aggregates are the components of the personality or ego:

1. material form (rūpa khandha),
2. mental formations (saṅkhāra khandha),
3. perceptions (saññā khandha),

4. feelings (vedanā khandha), and
5. sense consciousness (viññāṇa khandha).

The conditional nature of the world refers to each and every object is composed of parts that are dependent on each other, where the behavior of each part influences the functioning of the whole. The understanding that everything is interconnected in the world is a fundamental principle of wisdom.

The components of the personality and the conditional nature of the world are investigated in accordance to the Three Characteristics of Existence (tilakkhaṇa) while developing wisdom. The Three Characteristics of Existence are:

1. impermanence (anicca),
2. suffering (dukkha), and the
3. absence of a permanent self (anatta).

See the October 2023 Newsletter for a discussion on the cultivation of insight.

The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

22.45 (3) Impermanent (1)

At Sāvattihī. “Bhikkhus, form is impermanent. What is impermanent is suffering. What is suffering is nonself. What is nonself should be seen as it really is with correct wisdom thus: ‘This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.’ When one sees this thus as it really is with correct wisdom, the mind becomes dispassionate and is liberated from the taints by nonclinging.

“Feeling is impermanent.... Perception is impermanent.... Volitional formations are impermanent.... Consciousness is impermanent. What is impermanent is suffering. What is suffering is nonself. What is nonself should be seen as it really is with correct wisdom thus: ‘This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.’ When one sees this thus as it really is with correct wisdom, the mind becomes dispassionate and is liberated from the taints by nonclinging.

“If, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu’s mind has become dispassionate towards the form element, it is liberated from the taints by nonclinging. If his mind has become dispassionate towards the feeling element ... towards the perception element ... towards the volitional formations element ... towards the consciousness element, it is liberated from the taints by nonclinging.

“By being liberated, it is steady; by being steady, it is content; by being content, he is not agitated. Being unagitated, he personally attains Nibbāna. He understands: ‘Destroyed is birth, the holy life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more for this state of being.’”

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya translation by Bhikkhu Bodhi

3.136 (4) Arising

- (1) “Bhikkhus, whether Tathāgatas arise or not, there persists that law, that stableness of the Dhamma, that fixed course of the Dhamma: ‘All conditioned phenomena are impermanent.’ A Tathāgata awakens to this and breaks through to it, and then he explains it, teaches it, proclaims it, establishes it, discloses it, analyzes it, and elucidates it thus: ‘All conditioned phenomena are impermanent.’
- (2) “Bhikkhus, whether Tathāgatas arise or not, there persists that law, that stableness of the Dhamma, that fixed course of the Dhamma: ‘All conditioned phenomena are suffering.’ A Tathāgata awakens to this and breaks through to it, and then he explains it, teaches it, proclaims it, establishes it, discloses it, analyzes it, and elucidates it thus: ‘All conditioned phenomena are suffering.’
- (3) “Bhikkhus, whether Tathāgatas arise or not, there persists that law, that stableness of the Dhamma, that fixed course of the Dhamma: ‘All phenomena are non-self.’ A Tathāgata awakens to this and breaks through to it, and then he explains it, teaches it, proclaims it, establishes it, discloses it, analyzes it, and elucidates it thus: ‘All phenomena are non-self.’”

Wisdom is developed with knowledge (ñāṇa):

1. knowledge based on thinking (cintāmayā paññā),
2. knowledge based on learning (sutamayā paññā), and

3. knowledge based on mental development (bhāvanāmayā paññā).

The development of wisdom through knowledge based on thinking (cintāmayā paññā) involves intellectual understanding and contemplation.

- Wisdom that arises through reflective thinking includes contemplation upon the Dhamma, and applying intellectual analysis to understand the Dhamma's meaning and implications.
- Wisdom is closely linked to ethical conduct (sīla). A virtuous and ethical life provides a foundation for the development of wisdom, as a clear, calm, blameless, and guilt-free mind is able to engage in reflective thinking and contemplation.

The development of wisdom through knowledge based on learning (sutamayā paññā) has the following characteristics:

- Wisdom begins with studying, learning and understanding the teachings of the Buddha recorded in the scriptures (tipiṭaka).
- Wisdom is an understanding of the Four Noble Truths (ariya catusacca). Reflecting on these truths the mind develops insight into the nature of existence.
- Contemplation of the Three Characteristics of Existence (tilakkhaṇa) is another aspect of developing wisdom. This is the understanding that all phenomena are impermanent, subject to suffering, and devoid of a permanent self, leads to insight into the nature of conditional existence.
- Wisdom is cultivated through an understanding of Dependent Origination (paṭicca samuppāda): the interdependence of phenomena and the origination of suffering (dukkha). This chain of causation explains how suffering arises and ceases, providing insight into the nature of existence. See the July 2023 Newsletter for a discussion of Dependent Origination.

The development of wisdom through knowledge based on mental development (bhāvanāmayā paññā) includes the following:

- Practicing insight meditation (vipassanā) is a condition for developing wisdom. By observing the arising and passing away of mental and physical phenomena, the mind acquires experiential knowledge of impermanence and the other Characteristics of Existence. See the October 2023 Newsletter for a discussion on Insight Meditation.
- Mindfulness meditation is also a condition for developing wisdom. Mindfulness (sati) is cultivated, for example, by practicing the Four Foundations of Mindfulness (satipaṭṭhāna): mindfulness of the body, feelings, mind, and mind objects. Through concentration (samādhi) and mindfulness, the mind acquires insight into the nature of these four subjects of contemplation, leading to an understanding of impermanence, suffering, and not-self. See the October 2023 Newsletter for a discussion on the Four Foundations of Mindfulness.

The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Dīgha Nikāya translated by Maurice O'C Walshe

33 Saṅgīti Sutta: The Chanting Together

1.10

(42) 'Three kinds of wisdom: of the learner [sekhā], of the non-learner, of the one who is neither (sekho puggalo, asekhō puggalo, n'eva sekho nāsekho puggalo).

(43) 'Three more kinds of wisdom: based on thought, on learning [hearing], on mental development [meditation] (cintāmayā paññā, sutamayā paññā, bhāvanāmayā paññā).

Note for the above sutta excerpt: The "learner" (sekhā) or "one in training" is a noble disciple (ariya puggala) who has not yet attained arahantship. A 'noble learner' is a disciple in higher training, i.e. one who pursues the three kinds of training (sikkhā):

1. training in higher morality (adhisīla-sikkhā)
2. training in higher mentality (adhicitta-sikkhā)
3. training in higher wisdom (adhipaññā-sikkhā)

The Path of Purification: Visuddhimagga by Bhaddantacariya Buddhaghosa

CHAPTER XIV THE AGGREGATES (Khandha-niddesa)

[A. UNDERSTANDING]

14. 7. ... understanding acquired without hearing from another is that consisting in what is reasoned because it is produced by one's own reasoning. Understanding acquired by hearing from another is that consisting in what is heard, because it is produced by hearing. Understanding that has reached absorption, having been somehow produced by (meditative) development, is that consisting in development.

Wisdom and faith balance each other in the Five Powers (pañca-balāni):

1. the power of faith (saddhā) is unshakeable by faithlessness (unbelief),
2. the power of energy (virīya) is unshakeable by laziness,
3. the power of mindfulness (sati) is unshakeable by forgetfulness,
4. the power of concentration (samādhi) is unshakeable by distractedness, and
5. the power of wisdom (paññā) is unshakeable by ignorance (avijjā).

The balance between faith and wisdom is required in order to efficiently train the mind. Faith is the initial inspiration and driving force to practice the Noble Eightfold Path. However, blind faith acts to bypass the investigative quality of wisdom, and it is wisdom that provides the discernment and insight necessary for training the mind, and wisdom is what uproots the defilements.

Faith without wisdom may lead to superstition or dogmatism, while wisdom without faith may result in a lack of inspiration and motivation to train the mind. The harmonious interplay of faith and wisdom is necessary for the cultivation of a balanced mind that trains for purification of defilements.

The statement that the power of wisdom is unshakeable by ignorance emphasizes the transformative and liberating nature of wisdom. Once a mind attains wisdom through insight meditation and understanding, the mind will then uproot ignorance that conditions the cycle of suffering (saṃsāra). The stable and unshakeable power of wisdom is not swayed or undermined by delusion.

Wisdom (paññā) is balanced by concentration (samādhi) because the development of a focused mind is necessary for the arising of insights and understanding. Concentration sharpens the mind for introspection, while wisdom provides insights gained through focused awareness.

The Perfection of Wisdom (paññā pāramī) is balanced and assisted by the other perfections.

- The Perfection of Generosity (dāna pāramī) helps support the cultivation of wisdom by creating favorable conditions for learning and practice. Through acts of generosity, the mind creates wholesome kammic conditions that will contribute to a conducive environment for the development of wisdom.
- The Perfection of Morality (sīla pāramī) promotes wholesome behavior that is essential for a stable and concentrated mind. By observing ethical principles, the mind creates a foundation for concentration and mental clarity, which are required for the cultivation of wisdom.
- The Perfection of Renunciation (nekkhama pāramī) reduces the distractions and obstacles that hinder the development of wisdom. Letting go of worldly desires allows for the concentrated mind to understand the nature of reality.
- The Perfection of Wisdom requires diligent effort in studying, contemplating, and meditating on the Dhamma. The Perfection of Energy (virīya pāramī) supports the sustained concentration needed for the cultivation of wisdom, the commitment for continuous practice, and overcoming obstacles on the path.
- Wisdom requires patience and perseverance. The Perfection of Patience (khanti pāramī) allows the mind to navigate challenges and setbacks without becoming discouraged and allows for a calm and composed mind that is able to understand the Dhamma.
- The Perfection of Truthfulness (sacca pāramī) is fundamental and required in the pursuit of wisdom. Understanding the truth of existence and reality is an aspect of wisdom.
- The Perfection of Determination (adhiṭṭhāna pāramī) supports the unwavering commitment to the cultivation of wisdom.
- The Perfection of Loving-kindness (mettā pāramī) creates a wholesome and compassionate state of mind. Cultivating a heart with love and compassion contributes to a wholesome and balanced approach to the pursuit of wisdom.
- The Perfection of Equanimity (upekkhā pāramī) maintains a balance mind in the face of both pleasant and unpleasant feelings and perceptions, and prevents attachment or aversion to impermanent

phenomena. Equanimity allows the mind to have an impartial and objective observation of the contents of experience which results in clear and objective wisdom.

Mahāyāna Buddhism emphasizes wisdom (paññā) and compassion (karunā) as the two pillars of practice. Theravāda Buddhism recognizes the importance of cultivating both wisdom and compassion in order to realize nibbāna. The virtue of wisdom understands the nature of reality and the virtue of compassion works to alleviate the suffering of others.

The following sutta excerpts provide additional advise for the cultivation of wisdom.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

135 Cūḷakammavibhanga Sutta: The Shorter Exposition of Action

17. “Here, student, some man or woman does not visit a recluse or a brahmin and ask: ‘Venerable sir, what is wholesome? What is unwholesome? What is blameable? What is blameless? What should be cultivated? What should not be cultivated? What kind of action will lead to my harm and suffering for a long time? What kind of action will lead to my welfare and happiness for a long time?’ Because of performing and undertaking such action... he reappears in a state of deprivation... But if instead he comes back to the human state, then wherever he is reborn he is stupid. This is the way, student, that leads to stupidity, namely, one does not visit a recluse or brahmin and ask such questions.

18. “But here, student, some man or woman visits a recluse or a brahmin and asks: ‘Venerable sir, what is wholesome?... What kind of action will lead to my welfare and happiness for a long time?’ Because of performing and undertaking such action... he reappears in a happy destination... But if instead he comes back to the human state, then wherever he is reborn he is wise. This is the way, student, that leads to **wisdom**, namely, one visits a recluse or brahmin and asks such questions.

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

4.115 (5) Deeds

“Bhikkhus, there are these four cases of deeds. What four? (1) There is a deed that is disagreeable to do which will prove harmful. (2) There is a deed that is disagreeable to do which will prove beneficial. (3) There is a deed that is agreeable to do which will prove harmful. (4) There is a deed that is agreeable to do which will prove beneficial.

(1) “Bhikkhus, take first the case of the deed that is disagreeable to do which will prove harmful. One considers that this deed should not be done on both grounds: because it is disagreeable to do and because it will prove harmful. One considers that this deed should not be done on both grounds.

(2) “Next, take the case of the deed that is disagreeable to do which will prove beneficial. It is in this case that one can understand who is a fool and who is a **wise** person in regard to manly strength, manly energy, and manly exertion. The fool does not reflect thus: ‘Although this deed is disagreeable to do, still it will prove beneficial.’ So he does not do that deed, and his refraining from it proves harmful. But the **wise** person does reflect thus: ‘Although this deed is disagreeable to do, still it will prove beneficial.’ So he does that deed, and it proves beneficial.

(3) “Next, take the case of the deed that is agreeable to do which will prove harmful. It is in this case, too, that one can understand who is a fool and who is a **wise** person in regard to manly strength, manly energy, and manly exertion. The fool does not reflect thus: ‘Although this deed is agreeable to do, still it will prove harmful.’ So he does that deed, and it proves harmful. But the **wise** person does reflect thus: ‘Although this deed is agreeable to do, still it will prove harmful.’ So he does not do that deed, and his refraining from it proves beneficial.

(4) “Next, take the case of the deed that is agreeable to do which will prove beneficial. This deed is considered one that should be done on both grounds: because it is agreeable to do and because it proves beneficial. This deed is considered one that should be done on both grounds. “These, bhikkhus, are the four cases of deeds.”

May 2024 - Perfection of Energy (vīriya pāramī)

The perfections (pāramīs) are a set of ten virtues that are cultivated in order to progress on the path to nibbāna, liberation from suffering (dukkha). An overview of the Ten Perfections are presented in the January 2024 Newsletter: The Perfection of Giving (dāna pāramī). The Ten Perfections (pāramīs) are:

1. Giving (dāna pāramī),
2. Virtue (sīla pāramī),
3. Renunciation (nekkhamma pāramī),
4. Wisdom (paññā pāramī),
5. Energy (vīriya pāramī),
6. Patience (khanti pāramī),
7. Truthfulness (saccā pāramī),
8. Determination (adhiṭṭhāna pāramī),
9. Loving-Kindness (mettā pāramī), and
10. Equanimity (upekkhā pāramī).

The subject of this newsletter is on the Perfection of Energy (vīriya pāramī). The Perfection of Giving (dāna pāramī) is discussed in the January 2024 Newsletter, the Perfection of Virtue (sīla pāramī) is discussed in the February 2024 Newsletter, the Perfection of Renunciation (nekkhamma pāramī) is discussed in the March 2024 Newsletter, and the Perfection of Wisdom (paññā pāramī) is discussed in the April 2024 Newsletter. The next five newsletters will discuss the remaining perfections.

The Perfection of Energy is the practice of diligent and persistent effort to purify the mind of defilements (kilesa) and is related to Right Effort (sammā vāyāma), the sixth factor of the Noble Eightfold Path (ariya aṭṭhaṅgika magga). The Noble Eightfold Path is discussed in the May 2023 Newsletter - The Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering. The function of Right Effort is to diminish and eliminate unwholesome (akusala) contents of mind, and to encourage the emergence and maintenance of wholesome (kusala) contents of mind. Right Effort is the arousal of energy (vīriya) to purify the mind of the root defilements: ignorance (avijjā), hatred (dosā) and greed (lobha). Energy (vīriya) is identical with effort (padhāna). Right Effort consists of generating the following four states of mind.

1. The effort to avoid unwholesome states of mind from arising (saṃvara padhāna).
2. The effort to overcome unwholesome states of mind that have arisen (pahāna padhāna).
3. The effort to cultivate wholesome states of mind (bhāvanā padhāna).
4. The effort to maintain wholesome states of mind that have arisen (anurakkhaṇa padhāna).

The following are examples of unwholesome states of mind.

- Wrong Views (micchādiṭṭhi)
 5. Eternalism (sassatadiṭṭhi) asserts the existence of an eternal and unchanging self or soul, as well as the following beliefs:
 - Eternalism is the belief in the existence of a self, ego-entity, soul, or a personality existing independently of those physical and mental processes stated as the Five Aggregates (pañcakkhandhā) of Existence, and continuing after death eternally. The Five Aggregates are the following.
 - vi. Material Form (rūpa khandha),
 - vii. Mental Formations (saṅkhāra khandha),
 - viii. Perceptions (saññā khandha),
 - ix. Feelings (vedanā khandha), and
 - x. Sense Consciousness (viññāṇa khandha).
 - Eternalism is also the belief in a permanent heaven or hell, where souls will be rewarded or punished.
 - Creationism (Issara nimmāna diṭṭhi) is the view that a creator god exists and is responsible for the creation and control of the universe. This view contradicts the Buddha's teachings on causality (idappaccayatā) and Dependent Origination (paticcasamuppāda). Dependent Origination is discussed in the July 2023 Newsletter.

2. Annihilationism (ucchedadiṭṭhi) asserts that death results in the complete annihilation of the self, ego-entity or personality, denying any form of continued existence after death. This view denies the cycle of birth, aging, sickness, death and rebirth (saṃsāra).
3. Personality Belief (sakkāyadiṭṭhi or sakkāyavāda) is one aggregate or a combination of all Five Aggregates is a permanent entity or self (atta or atman). The Personality Belief or Ego Illusion (attadiṭṭhi) is of two kinds: Eternalism and Annihilationism.
4. Wrong Views with Fixed Evil Destiny (niyatamicchādiṭṭhi)
 - Moral Nihilism (natthikadiṭṭhi or natthikavāda) is the view that all moral values are baseless, there are no corresponding result of wholesome or unwholesome actions; that after death no further life would follow, that the Five Aggregates at death would become dissolved into the elements; that nothing is knowable or can be communicated; and that life itself is meaningless. This view is closely aligned with Materialism (sāṅgikadiṭṭhi), the view that physical existence and material possessions are the ultimate reality, and there is no transcendental dimension or significance to life.
 - Inefficacy of Action (akiriyaḍḍhi or akiriyaḍḍavāda) is the view that denies the efficacy of moral actions, asserting that ethical conduct has no impact on one's well-being or future existence; no effort or striving is necessary for spiritual progress, suggesting that liberation can be achieved without practicing the Noble Eightfold Path. This view holds the belief that there is no such thing as kamma, the law of cause and effect.
 - Fatalism (ahetukadiṭṭhi or ahetukavāda) is the view that existence happens due to fate, destiny or external forces; there is no cause for the unwholesome and wholesome states of mind. This view undermines the importance of moral conduct and personal responsibility.

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya
translation by Bhikkhu Bodhi

Note 165 ... It seems, though, that the term micchādiṭṭhi is used in the Nikāyas solely in relation to three views: moral nihilism, the doctrine of non-doing, and the doctrine of non-causality (natthikavāda, akiriyaḍḍavāda, ahetukavāda).

- Delusion (moha) is ignorance (avijjā) or confusion about the true nature of reality and is an unwholesome state of mind.
 - Ignorance of The Four Noble Truths (ariya catusacca):
 5. The Noble Truth of Suffering (dukkha) is discussed in the February 2023 Newsletter.
 6. The Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering (samudaya) is discussed in the March 2023 Newsletter.
 7. The Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering (nirodha) is discussed in the April 2023 Newsletter.
 8. The Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering (magga) is discussed in the May 2023 Newsletter
 - Ignorance of The Three Characteristics of Existence (tilakkhaṇa):
 9. Impermanence (anicca),
 10. Unsatisfactoriness (dukkha), and
 11. Not-self (anatta).
 The Three Characteristics of Existence is discussed in the October 2023 Newsletter - Insight Meditation (vipassanā).
- The Five Hindrances (pañca nīvaraṇā) are obstacles for concentration and a peaceful mind, and are unwholesome states of mind.
 6. Sensual Desire (kāmacchanda),
 7. Ill Will (vyāpāda),
 8. Sloth and Torpor (thīnamiddha),
 9. Restlessness and Remorse (uddhaccakukkucca), and
 10. Doubt (vicikicchā).
 See the September 2023 Newsletter-Tranquility Meditation (samatha) and The Five Hindrances (pañca nīvaraṇā) for a detailed discussion.

- The Ten Fetters (samyojana) that tie beings to the cycle of existence (saṃsāra) and prevent the realization of the transcendental reality nibbāna, and are unwholesome states of mind.
 20. Personality Belief (sakkāya diṭṭhi),
 21. Doubt (vicikicchā),
 22. Clinging to Rites and Rituals (sīlabbata parāmāsa),
 23. Sensual Desire (kāma rāga),
 24. Ill Will (vyāpāda),
 25. Craving for Existence in the Form World, fine material existence (rūpa rāga),
 26. Craving for Existence in the Formless World, immaterial existence (arūpa rāga),
 27. Conceit (māna),
 28. Restlessness (uddhacca), and
 29. Ignorance (avijjā).

The Four Noble Disciples (ariya-sāvaka) have realized to some extent the transcendental reality nibbāna.

 1. Streamwinner (sotāpanna) is free from fetters 1-3.
 2. Once Returner (sakadāgāmi) is free from fetters 1-3 and has overcome 4 and 5 in their grosser form.
 3. Non-Returner (anāgāmi) is free from fetters 1-5.
 4. Perfect Holy One (arahat) is free from all 10 fetters.
- The Ten Kammically Unwholesome Actions (akusala kamma or akusala kammapatha) result in suffering for oneself and others, and are unwholesome states of mind.
 5. Killing (pāṇātipātā),
 6. Stealing (adinnādānā),
 7. Sexual Misconduct and unwholesome conduct in regard to sense pleasures (kāmesu micchācārā),
 8. Lying (musāvādā),
 9. Slandering Speech (pisuṇāya vacāya),
 10. Harsh Speech (pharusāya vācāya),
 11. Idle Chatter (samphappalāpā),
 12. Covetousness (anabhijjhā),
 13. Ill Will (abyāpāda), and
 14. Wrong Views (micchādiṭṭhi).
- Wrong Intention (micchā-saṅkappa) are unwholesome states of mind.
 1. Thoughts of craving and attachment to sense pleasures,
 2. Thoughts of ill will, and
 3. Thoughts of cruelty.

See the May 2023 Newsletter - The Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering for a discussion of Right Intention (sammā-saṅkappa).
- Shamelessness (ahirika) is lack of shame or lack of moral conscience and a disregard for the consequences of unskillful and unwholesome actions; the absence of disgust at physical or verbal misconduct. Shamelessness is an unwholesome state of mind.
- Fearlessness of Wrongdoing (anottappa) is the absence of moral apprehension or fear of the consequences of unskillful and unwholesome actions. Fearlessness of Wrongdoing is an unwholesome state of mind.
- Attachment to Rituals and Observances (sīlabbata parāmāsa) is the view that rituals (animal sacrifices, ablutions, chanting, etc.), belief in a god (issara nimmāna) that responds to requests, and observing the external form of moral precepts without internalizing them (i.e., moral precepts are not ingrained in the mind's nature), will result in liberation nibbāna. The Buddha taught that wisdom (paññā) is the most important quality that purifies the mind of defilements (kilesa) which results in the realization of nibbāna. Attachment to Rituals and Observances is an unwholesome state of mind.
- Envy (issa) is jealousy or resentment towards others' achievement, success, wealth, or good fortune. Envy is an unwholesome state of mind.
- Stinginess or Miserliness (macchariya) is being possessive or selfish, unwilling to share or be generous. Stinginess is an unwholesome state of mind.

The following are examples of wholesome states of mind.

- Affirmation of Existence (atthikadiṭṭhi or atthikavāda) is the view that moral values exist in the cycle of existence (saṃsāra), there are corresponding results for wholesome or unwholesome actions; and that after death there is rebirth for those who have not realized nibbāna. Affirmation of Existence is a wholesome state of mind.
- Right View (sammā-diṭṭhi) is a factor of the Noble Eightfold Path defined as the realization of the Four Noble Truths (ariya catusacca) and is a wholesome state of mind.
 1. The Noble Truth of Suffering (dukkha),
 2. The Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering (samudaya),
 3. The Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering (nirodha), and
 4. The Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering (magga).See the May 2023 Newsletter - The Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering for a discussion on this path factor.
- The Ten Kammically Wholesome Actions (kusala kamma or kusala kammapatha) result in wholesome states of mind.
 1. Generosity (dāna maya),
 2. Morality (sīla maya),
 3. Meditation (bhāvanā maya),
 4. Respectfulness (apacāyana),
 5. Service (veyyāvacca),
 6. Sharing of Merit (patti dāna),
 7. Rejoicing in the Merit of Others (pattānumodana),
 8. Listening to the Dhamma (dhamma savana),
 9. Teaching the Dhamma (dhamma desanā), and
 10. Straightening of Views (diṭṭhi'jju kamma).
- Right Intention (sammā-saṅkappa) is a factor of the Noble Eightfold Path and are wholesome states of mind.
 1. Thoughts of renunciation and detachments to sense pleasures (nekkhamma vitakka),
 2. Thoughts of non-ill will (abyāpāda vitakka), and
 3. Thoughts of non-cruelty (avihiṃsā vitakka).See the May 2023 Newsletter - The Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering for a discussion on this path factor.
- Right Mindfulness (sammā-sati) is a factor of the Noble Eightfold Path, is a wholesome state of mind, and may be developed in the following four contemplations.
 1. Mindful contemplation of the body (kāyānupassanā),
 2. Mindful contemplation of feelings (vedanā sañña),
 3. Mindful contemplation of the mind (citta sañña), and
 4. Mindful contemplation of mind-objects or dhammas (dammā sañña).See the May 2023 Newsletter - The Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering for a discussion on this path factor.
- Right Concentration (sammā-samādhi) is a factor of the Noble Eightfold Path defined as the four stages of absorption (rupa jhāna) and are wholesome states of mind. See the May 2023 Newsletter - The Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering for a discussion on this path factor.
- Seven Factors of Enlightenment (bojjhaṅga) are wholesome states of mind.
 1. Mindfulness (sat),
 2. Investigation of Dhamma (dhamma-vicaya),
 3. Energy (vīriya),
 4. Joy (pīti),
 5. Tranquility (passaddhi),
 6. Concentration (sāmādhi), and
 7. Equanimity (upekkhā).

- Four Divine Abodes (brahmavihāra) are wholesome states of mind and have been discussed in the September 2023 Newsletter - Tranquility Meditation (samatha) and The Five Hindrances (pañca nīvaraṇā).
 5. Loving-kindness (mettā) is the cultivation of unconditional love and goodwill towards all beings.
 6. Compassion (karunā) is empathy with others in their suffering; actively seeking ways to alleviate the pain and struggles of sentient beings.
 7. Sympathetic Joy (muditā) is the ability to rejoice in the success and happiness of others; their virtues and success. Sympathetic joy counters envy and jealousy, promoting a selfless and appreciative attitude towards the well-being of others.
 8. Equanimity (upekkhā) is maintaining mental balance and stability in the face of both pleasant and unpleasant experiences; an attitude of detached impartiality towards beings (not apathy or indifference).
- Generosity (dāna) is the practice of giving freely without attachment or expecting anything in return. Practicing generosity contributes to the reduction of the egoic personality, selfish desires and supports the experience of interconnectedness with others. Generosity is a wholesome state of mind and, has been discussed in the August 2022 Newsletter - The Practice of Generosity (dāna) and in the January 2024 Newsletter - Perfection of Giving (dāna pāramī).
- Virtue (sīla) is adhering to ethical conduct and moral principles that does not cause harm to others, and results in a clear conscience and a peaceful mind. Virtue is a wholesome state of mind and, has been discussed in the November 2023 Newsletter - Peace (santi) and in the February 2024 Newsletter - Perfection of Virtue (sīla pāramī).
- Wisdom (paññā) is the cultivation of an understanding of the nature of reality. Wisdom arises through insight meditation (vipassanā) and contemplation on the Three Characteristics of Existence (tilakkhaṇa): impermanence (anicca), suffering (dukkha), and not-self (anatta). Wisdom is a wholesome state of mind and has been discussed in the October 2023 Newsletter - Insight Meditation (vipassanā).

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

141 Saccavibhanga Sutta: The Exposition of the Truths

29. “And what, friends, is right effort? Here a bhikkhu awakens zeal for the non-arising [anuppādāya] of unarisen evil unwholesome states, and he makes effort, arouses energy, exerts his mind, and strives. He awakens zeal for the abandoning [pahānāya] of arisen evil unwholesome states, and he makes effort, arouses energy, exerts his mind, and strives. He awakens zeal for the arising [uppādāya] of unarisen wholesome states, and he makes effort, arouses energy, exerts his mind, and strives. He awakens zeal for the continuance [ṭhitiyā], non-disappearance, strengthening, increase, and fulfillment by development of arisen wholesome states, and he makes effort, arouses energy, exerts his mind, and strives. This is called right effort.

The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

48.10 (10) Analysis (2)

“And what, bhikkhus, is the faculty of energy? Here, bhikkhus, the noble disciple dwells with energy aroused for the abandoning of unwholesome states and the acquisition of wholesome states; he is strong, firm in exertion, not shirking the responsibility of cultivating wholesome states. He generates desire for the nonarising of unarisen evil unwholesome states; he makes an effort, arouses energy, applies his mind, and strives. He generates desire for the abandoning of arisen evil unwholesome states; he makes an effort, arouses energy, applies his mind, and strives. He generates desire for the arising of unarisen wholesome states; he makes an effort, arouses energy, applies his mind, and strives. He generates desire for the maintenance of arisen wholesome states, for their nondecay, increase, expansion, and fulfillment by development; he makes an effort, arouses energy, applies his mind, and strives. This is called the faculty of energy.

The following sutta describes the importance of cultivating a ‘balance of energy’ and an ‘evenness of the spiritual faculties’. The Five Spiritual Faculties (indriya) are the following.

1. Faith (saddhā),
2. Energy (vīriya),
3. Mindfulness (sati),
4. Concentration (samādhi), and
5. Wisdom (paññā).

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

6.55 (1) Soṇa

“Soṇa, when you were alone in seclusion, didn’t the following course of thought arise in your mind: ‘I am one of the Blessed One’s most energetic disciples, yet my mind has not been liberated from the taints by non-clinging. Now there is wealth in my family, and it is possible for me to enjoy my wealth and do meritorious deeds. Let me then give up the training and return to the lower life, so that I can enjoy my wealth and do meritorious deeds?’”

“Yes, Bhante.”

“Tell me, Soṇa, in the past, when you lived at home, weren’t you skilled at the lute?”

“Yes, Bhante.”

“What do you think, Soṇa? When its strings were too tight, was your lute well tuned and easy to play?”

“No, Bhante.”

“When its strings were too loose, was your lute well tuned and easy to play?”

“No, Bhante.”

“But, Soṇa, when its strings were neither too tight nor too loose but adjusted to a balanced pitch, was your lute well tuned and easy to play?”

“Yes, Bhante.”

“So too, Soṇa, if energy is aroused too forcefully this leads to restlessness, and if energy is too lax this leads to laziness. Therefore, Soṇa, resolve on a balance of energy, achieve evenness of the spiritual faculties, and take up the object there.” “Yes, Bhante,” the Venerable Soṇa replied.

When the Blessed One had finished giving the Venerable Soṇa this exhortation, just as a strong man might extend his drawn-in arm or draw in his extended arm, he disappeared in the Cool Grove and reappeared on Mount Vulture Peak. Then, some time later, the Venerable Soṇa resolved on a balance of energy, achieved evenness of the spiritual faculties, and took up the object there. Then, dwelling alone, withdrawn, heedful, ardent, and resolute, in no long time the Venerable Soṇa realized for himself with direct knowledge, in this very life, that unsurpassed consummation of the spiritual life for the sake of which clansmen rightly go forth from the household life into homelessness, and having entered upon it, he dwelled in it. He directly knew: “Destroyed is birth, the spiritual life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more coming back to any state of being.” And the Venerable Soṇa became one of the arahants.

The following sutta reveals the importance of energy or exertion in training the mind and equanimity (upekkhā) for the eradication of suffering.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

101 Devadaha Sutta: At Devadaha

... 23. “And how is exertion fruitful, bhikkhus, how is striving fruitful? Here, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu who is not overwhelmed with suffering does not overwhelm himself with suffering; and he does not give up the pleasure that accords with Dhamma, yet he is not infatuated with that pleasure.⁹³² He knows thus: ‘When I strive with determination, this particular source of suffering fades away in me because of that determined striving; and when I look on with equanimity, this particular source of suffering fades away in me while I develop equanimity.’⁹³³ He strives with determination in regard to that particular source of suffering which fades away in him because of that determined striving; and he develops equanimity in regard to that particular source of suffering which fades away in him while he is

developing equanimity. When he strives with determination, such and such a source of suffering fades away in him because of that determined striving; thus that suffering is exhausted in him. When he looks on with equanimity, such and such a source of suffering fades away in him while he develops equanimity; thus that suffering is exhausted in him.

Notes:

932 This is a formulation of the Buddha's Middle Way, which avoids the extreme of self-mortification without falling into the other extreme of infatuation with sensual pleasure.

933 MA explains the source of suffering to be craving, so called because it is the root of the suffering comprised in the five aggregates. The passage shows two alternative approaches toward overcoming craving — one employing energetic striving, the other detached equanimity. The “fading away” of the source is identified by MA with the supramundane path. The passage is said to illustrate the practice of one who progresses on a pleasant path with quick direct knowledge (*sukhapaṭipadā khippābhiññā*).

The Perfection of Energy (*vīriya pāramī*) is balanced and assisted by the other perfections. The following are some examples in how energy is balanced.

- Effort (*vīriya*) is balanced by the Perfection of Truthfulness (*sacca pāramī*) as being truthful to oneself and with others generates the motivation and energy to continue on the path.
- Effort is balanced by the Perfection of Patience (*khanti pāramī*), which helps endure challenges and setbacks without losing motivation, becoming discouraged or giving up. Patience allows individuals to sustain their efforts over the long term.

June 2024 - Perfection of Patience (khanti pāramī)

The perfections (pāramīs) are a set of ten virtues that are cultivated in order to progress on the path to nibbāna, liberation from suffering (dukkha). An overview of the Ten Perfections are presented in the January 2024 Newsletter: The Perfection of Giving (dāna pāramī). The Ten Perfections (pāramīs) are:

1. Giving (dāna pāramī) discussed in the January 2024 Newsletter,
2. Virtue (sīla pāramī) discussed in the February 2024 Newsletter,
3. Renunciation (nekkhama pāramī) discussed in the March 2024 Newsletter,
4. Wisdom (paññā pāramī) discussed in the April 2024 Newsletter,
5. Energy (vīriya pāramī) discussed in the May 2024 Newsletter,
6. Patience (khanti pāramī) is discussed in this Newsletter,
7. Truthfulness (saccā pāramī) will be discussed in the July 2024 Newsletter,
8. Determination (adhiṭṭhāna pāramī) will be discussed in the August 2024 Newsletter,
9. Loving-Kindness (mettā pāramī) will be discussed in the September 2024 Newsletter, and
10. Equanimity (upekkhā pāramī) will be discussed in the October 2024 Newsletter.

The Perfection of Patience (khanti pāramī) is a mind trained in tolerance, forbearance, and to endure difficulties, hardships, setbacks, and challenging situations without anger, aversion, resentment, irritation, frustration, or negativity. Patience is not merely the absence of frustration or irritation but a positive quality actively cultivated through mindfulness, concentration, loving-kindness, and an understanding of impermanence. Patience is an important virtue on the path to liberation from suffering, nibbāna; if the mind never gives up on the training, no matter how many setbacks are encountered, then success is assured.

- The mind with patience has forbearance, endures physical and mental discomfort without reacting negatively. This includes enduring physical pain, discomfort, illness, or challenging situations without giving in to aversion or frustration but instead the mind rests in equanimity.
- The patient mind is tested when faced with criticism, insults, or negative behavior from others. Rather than reacting with anger or defensiveness, the trained mind responds with wisdom and compassion.
- The quality of patience lets go of grudges and forgives others for perceived wrongs. Holding onto resentment will hinder the mind's purification of defilements, and forgiveness frees the mind from the burden of negative emotions.
- Training in mindfulness of thoughts and emotions, without immediate reaction but instead the mind maintain awareness and wisdom for an informed reaction. Through mindfulness, the mind will have the awareness and the opportunity to choose a skillful response, which is how patience is practiced in challenging situations.
- The practice of loving-kindness (metta) is a mind with boundless and unconditional love towards oneself and others. Loving-kindness is a condition for forgiveness, and will enhance patience and endurance.
- Understanding the impermanence of all things, including difficult situations, is a condition for a patient mind to accept for the moment 'what is', knowing that the next moment will be different. The trained mind recognizes that challenges are temporary and not to react impulsively, which allows the mind to rest in equanimity.
- The mind that cultivates equanimity, or even-mindedness, is an essential aspect of patience. This involves maintaining balance and composure in the face of life's ups and downs, not getting overly elated by success or unduly discouraged by failure.
- Practicing internal solitude and contemplation allows the mind to develop inner strength and patience. In the silence and stillness of meditation, the mind observe thoughts and emotions, and learns to respond to challenges with patience and wisdom.
- Practicing patience is aided with the understanding of the law of kamma, that wholesome actions result in wholesome circumstances, thereby the trained mind cultivates wholesome intentions while refraining from unwholesome intentions.

The Dhammapada: The Buddha's Path of Wisdom translated by Acharya Buddhārakkhita

184. Enduring patience is the highest austerity. “Nibbāna is supreme,” say the Buddha. He is not a true monk who harms another, nor a real renunciate who oppresses others.
399. He who without resentment endures abuse, beating, and punishment, whose power, real might, is patience – him do I call a holy man.

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

IV.164 (4) Patient (1)

... (1) “And what, bhikkhus, is the impatient practice? Here, someone insults one who insults him, scolds one who scolds him, and argues with one who picks an argument with him. This is called the impatient practice.

(2) “And what is the patient practice? Here, someone does not insult one who insults him, does not scold one who scolds him, and does not argue with one who picks an argument with him. This is called the patient practice.

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

IV.165 (5) Patient (2)

... (1) “And what, bhikkhus, is the impatient practice? Here, someone does not patiently endure cold and heat; hunger and thirst; contact with flies, mosquitoes, wind, the burning sun, and serpents; rude and offensive ways of speech; he is unable to bear up with arisen bodily feelings that are painful, racking, sharp, piercing, harrowing, disagreeable, sapping one’s vitality. This is called the impatient practice.

(2) “And what is the patient practice? Here, someone patiently endures cold and heat ... rude and offensive ways of speech; he is able to bear up with arisen bodily feelings that are painful, racking, sharp, piercing, harrowing,

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

V.215 (5) Impatience (1)

“Bhikkhus, there are these five dangers in impatience. What five? One is displeasing and disagreeable to many people; one has an abundance of enmity; one has an abundance of faults; one dies confused; with the breakup of the body, after death, one is reborn in the plane of misery, in a bad destination, in the lower world, in hell. These are the five dangers in impatience.

“Bhikkhus, there are these five benefits in patience. What five? One is pleasing and agreeable to many people; one does not have an abundance of enmity; one does not have an abundance of faults; one dies unconfused; with the breakup of the body, after death, one is reborn in a good destination, in a heavenly world. These are the five benefits in patience.”

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

V.216 (6) Impatience (2)

“Bhikkhus, there are these five dangers in impatience. What five? One is displeasing and disagreeable to many people; one is violent; one is remorseful; one dies confused; with the breakup of the body, after death, one is reborn in the plane of misery, in a bad destination, in the lower world, in hell. These are the five dangers in impatience.

“Bhikkhus, there are these five benefits in patience. What five? One is pleasing and agreeable to many people; one is not violent; one is without remorse; one dies unconfused; with the breakup of the body, after death, one is reborn in a good destination, in a heavenly world. These are the five benefits in patience.”

The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

I.7.3 (3) Asurindaka

... [The Blessed One:]

619 “The fool thinks victory is won
When, by speech, he bellows harshly;
But for one who understands,
Patient endurance is the true victory.”

The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

I.10.12 Ālavaka

... [The Blessed One:]

854 “Come now, ask others as well,
The many ascetics and brahmins,
Whether there is found here anything better
Than truth, self-control, generosity, and patience.”

The following are examples of how the Perfection of Patience (khanti pāramī) is balanced and assisted by the other perfections.

- The Perfection of Patience is balanced by the Perfection of Loving-Kindness (mettā pāramī) because cultivating loving-kindness helps in maintaining a patient and compassionate attitude towards oneself and others.
- Patience allows the mind to endure challenges without reacting negatively, while the Perfection of Energy (viriya pāramī) fuels the effort needed to overcome obstacles and directly reinforces patience. The following sutta excerpts provide additional teachings on patience.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Nanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi

21 Kakacūpama Sutta: The Simile of the Saw

... 11. “Bhikkhus, there are these five courses of speech that others may use when they address you: their speech may be timely or untimely, true or untrue, gentle or harsh, connected with good or with harm, spoken with a mind of loving-kindness or with inner hate. When others address you, their speech may be timely or untimely; when others address you, their speech may be true or untrue; when others address you, their speech may be gentle or harsh; when others address you, their speech may be connected with good or with harm; when others address you, their speech may be spoken with a mind of loving-kindness or with inner hate. Herein, bhikkhus, you should train thus: ‘Our minds will remain unaffected, and we shall utter no evil words; we shall abide compassionate for their welfare, with a mind of loving-kindness, without inner hate. We shall abide pervading that person with a mind imbued with loving-kindness, and starting with him, we shall abide pervading the all-encompassing world with a mind imbued with loving-kindness, abundant, exalted, immeasurable, without hostility and without ill will.’ That is how you should train, bhikkhus.

... 20. “Bhikkhus, even if bandits were to sever you savagely limb by limb with a two-handed saw, he who gave rise to a mind of hate towards them would not be carrying out my teaching. Herein, bhikkhus, you should train thus: ‘Our minds will remain unaffected, and we shall utter no evil words; we shall abide compassionate for their welfare, with a mind of loving-kindness, without inner hate. We shall abide pervading them with a mind imbued with loving-kindness; and starting with them, we shall abide pervading the all-encompassing world with a mind imbued with loving-kindness, abundant, exalted, immeasurable, without hostility and without ill will.’ That is how you should train, bhikkhus.

21. “Bhikkhus, if you keep this advice on the simile of the saw constantly in mind, do you see any course of speech, trivial or gross, that you could not endure?” — “No, venerable sir.” — “Therefore, bhikkhus, you should keep this advice on the simile of the saw constantly in mind. That will lead to your welfare and happiness for a long time.”

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Nanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi
2 Sabbāsava Sutta: All the Taints

... 18. "What taints, bhikkhus, should be abandoned by enduring? Here a bhikkhu, reflecting wisely, bears cold and heat, hunger and thirst, and contact with gadflies, mosquitoes, wind, the sun, and creeping things; he endures ill-spoken, unwelcome words and arisen bodily feelings that are painful, racking, sharp, piercing, disagreeable, distressing, and menacing to life. While taints, vexation, and fever might arise in one who does not endure such things, there are no taints, vexation, or fever in one who endures them. These are called the taints that should be abandoned by enduring.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Nanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi

62 Mahārāhulovāda Sutta: The Greater Discourse of Advice to Rāhula

... 13. "Rāhula, develop meditation that is like the earth; for when you develop meditation that is like the earth, arisen agreeable and disagreeable contacts will not invade your mind and remain. Just as people throw clean things and dirty things, excrement, urine, spittle, pus, and blood on the earth, and the earth is not repelled, humiliated, and disgusted because of that, so too, Rāhula, develop meditation that is like the earth; for when you develop meditation that is like the earth, arisen agreeable and disagreeable contacts will not invade your mind and remain.

14. "Rāhula, develop meditation that is like water; for when you develop meditation that is like water, arisen agreeable and disagreeable contacts will not invade your mind and remain. Just as people wash clean things and dirty things, excrement, urine, spittle, pus, and blood in water, and the water is not repelled, humiliated, and disgusted because of that, so too, Rāhula, develop meditation that is like water; for when you develop meditation that is like water, arisen agreeable and disagreeable contacts will not invade your mind and remain.

15. "Rāhula, develop meditation that is like fire; for when you develop meditation that is like fire, arisen agreeable and disagreeable contacts will not invade your mind and remain. Just as people burn clean things and dirty things, excrement, urine, spittle, pus, and blood in fire, and the fire is not repelled, humiliated, and disgusted because of that, so too, Rāhula, develop meditation that is like fire; for when you develop meditation that is like fire, arisen agreeable and disagreeable contacts will not invade your mind and remain.

16. "Rāhula, develop meditation that is like air; for when you develop meditation that is like air, arisen agreeable and disagreeable contacts will not invade your mind and remain. Just as the air blows on clean things and dirty things, on excrement, urine, spittle, pus, and blood, and the air is not repelled, humiliated, and disgusted because of that, so too, Rāhula, develop meditation that is like air; for when you develop meditation that is like air, arisen agreeable and disagreeable contacts will not invade your mind and remain.

17. "Rāhula, develop meditation that is like space; for when you develop meditation that is like space, arisen agreeable and disagreeable contacts will not invade your mind and remain. Just as space is not established anywhere, so too, Rāhula, develop meditation that is like space; for when you develop meditation that is like space, arisen agreeable and disagreeable contacts will not invade your mind and remain.

July 2024 - Perfection of Truthfulness (saccā pāramī)

The perfections (pāramīs) are a set of ten virtues that are cultivated in order to progress on the path to nibbāna, liberation from suffering (dukkha). An overview of the Ten Perfections are presented in the January 2024 Newsletter: The Perfection of Giving (dāna pāramī). The Ten Perfections (pāramīs) are:

1. Giving (dāna pāramī) discussed in the January 2024 Newsletter,
2. Virtue (sīla pāramī) discussed in the February 2024 Newsletter,
3. Renunciation (nekkhamma pāramī) discussed in the March 2024 Newsletter,
4. Wisdom (paññā pāramī) discussed in the April 2024 Newsletter,
5. Energy (vīriya pāramī) discussed in the May 2024 Newsletter,
6. Patience (khanti pāramī) discussed in the June 2024 Newsletter,
7. Truthfulness (saccā pāramī) discussed in this Newsletter,
8. Determination (adhiṭṭhāna pāramī) will be discussed in the August 2024 Newsletter,
9. Loving-Kindness (mettā pāramī) will be discussed in the September 2024 Newsletter, and
10. Equanimity (upekkhā pāramī) will be discussed in the October 2024 Newsletter.

The Perfection of Truthfulness is honesty in thinking thoughts that are true, speaking true speech, and performing true actions.

True thoughts are aligned with:

- Right View (sammā-diṭṭhi) and Right Intention (sammā-saṅkappa), components of the Noble Eightfold Path (ariya aṭṭhaṅgika magga). The Noble Eightfold Path is discussed in the May 2023 Newsletter - The Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering.
- The understanding of the Three Characteristics of Existence (tilakkhaṇa):
 6. impermanence (anicca),
 7. suffering or unsatisfactoriness (dukkha), and
 8. not-self (anattā).

For a discussion of the Three Characteristics of Existence see the October 2023 Newsletter - Insight Meditation (vipassanā).

- The understanding of Dependent Origination (paṭicca samuppāda), discussed in the July 2023 Newsletter.

True thoughts arise from a mind that is wholesome (kusala vitakka), mindful (sati), concentrated (samādhi), and free from delusion (avijjā). Through the practice of meditation, the mind cultivates the ability to observe all thoughts without attachment or aversion and to see them as they truly are: impermanent, unsatisfactory, and not-self. True thoughts are those that are in harmony with the principles of wisdom (paññā), compassion (karuṇā), and non-attachment (virāga), leading to liberation from suffering and the realization of nibbāna.

The practice of truthfulness is particularly important in the context of Right Speech, a component of the Noble Eightfold Path. Right Speech is wholesome speech that is true, gentle, beneficial and encourages harmony; and the guidelines for the practice are the following:

1. abstain from false speech, lying (musāvāda veramaṇī),
2. abstain from malicious speech, slanderous speech, divisive tale-bearing speech that incites one against another (pisuṇāya vācāya veramaṇī),
3. abstain from harsh speech and rude talk (pharusāya vācāya veramaṇī), and
4. abstain from idle speech, useless chatter, foolish babble, vain talk and gossip (samphappalāpā veramaṇī).

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Nanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi

141 Saccavibhanga Sutta: The Exposition of the Truths

... 26. “And what, friends, is right speech? Abstaining from false speech, abstaining from malicious speech, abstaining from harsh speech, and abstaining from idle chatter — this is called right speech.

The First Discourse of the Buddha: Turning the Wheel of Dhamma by Dr. Rewata Dhamma; 1997; p. 35

“As one progressively attains the stages of sainthood, one gradually uproots mental defilements which are the cause of wrong speech. It is said that the first stage of sainthood (sotāpanna) dispels false speech or telling lies; the third stage of sainthood (anāgāmi) dispels slandering and abusive language; the fourth and final stage of sainthood (arahant) dispels frivolous talk or useless chatter.”

The performance of true actions are in alignment with Right Action and Right Livelihood, components of the Noble Eightfold Path; and refers to moral behavior that are in alignment with the Five Precepts (pañca sīla), which are basic ethical guidelines. The Five Precepts are the following:

1. abstain from destroying living beings (pāṇātipātā veramaṇī),
2. abstain from stealing or taking that which is not freely given (adinnādānā veramaṇī),
3. abstain from sexual misconduct (kamesu micchacara veramaṇī),
4. abstain from false speech (musāvāda veramaṇī), and
5. abstain from intoxicants that cause carelessness and cloud the mind (surā meraya majja pamādatthāna veramaṇī).

Practicing true actions goes beyond just following these precepts; it also involves cultivating the virtues, such as loving-kindness (mettā), compassion (karunā), generosity (dāna), service (atthacariyā or sevā) and mindfulness (sati) in daily life. By acting in accordance with the Five Precepts and virtues, the mind will reduce suffering for themselves and others and cultivate inner peace and wisdom.

The purification of mind, the removal of defilements (kilesa) that results in nibbāna, requires a commitment to truth; avoiding falsehood, deceit, and dishonesty. Living with, valuing and abiding by truth is a condition for success in purifying and training the mind. Dhamma is a synonym for truth and Dhamma practice is synonymous with living a life of truth.

Truth (saccā) and wisdom (paññā) are interconnected and are necessary on the path that results in liberation from suffering, nibbāna. The relationship between truth and wisdom is found in the Four Noble Truths (ariya catusacca) and the Noble Eightfold Path (ariya aṭṭhaṅgika magga).

The Four Noble Truths are fundamental truths about the nature of existence and suffering. Recognizing and understanding these truths is required for developing wisdom. The Four Noble Truths are:

1. The Noble Truth of Suffering (dukkha) acknowledges the existence of suffering, the reality of dissatisfaction and unsatisfactoriness in the cycle of birth, aging, sickness, death and rebirth (saṃsāra). This truth is discussed in the February 2023 Newsletter.
2. The Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering (samudaya) is craving (taṇhā), attachment and identification with that which is impermanent. This truth is discussed in the March 2023 Newsletter.
3. The Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering (nirodha) is the elimination of the causes for suffering and the result is nibbāna, the escape from saṃsāra. This truth is discussed in the April 2023 Newsletter.
4. The Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering (magga) is training in the Noble Eightfold Path (ariya aṭṭhaṅgika magga) that leads to nibbāna. This truth is discussed in the May 2023 Newsletter.

The Noble Eightfold Path (ariya aṭṭhaṅgika magga) is composed of eight factors:

1. Right View (sammā-ditṭhi),
2. Right Intention (sammā-saṅkappa),
3. Right Speech (sammā-vācā),
4. Right Action (sammā-kammanta),
5. Right Livelihood (sammā-ājīva),
6. Right Effort (sammā-vāyāma),
7. Right Mindfulness (sammā-sati), and
8. Right Concentration (sammā-samādhi).

The Noble Eightfold Path is described in terms of three aspects:

1. Moral Conduct (sīla). The morality division includes the path factors Right Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood.
2. Meditation (samādhi). The meditation division includes the path factors Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration.
3. Wisdom (paññā). The wisdom division includes the path factors Right View and Right Intention.

The following are examples on how the Perfection of Truthfulness (saccā pāramī) is balanced and assisted by the other perfections.

- The Perfection of Truthfulness is balanced by the Perfection of Determination (adhiṭṭhāna pāramī) as determination provides the strength and resolve to adhere to truthfulness even in challenging circumstances.
- The Perfection of Truthfulness is balanced by the Perfection of Loving-Kindness (mettā pāramī), which ensures that truthful behavior is performed with kindness and avoiding unnecessary harm to others.

The following sutta excerpts are teachings in cultivating truth.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Nanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi

61 Ambalaṭṭhikārāhulovāda Sutta: Advice to Rāhula at Ambalaṭṭhikā

1. Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Rājagaha in the Bamboo Grove, the Squirrels' Sanctuary.

2. Now on that occasion the venerable Rāhula was living at Ambalaṭṭhikā.⁶³⁷ Then, when it was evening, the Blessed One rose from meditation and went to the venerable Rāhula at Ambalaṭṭhikā. The venerable Rāhula saw the Blessed One coming in the distance and made a seat ready and set out water for washing the feet. The Blessed One sat down on the seat made ready and washed his feet. The venerable Rāhula paid homage to him and sat down at one side.

3. Then the Blessed One left a little water in the water vessel and asked the venerable Rāhula: "Rāhula, do you see this little water left in the water vessel?" — "Yes, venerable sir." — "Even so little, Rāhula, is the recluseship of those who are not ashamed to tell a deliberate lie."

4. Then the Blessed One threw away the little water that was left and asked the venerable Rāhula: "Rāhula, do you see that little water that was thrown away?" — "Yes, venerable sir." — "Even so, Rāhula, those who are not ashamed to tell a deliberate lie have thrown away their recluseship."

5. Then the Blessed One turned the water vessel upside down and asked the venerable Rāhula: "Rāhula, do you see this water vessel turned upside down?" — "Yes, venerable sir." — "Even so, Rāhula, those who are not ashamed to tell a deliberate lie have turned their recluseship upside down."

6. Then the Blessed One turned the water vessel right way up again and asked the venerable Rāhula: "Rāhula, do you see this hollow, empty water vessel?" — "Yes, venerable sir." — "Even so hollow and empty, Rāhula, is the recluseship of those who are not ashamed to tell a deliberate lie."

7. "Suppose, Rāhula, there were a royal tusker elephant with tusks as long as chariot poles, full-grown in stature, high-bred, and accustomed to battle. In battle he would perform his task with his forefeet and his hindfeet, with his forequarters and his hindquarters, with his head and his ears, with his tusks and his tail, yet he would keep back his trunk. Then his rider would think: 'This royal tusker elephant with tusks as long as chariot poles... performs his task in battle with his forefeet and his hindfeet... yet he keeps back his trunk. He has not yet given up his life.' But when the royal tusker elephant... performs his task in battle with his forefeet and his hindfeet, with his forequarters and his hindquarters, with his head and his ears, with his tusks and his tail, and also with his trunk, then his rider would think: 'This royal tusker elephant with tusks as long as chariot poles... performs his task in battle with his forefeet and his hindfeet... and also with his trunk. He has given up his life. Now there is nothing this royal tusker elephant would not do.' So too, Rāhula, **when one is not ashamed to tell a deliberate lie, there is no evil, I say, that one would not do. Therefore, Rāhula, you should train thus: 'I will not utter a falsehood even as a joke.'**

8. "What do you think, Rāhula? What is the purpose of a mirror?"

"For the purpose of reflection, venerable sir."

"So too, Rāhula, an action with the body should be done after repeated reflection; an action by speech should be done after repeated reflection; an action by mind should be done after repeated reflection.

9. "Rāhula, when you wish to do an action with the body, you should reflect upon that same bodily action thus: 'Would this action that I wish to do with the body lead to my own affliction, or to the affliction of others, or to the affliction of both? Is it an unwholesome bodily action with painful consequences, with painful results?' When you reflect, if you know: 'This action that I wish to do with the body would lead to

my own affliction, or to the affliction of others, or to the affliction of both; it is an unwholesome bodily action with painful consequences, with painful results,' then you definitely should not do such an action with the body. But when you reflect, if you know: 'This action that I wish to do with the body would not lead to my own affliction, or to the affliction of others, or to the affliction of both; it is a wholesome bodily action with pleasant consequences, with pleasant results,' then you may do such an action with the body.

10. "Also, Rāhula, while you are doing an action with the body, you should reflect upon that same bodily action thus: 'Does this action that I am doing with the body lead to my own affliction, or to the affliction of others, or to the affliction of both? Is it an unwholesome bodily action with painful consequences, with painful results?' When you reflect, if you know: 'This action that I am doing with the body leads to my own affliction, or to the affliction of others, or to the affliction of both; it is an unwholesome bodily action with painful consequences, with painful results,' then you should suspend such a bodily action. But when you reflect, if you know: 'This action that I am doing with the body does not lead to my own affliction, or to the affliction of others, or to the affliction of both; it is a wholesome bodily action with pleasant consequences, with pleasant results,' then you may continue in such a bodily action.

11. "Also, Rāhula, after you have done an action with the body, you should reflect upon that same bodily action thus: 'Did this action that I did with the body lead to my own affliction, or to the affliction of others, or to the affliction of both? Was it an unwholesome bodily action with painful consequences, with painful results?' When you reflect, if you know: 'This action that I did with the body led to my own affliction, or to the affliction of others, or to the affliction of both; it was an unwholesome bodily action with painful consequences, with painful results,' then you should confess such a bodily action, reveal it, and lay it open to the Teacher or to your wise companions in the holy life. Having confessed it, revealed it, and laid it open, you should undertake restraint for the future. But when you reflect, if you know: 'This action that I did with the body did not lead to my own affliction, or to the affliction of others, or to the affliction of both; it was a wholesome bodily action with pleasant consequences, pleasant results,' you can abide happy and glad, training day and night in wholesome states.

12. "Rāhula, when you wish to do an action by speech... (complete as in §9, substituting "speech" for "body")... you may do such an action by speech.

13. "Also, Rāhula, while you are doing an action by speech... (complete as in §10, substituting "speech" for "body") ... you may continue in such an action by speech.

14. "Also, Rāhula, after you have done an action by speech... (complete as in §11, substituting "speech" for "body")... you can abide happy and glad, training day and night in wholesome states.

15. "Rāhula, when you wish to do an action by mind... (complete as in §9, substituting "mind" for "body") ... you may do such an action by mind.

16. "Also, Rāhula, while you are doing an action by mind... (complete as in §10, substituting "mind" for "body")... you may continue in such a mental action.

17. "Also, Rāhula, after you have done an action by mind... (complete as in §11, substituting "mind" for "body")... you can abide happy and glad, training day and night in wholesome states.

18. "Rāhula, whatever recluses and brahmins in the past purified their bodily action, their verbal action, and their mental action, all did so by repeatedly reflecting thus. Whatever recluses and brahmins in the future will purify their bodily action, their verbal action, and their mental action, all will do so by repeatedly reflecting thus. Whatever recluses and brahmins in the present are purifying their bodily action, their verbal action, and their mental action, all are doing so by repeatedly reflecting thus. Therefore, Rāhula, you should train thus: 'We will purify our bodily action, our verbal action, and our mental action by repeatedly reflecting upon them.'"

That is what the Blessed One said. The venerable Rāhula was satisfied and delighted in the Blessed One's words.

Notes 637: Rāhula was the only son of the Buddha, born on the day his father left the palace to seek enlightenment. At the age of seven he was ordained as a novice by Ven. Sāriputta on the occasion of the Buddha's first return visit to Kapilavatthu after his enlightenment. The Buddha declared him the foremost disciple among those desirous of training. According to MA, this discourse was taught to Rāhula when he was seven years old, thus very shortly after his ordination. At MN 147 he attains arahantship after listening to a discourse by the Buddha on the development of insight.

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

4.183 (3) Heard

... (1) "I do not say, brahmin, that everything seen should be spoken about, nor do I say that nothing seen should be spoken about. (2) I do not say that everything heard should be spoken about, nor do I say that nothing heard should be spoken about. (3) I do not say that everything sensed should be spoken about, nor do I say that nothing sensed should be spoken about. (4) I do not say that everything cognized should be spoken about, nor do I say that nothing cognized should be spoken about.

(1) "For, brahmin, if, when one speaks about what one has seen, unwholesome qualities increase and wholesome qualities decline, I say that one should not speak about what one has seen. But if, when one speaks about what one has seen, unwholesome qualities decline and wholesome qualities increase, I say that one should speak about what one has seen.

(2) "If, when one speaks about what one has heard, unwholesome qualities increase and wholesome qualities decline, I say that one should not speak about what one has heard. But if, when one speaks about what one has heard, unwholesome qualities decline and wholesome qualities increase, I say that one should speak about what one has heard.

(3) "If, when one speaks about what one has sensed, unwholesome qualities increase and wholesome qualities decline, I say that one should not speak about what one has sensed. But if, when one speaks about what one has sensed, unwholesome qualities decline and wholesome qualities increase, I say that one should speak about what one has sensed.

(4) "If, when one speaks about what one has cognized, unwholesome qualities increase and wholesome qualities decline, I say that one should not speak about what one has cognized. But if, when one speaks about what one has cognized, unwholesome qualities decline and wholesome qualities increase, I say that one should speak about what one has cognized."

August 2024 - Perfection of Determination (adhiṭṭhāna pāramī)

The perfections (pāramīs) are a set of ten virtues that are cultivated in order to progress on the path to nibbāna, liberation from suffering (dukkha). An overview of the Ten Perfections are presented in the January 2024 Newsletter - The Perfection of Giving (dāna pāramī). The Ten Perfections (pāramīs) are:

1. Giving (dāna pāramī) discussed in the January 2024 Newsletter,
2. Virtue (sīla pāramī) discussed in the February 2024 Newsletter,
3. Renunciation (nekkhamma pāramī) discussed in the March 2024 Newsletter,
4. Wisdom (paññā pāramī) discussed in the April 2024 Newsletter,
5. Energy (vīriya pāramī) discussed in the May 2024 Newsletter,
6. Patience (khanti pāramī) discussed in the June 2024 Newsletter,
7. Truthfulness (saccā pāramī) discussed in the July 2024 Newsletter,
8. Determination (adhiṭṭhāna pāramī) is discussed in this Newsletter,
9. Loving-Kindness (mettā pāramī) will be discussed in the September 2024 Newsletter, and
10. Equanimity (upekkhā pāramī) will be discussed in the October 2024 Newsletter.

The Perfection of Determination (adhiṭṭhāna pāramī) is unwavering resolve and commitment to purify the mind of defilements (kilesa) and train the mind to overcome obstacles on the path towards liberation from suffering, nibbāna. The virtue of determination is the single-minded decision to persevere through difficulties, doubts, and distractions in order to attain liberation.

Practicing determination involves maintaining a steadfast and unshakeable determination to follow the path of virtue (sīla), meditation (samādhi), and wisdom (paññā); i.e., the Noble Eightfold Path discussed in the May 2023 Newsletter. As well as the commitment to cultivate the other perfections (pāramīs). By perfecting determination, the mind remains focused with an ongoing and sustained effort, dedicated, and undeterred in the pursuit of nibbāna.

The commentary *A Treatise on the Pāramīs* states that determination is utilized to practice The Thirty-Seven Aids to Enlightenment (bodhipakkhiyā dhammā), also known as the Requisites of Enlightenment which constitute the entire teaching of the Buddha. The Thirty-Seven Aids to Enlightenment consist of seven groups comprising a total of thirty-seven elements.

- I. The Four Foundations of Mindfulness (cattāro satipaṭṭhānā) are discussed in the October 2023 Newsletter - Insight Meditation (vipassanā).
 1. contemplation of the Body (kāyānupassanā),
 2. contemplation of Feeling (vedanā saññā),
 3. contemplation of Mind (citta saññā), and
 4. contemplation of Mind-Objects (dammā saññā).
- II. The Four Right Strivings (cattāro sammappadhānā) or The Four Right Efforts (cattāro sammā vāyāma) are discussed in the May 2024 Newsletter - Perfection of Energy (vīriya pāramī).
 5. the effort to avoid unwholesome states of mind from arising (saṃvara-padhāna),
 6. the effort to overcome unwholesome states of mind that have arisen (pahāna-padhāna),
 7. the effort to develop wholesome states of mind (bhāvanā-padhāna), and
 8. the effort to maintain wholesome states of mind that have arisen (anurakkhaṇa-padhāna).
- III. The Four Bases for Spiritual Power (cattāro iddhipādā) is mentioned in SN 51.2 (2) Neglected.
 9. possesses concentration due to desire (chanda samādhi) and volitional formations of striving (padhāna saṅkhārasamannāgata),
 10. possesses concentration due to energy (viriya samādhi) and volitional formations of striving,
 11. possesses concentration due to mind (citta samādhi) and volitional formations of striving, and
 12. possesses concentration due to investigation (vīmaṃsa samādhi) and volitional formations of striving.
- IV. The Five Spiritual Faculties (pañc'indriyāni) is mentioned in SN 48.1 (1) Simple Version.
 13. faith (saddhā),
 14. energy (viriya),
 15. mindfulness (sati),

16. concentration (samādhi), and
 17. wisdom (paññā).
- V. The Five Powers (pañca balāni) is mentioned in SN 50.1 (1)-12 (12) The River Ganges–Eastward, Etc.
18. power of faith (saddhā) is unshakeable by faithlessness (unbelief),
 19. power of energy (virīya) is unshakeable by laziness,
 20. power of mindfulness (sati) is unshakeable by forgetfulness,
 21. power of concentration (samādhi) is unshakeable by distractedness, and
 22. power of wisdom (paññā) is unshakeable by ignorance.
- VI. The Seven Factors of Enlightenment (satta-bojjhaṅgā) is mentioned in SN 46. Bojjhaṅgasamyyutta.
23. mindfulness (sati sambojjhaṅga),
 24. discrimination of phenomena (dhammavicaya sambojjhaṅga),
 25. energy (virīya sambojjhaṅga),
 26. rapture, joy (pīti sambojjhaṅga),
 27. tranquillity (passaddhi sambojjhaṅga),
 28. concentration (samādhi sambojjhaṅga), and
 29. equanimity (upekkhā sambojjhaṅga).
- VII. The Noble Eightfold Path (ariya-aṭṭhaṅgika-magga) is discussed in the May 2023 Newsletter-Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering.
30. Right View (sammādiṭṭhi),
 31. Right Intention (sammāsaṅkappa),
 32. Right Speech (sammāvācā),
 33. Right Action (sammākammanta),
 34. Right Livelihood (sammāājīva),
 35. Right Effort (sammāvāyāma),
 36. Right Mindfulness (sammāsati), and
 37. Right Concentration (sammāsamādhi).

A Treatise on the Pāramīs by Ācariya Dhammapāla translated from the pāli by Bhikkhu Bodhi v.8

Determination has the characteristic of determining upon the requisites of enlightenment; its function is to overcome their opposites; its manifestation is unshakeableness in that task; the requisites of enlightenment are its proximate cause.

The determinations (adhiṭṭhāna) for nibbāna are practices that serve as foundations for a mind intent on liberation. There are four kinds of determinations or foundations:

1. not neglect wisdom (paññāadhiṭṭhāna),
2. preserve truth (saccāadhiṭṭhāna),
3. cultivate relinquishment (cāgādhiṭṭhāna), and
4. train for peace (upasaṃādhiṭṭhāna).

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya by Bhikkhu Nanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi

140 Dhātuvibhanga Sutta: The Exposition of the Elements

... 7. “Bhikkhu, this person consists of six elements, six bases of contact, and eighteen kinds of mental exploration, and he has four foundations. The tides of conceiving do not sweep over one who stands upon these [foundations], and when the tides of conceiving no longer sweep over him he is called a sage at peace. One should not neglect wisdom, should preserve truth, should cultivate relinquishment, and should train for peace. This is the summary of the exposition of the six elements.

... 11. “‘Bhikkhu, this person has four foundations.’ So it was said. And with reference to what was this said? There are the foundation of wisdom, the foundation of truth, the foundation of relinquishment, and the foundation of peace.¹²⁷⁰ So it was with reference to this that it was said: ‘Bhikkhu, this person has four foundations.’”

12. “One should not neglect wisdom, should preserve truth, should cultivate relinquishment, and should train for peace.¹²⁷¹ So it was said. And with reference to what was this said?

13. “How, bhikkhu, does one not neglect wisdom?¹²⁷² There are these six elements: the earth element, the water element, the fire element, the air element, the space element, and the consciousness element.

14. “What, bhikkhu, is the earth element? The earth element may be either internal or external. What is the internal earth element? Whatever internally, belonging to oneself, is solid, solidified, and clung-to, that is, head-hairs, body-hairs, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, bone-marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, diaphragm, spleen, lungs, intestines, mesentery, contents of the stomach, feces, or whatever else internally, belonging to oneself, is solid, solidified, and clung-to: this is called the internal earth element. Now both the internal earth element and the external earth element are simply earth element. And that should be seen as it actually is with proper wisdom thus: ‘This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.’ When one sees it thus as it actually is with proper wisdom, one becomes disenchanted with the earth element and makes the mind dispassionate towards the earth element.

15. “What, bhikkhu, is the water element? The water element may be either internal or external. What is the internal water element? Whatever internally, belonging to oneself, is water, watery, and clung-to, that is, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, grease, spittle, snot, oil-of-the-joints, urine, or whatever else internally, belonging to oneself, is water, watery, and clung-to: this is called the internal water element. Now both the internal water element and the external water element are simply water element. And that should be seen as it actually is with proper wisdom thus: ‘This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.’ When one sees it thus as it actually is with proper wisdom, one becomes disenchanted with the water element and makes the mind dispassionate towards the water element.

16. “What, bhikkhu, is the fire element? The fire element may be either internal or external. What is the internal fire element? Whatever internally, belonging to oneself, is fire, fiery, and clung-to, that is, that by which one is warmed, ages, and is consumed, and that by which what is eaten, drunk, consumed, and tasted gets completely digested, or whatever else internally, belonging to oneself, is fire, fiery, and clung-to: this is called the internal fire element. Now both the internal fire element and the external fire element are simply fire element. And that should be seen as it actually is with proper wisdom thus: ‘This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.’ When one sees it thus as it actually is with proper wisdom, one becomes disenchanted with the fire element and makes the mind dispassionate towards the fire element.

17. “What, bhikkhu, is the air element? The air element may be either internal or external. What is the internal air element? Whatever internally, belonging to oneself, is air, airy, and clung-to, that is, up-going winds, down-going winds, winds in the belly, winds in the bowels, winds that course through the limbs, in-breath and out-breath, or whatever else internally, belonging to oneself, is air, airy, and clung-to: this is called the internal air element. Now both the internal air element and the external air element are simply air element. And that should be seen as it actually is with proper wisdom thus: ‘This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.’ When one sees it thus as it actually is with proper wisdom, one becomes disenchanted with the air element and makes the mind dispassionate towards the air element.

18. “What, bhikkhu, is the space element? The space element may be either internal or external. What is the internal space element? Whatever internally, belonging to oneself, is space, spatial, and clung-to, that is, the holes of the ears, the nostrils, the door of the mouth, and that [aperture] whereby what is eaten, drunk, consumed, and tasted gets swallowed, and where it collects, and whereby it is excreted from below, or whatever else internally, belonging to oneself, is space, spatial, and clung-to: this is called the internal space element. Now both the internal space element and the external space element are simply space element. And that should be seen as it actually is with proper wisdom thus: ‘This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.’ When one sees it thus as it actually is with proper wisdom, one becomes disenchanted with the space element and makes the mind dispassionate towards the space element.

19. “Then there remains only consciousness, purified and bright.¹²⁷³ What does one cognize with that consciousness? One cognizes: ‘[This is] pleasant’; one cognizes: ‘[This is] painful’; one cognizes: ‘[This is] neither-painful-nor-pleasant.’ In dependence on a contact to be felt as pleasant there arises a pleasant feeling.¹²⁷⁴ When one feels a pleasant feeling, one understands: ‘I feel a pleasant feeling.’

One understands: ‘With the cessation of that same contact to be felt as pleasant, its corresponding feeling — the pleasant feeling that arose in dependence on that contact to be felt as pleasant — ceases and subsides.’ In dependence on a contact to be felt as painful there arises a painful feeling. When one feels a painful feeling, one understands: ‘I feel a painful feeling.’ One understands: ‘With the cessation of that same contact to be felt as painful, its corresponding feeling — the painful feeling that arose in dependence on that contact to be felt as painful — ceases and subsides.’ In dependence on a contact to be felt as neither-painful-nor-pleasant there arises a neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling. When one feels a neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling, one understands: ‘I feel a neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling.’ One understands: ‘With the cessation of that same contact to be felt as neither-painful-nor-pleasant, its corresponding feeling — the neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling that arose in dependence on that contact to be felt as neither-painful-nor-pleasant — ceases and subsides.’ Bhikkhu, just as from the contact and friction of two fire-sticks heat is generated and fire is produced, and with the separation and disjunction of those two fire-sticks the corresponding heat ceases and subsides; so too, in dependence on a contact to be felt as pleasant... to be felt as painful... to be felt as neither-painful-nor-pleasant there arises a neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling... One understands: ‘With the cessation of that same contact to be felt as neither-painful-nor-pleasant, its corresponding feeling... ceases and subsides.’

20. “Then there remains only equanimity, purified and bright, malleable, wieldy, and radiant.¹²⁷⁵ Suppose, bhikkhu, a skilled goldsmith or his apprentice were to prepare a furnace, heat up the crucible, take some gold with tongs, and put it into the crucible. From time to time he would blow on it, from time to time he would sprinkle water over it, and from time to time he would just look on. That gold would become refined, well refined, completely refined, faultless, rid of dross, malleable, wieldy, and radiant. Then whatever kind of ornament he wished to make from it, whether a golden chain or earrings or a necklace or a golden garland, it would serve his purpose. So too, bhikkhu, then there remains only equanimity, purified and bright, malleable, wieldy, and radiant.

21. “He understands thus: ‘If I were to direct this equanimity, so purified and bright, to the base of infinite space and to develop my mind accordingly, then this equanimity of mine, supported by that base, clinging to it, would remain for a very long time.¹²⁷⁶ If I were to direct this equanimity, so purified and bright, to the base of infinite consciousness... to the base of nothingness... to the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception and to develop my mind accordingly, then this equanimity of mine, supported by that base, clinging to it, would remain for a very long time.’

22. “He understands thus: ‘If I were to direct this equanimity, so purified and bright, to the base of infinite space and to develop my mind accordingly, this would be conditioned.¹²⁷⁷ If I were to direct this equanimity, so purified and bright, to the base of infinite consciousness... to the base of nothingness... to the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception and to develop my mind accordingly, this would be conditioned.’ He does not form any condition or generate any volition tending towards either being or non-being.¹²⁷⁸ Since he does not form any condition or generate any volition tending towards either being or non-being, he does not cling to anything in this world. When he does not cling, he is not agitated. When he is not agitated, he personally attains Nibbāna. He understands thus: ‘Birth is destroyed, the holy life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more coming to any state of being.’¹²⁷⁹

23. “If he feels a pleasant feeling,¹²⁸⁰ he understands: ‘It is impermanent; there is no holding to it; there is no delight in it.’ If he feels a painful feeling, he understands: ‘It is impermanent; there is no holding to it; there is no delight in it.’ If he feels a neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling, he understands: ‘It is impermanent; there is no holding to it; there is no delight in it.’

24. “If he feels a pleasant feeling, he feels it detached; if he feels a painful feeling, he feels it detached; if he feels a neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling, he feels it detached. When he feels a feeling terminating with the body, he understands: ‘I feel a feeling terminating with the body.’ When he feels a feeling terminating with life, he understands: ‘I feel a feeling terminating with life.’¹²⁸¹ He understands: ‘On the dissolution of the body, with the ending of life, all that is felt, not being delighted in, will become cool right here.’¹²⁸² Bhikkhu, just as an oil-lamp burns in dependence on oil and a wick, and when the oil and wick are used up, if it does not get any more fuel, it is extinguished from lack of fuel; so too when he feels a feeling terminating with the body... a feeling terminating with life, he

understands: ‘I feel a feeling terminating with life.’ He understands: ‘On the dissolution of the body, with the ending of life, all that is felt, not being delighted in, will become cool right here.’

25. “Therefore a bhikkhu possessing [this wisdom] possesses the supreme foundation of wisdom. For this, bhikkhu, is the supreme noble wisdom, namely, the knowledge of the destruction of all suffering.¹²⁸³

26. “His deliverance, being founded upon truth, is unshakeable. For that is false, bhikkhu, which has a deceptive nature, and that is true which has an undeceptive nature — Nibbāna. Therefore a bhikkhu possessing [this truth] possesses the supreme foundation of truth. For this, bhikkhu, is the supreme noble truth, namely, Nibbāna, which has an undeceptive nature.

27. “Formerly, when he was ignorant, he undertook and accepted acquisitions;¹²⁸⁴ now he has abandoned them, cut them off at the root, made them like a palm stump, done away with them so that they are no longer subject to future arising. Therefore a bhikkhu possessing [this relinquishment] possesses the supreme foundation of relinquishment. For this, bhikkhu, is the supreme noble relinquishment, namely, the relinquishing of all acquisitions.

28. “Formerly, when he was ignorant, he experienced covetousness, desire, and lust; now he has abandoned them, cut them off at the root, made them like a palm stump, done away with them so that they are no longer subject to future arising. Formerly, when he was ignorant, he experienced anger, ill will, and hate; now he has abandoned them, cut them off at the root, made them like a palm stump, done away with them so that they are no longer subject to future arising. Formerly, when he was ignorant, he experienced ignorance and delusion; now he has abandoned them, cut them off at the root, made them like a palm stump, done away with them so that they are no longer subject to future arising. Therefore a bhikkhu possessing [this peace] possesses the supreme foundation of peace. For this, bhikkhu, is the supreme noble peace, namely, the pacification of lust, hate, and delusion.

29. “So it was with reference to this that it was said: ‘One should not neglect wisdom, should preserve truth, should cultivate relinquishment, and should train for peace.’ ...

Notes:

1270: Paññādhiṭṭhāna, saccādhiṭṭhāna, cāgādhiṭṭhāna, upasamādhiṭṭhāna. Nm, in Ms, had first rendered adhiṭṭhāna as “resolve,” and then replaced it with “mode of expression,” neither of which seems suitable for this context. MA glosses the word with patīṭṭhā, which clearly means foundation, and explains the sense of the statement thus: “This person who consists of the six elements, the six bases of contact, and the eighteen kinds of mental approach — when he turns away from these and attains arahantship, the supreme accomplishment, he does so established upon these four bases.” The four foundations will be individually elucidated by the sequel, §§12–29.

1271 MA: From the start one should not neglect the wisdom born of concentration and insight in order to penetrate through to the wisdom of the fruit of arahantship. One should preserve truthful speech in order to realise Nibbāna, the ultimate truth. One should cultivate the relinquishment of defilements in order to relinquish all defilements by the path of arahantship. From the start one should train in the pacification of defilements in order to pacify all defilements by the path of arahantship. Thus the wisdom, etc., born of serenity and insight are spoken of as the preliminary foundations for achieving the foundations of wisdom, etc. (distinctive of arahantship).

1272 MA: The non-neglecting of wisdom is explained by way of the meditation on the elements.

1273 MA: This is the sixth element, which “remains” in that it has yet to be expounded by the Buddha and penetrated by Pukkusāti. Here it is explained as the consciousness that accomplishes the work of insight contemplation on the elements. Under the heading of consciousness, the contemplation of feeling is also introduced.

1274 This passage shows the conditionality of feeling and its impermanence through the cessation of its condition.

1275 MA identifies this as the equanimity of the fourth jhāna. According to MA, Pukkusāti had already achieved the fourth jhāna and had a strong attachment to it. The Buddha first praises this equanimity to inspire Pukkusāti’s confidence, then he gradually leads him to the immaterial jhānas and the attainment of the paths and fruits.

1276 The sense is: If he attains the base of infinite space and should pass away while still attached to it, he would be reborn in the plane of infinite space and would live there for the full lifespan of 20,000

aeons specified for that plane. In the higher three immaterial planes the lifespan is respectively 40,000 aeons, 60,000 aeons, and 84,000 aeons.

1277 MA: This is said in order to show the danger in the immaterial jhānas. By the one phrase, “This would be conditioned,” he shows: “Even though the lifespan there is 20,000 aeons, that is conditioned, fashioned, built up. It is thus impermanent, unstable, not lasting, transient. It is subject to perishing, breaking up, and dissolution; it is involved with birth, ageing, and death, grounded upon suffering. It is not a shelter, a place of safety, a refuge. Having passed away there as a worldling, one can still be reborn in the four states of deprivation.”

1278 So n’eva abhisankharoti nābhisañcetaṃ bhavāya vā vibhavāya. The two verbs suggest the notion of volition as a constructive power that builds up the continuation of conditioned existence. Ceasing to will for either being or non-being shows the extinction of craving for eternal existence and annihilation, culminating in the attainment of arahantship.

1279 MA says that at this point Pukkusaṃti penetrated three paths and fruits, becoming a non-returner. He realised that his teacher was the Buddha himself, but he could not express his realisation since the Buddha still continued with his discourse.

1280 This passage shows the arahant’s abiding in the Nibbāna element with a residue remaining (of the factors of conditioned existence, sa-upādisesa nibbānadhātu). Though he continues to experience feelings, he is free from lust towards pleasant feeling, from aversion towards painful feeling, and from ignorance about neutral feeling.

1281 That is, he continues to experience feeling only as long as the body with its life faculty continues, but not beyond that.

1282 This refers to his attainment of the Nibbāna-element with no residue remaining (anupādisesa nibbānadhātu) — the cessation of all conditioned existence with his final passing away.

1283 This completes the exposition of the first foundation, which began at §13. MA says that the knowledge of the destruction of all suffering is the wisdom pertaining to the fruit of arahantship.

1284 MA mentions four kinds of acquisitions (upadhi) here: see n.674.

674 Upadhi. MA glosses: For the abandoning of four kinds of upadhi — the aggregates, defilements, volitional formations, and cords of sensual pleasure (khandh’upadhi kiles’upadhi abhisankhār’upadhi kāmagaṇ’upadhi).

The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Dīgha Nikāya translated by Maurice O’C. Walshe

33 Saṅgīti Sutta: The Chanting Together

(27) ‘Four kinds of resolve (adhiṭṭhānāni): [to gain] (a) wisdom, (b) truth (sacca),¹⁰⁷⁰ (c) relinquishment (cāga), (d) tranquillity (upasama).

Note 1070: Truth, i.e. realisation of ‘things as they really are’.

Some examples of how the Perfection of Determination (adhiṭṭhāna pāramī) is balanced and assisted by the other perfections follow:

- The Perfection of Renunciation (nekkhamma pāramī) is the letting go of attachments to sensual pleasures and worldly desires. Determination is assisted by renunciation as it reduces distractions and allows the mind to concentrate on the training. A skillful lifestyle will strengthen determination by renouncing external influences that hinder progress in freeing the mind from the defilements.
- The Perfection of Wisdom (paññā pāramī) guides determination by providing an understanding of the nature of reality and the path to liberation. With wisdom, the mind can discern the right goals and make informed decisions on how to achieve them. Determination, when guided by wisdom, is aligned with the ultimate goal of nibbāna.
- The Perfection of Determination and The Perfection of Energy (viriya pāramī) are closely related. Energy provides the necessary effort and perseverance to overcome obstacles on the path. Determination directs energy towards the purification of mind and liberation from suffering. The two work hand in hand to maintain a consistent and vigorous practice.
- The Perfection of Determination requires the Perfection of Patience (khanti pāramī), especially in the face of challenges and setbacks. Patience allows the mind to endure difficulties without losing focus

or enthusiasm. The combination of determination and patience ensures a steady progression on the path to liberation from suffering and perfect peace.

September 2024 - Perfection of Loving-Kindness (mettā pāramī)

The perfections (pāramīs) are a set of ten virtues that are cultivated in order to progress on the path to nibbāna, liberation from suffering (dukkha). An overview of the Ten Perfections are presented in the January 2024 Newsletter - The Perfection of Giving (dāna pāramī). The Ten Perfections (pāramīs) are:

1. Giving (dāna pāramī) discussed in the January 2024 Newsletter,
2. Virtue (sīla pāramī) discussed in the February 2024 Newsletter,
3. Renunciation (nekkhamma pāramī) discussed in the March 2024 Newsletter,
4. Wisdom (paññā pāramī) discussed in the April 2024 Newsletter,
5. Energy (vīriya pāramī) discussed in the May 2024 Newsletter,
6. Patience (khanti pāramī) discussed in the June 2024 Newsletter,
7. Truthfulness (saccā pāramī) discussed in the July 2024 Newsletter,
8. Determination (adhiṭṭhāna pāramī) discussed in the August 2024 Newsletter,
9. Loving-Kindness (mettā pāramī) is discussed in this Newsletter, and
10. Equanimity (upekkhā pāramī) will be discussed in the October 2024 Newsletter.

The Perfection of Loving-Kindness (mettā pāramī) is the cultivation of a boundless and unconditional friendliness, compassion, and goodwill towards all sentient beings, without discrimination or attachment. The mind has a compassionate and loving attitude, wishing happiness, well-being, and freedom from suffering for all sentient beings, including oneself, friends, enemies, strangers, and all life forms. The practice is to train the mind to be constant and continuous in radiating love and compassion, to have an understanding and feeling for the connection with all of life; actively expressing loving actions with kindness, gentleness, generosity, and helpfulness. The trained mind transcends selfishness and self-centeredness, breaks down defensive barriers established by the ego, and cultivates a heart full of love for the welfare of all beings.

The cultivation of loving-kindness requires a focused intention that develops the mental faculties of concentration (samādhi) and mindfulness (sati). The heightened awareness achieved by training the mind with loving-kindness contributes to a stable and balanced mind that is able to ward off ill will and hatred.

Ill will, malice and hostility is the meaning of the Pāli word vyāpāda. This is a mind that has a desire to cause harm to others and has an active wish to inflict suffering or see others suffer. Ill will arises or is born from hatred or aversion; is one of the Five Hindrances (pañca nīvaraṇā) that obstruct progress in meditation (bhāvanā) and progress towards liberation from suffering, nibbāna; and is also listed as one of the Ten Fetters (saṃyojana) that bind beings to the cycle of rebirth (saṃsāra). The Five Hindrances are discussed in the September 2023 Newsletter-Tranquility Meditation (samatha) and The Five Hindrances (pañca nīvaraṇā) and are listed as follows:

1. sensual desire (kāmacchanda),
2. ill will (vyāpāda),
3. sloth and torpor (thīna middha),
4. restlessness and remorse (uddhaccakukkucca), and
5. doubt (vicikicchā).

The Ten Fetters are discussed in the May 2023 Newsletter-Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering and are listed as follows:

30. sakkāya diṭṭhi: personality belief,
31. vicikicchā: doubt,
32. sīlabbata parāmāsa: clinging to rites and rituals,
33. kāma rāga: sensuous desire,
34. vyāpāda: ill will,
35. rūpa rāga: craving for existence in the Form World, fine material existence,
36. arūpa rāga: craving for existence in the Formless World, immaterial existence,
37. māna: conceit,
38. uddhacca: restlessness, and

39. avijjā: ignorance.

Hatred, aversion, and anger is the meaning of the Pāli word dosā. The mind consumed with hatred has aversion towards people, other sentient beings, objects, or situations; broader in scope than ill will and can include irritation, annoyance, and anger; and not necessarily involving a wish to harm. Hatred is one of the Three Unwholesome Roots (akusala mūla) which are the root causes for suffering (dukkha), unwholesome kamma, unethical behavior and the repeated cycle of rebirth (saṃsāra). The Three Unwholesome Roots are discussed in the August 2023 Newsletter-kamma and are listed as follows:

5. delusion (moha) = ignorance (avijjā),
6. greed (lobha), and
7. hatred (dosa).

Ill will is more specific and intense than hatred, involving an active intention to cause harm. Hatred, on the other hand, is a broader term that includes a range of aversive feelings from mild irritation to intense hatred. Hatred is like the fertile ground where negative emotions can grow, while ill will is a specific weed that can sprout from that ground.

The loving and kind mind resists, counters and can eventually uproot both ill-will and hatred. When ill will is mentioned, hatred is also implied in the following benefits for cultivating loving-kindness.

- The active and continuous cultivation of love, kindness, and compassion will prevent ill will from arising and will remove ill will that has already arisen.
- Loving-kindness produces a shift in perspective from self-centeredness to a view that welcomes and includes others. The mind extends feelings and thoughts of love and goodwill not only to themselves but also to relatives, friends, acquaintances, strangers, and to others in conflicting relationships. This expanded perspective dissolves the boundaries that fuel ill will.
- Ill will may be a cycle of negativity and reactivity, arising from unwholesome thoughts, judgments, or resentments towards oneself or others. Loving-kindness interrupts this cycle by replacing unwholesome thoughts with wholesome ones, fostering wholesome emotions and perceptions where ill will has no room to thrive. Instead of reacting with hatred or resentment, the mind responds with love and understanding, disrupting the perpetuation of ill will.
- The practice of loving-kindness also develops equanimity: a balanced and non-reactive mind. The mind that creates the habit of radiating loving-kindness will then be able to face challenging situations with a calm and compassionate view, and not react with ill will.
- The mind of loving-kindness is conducive to inner peace and tranquility. As the mind experiences the soothing effects of love and goodwill, the agitations of the mind that contribute to ill will naturally diminish.
- The cultivation of loving-kindness is a means of purifying the mind. As the mind consistently engages in this practice, the defilements (kilesa), including ill will, are gradually uprooted, leading to a wholesome and purified state of mind.

Loving-Kindness is one of the Four Divine Abodes (brahmavihāra), also known as the Four Immeasurables and Sublime Attitudes.

1. Loving-kindness (mettā),
2. Compassion (karuṇā),
3. Altruistic or Sympathetic Joy (muditā), and
4. Equanimity (upekkhā).

The Four Divine Abodes are discussed in the September 2023 Newsletter - Tranquility Meditation (samatha) and The Five Hindrances (pañca nīvaraṇā).

See the July 2022 Newsletter - The Practice of Metta (Loving-Kindness) for additional discussion on the development and practice of loving-kindness.

Examples of how the Perfection of Loving-Kindness (mettā pāramī) is balanced and assisted by the other perfections follow.

- Loving-kindness is balanced by the Perfection of Generosity (dāna pāramī) as generosity arises from a heart filled with loving-kindness. Practicing generosity creates a sense of goodwill and compassion toward others, laying the foundation for cultivating loving-kindness. When the mind is generous, a positive and benevolent view arises which aligns with the intentions of loving-kindness.

- The Perfection of Patience (khanti pāramī) is crucial for the cultivation of loving-kindness, especially when faced with challenges or difficulties. Being patient allows the mind to respond to others with understanding and tolerance, creating an environment conducive to the growth of loving-kindness.
- The Perfection of Renunciation (nekkhamma pāramī) aims to reduce and eliminate attachment to personal desires and cravings, thereby the mind will develop a selfless and compassionate attitude. The reduction in selfish desires results in the expansion of loving-kindness towards all beings.
- The Perfection of Wisdom (paññā pāramī) guides the cultivation of loving-kindness by providing insight into the interconnectedness of all beings.

Loving-Kindness is discussed in the following sutta excerpts.

The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

42.8 The Conch Blower

... “Then, headman, that noble disciple—who is thus devoid of covetousness, devoid of ill will, unconfused, clearly comprehending, ever mindful—dwells pervading one quarter with a mind imbued with lovingkindness, likewise the second quarter, the third quarter, and the fourth quarter. Thus above, below, across, and everywhere, and to all as to himself, he dwells pervading the entire world with a mind imbued with lovingkindness, vast, exalted, measureless, without hostility, without ill will. ...

The Suttanipata: An Ancient Collection of the Buddha's Discourses Together with Its Commentaries translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

I.8 Loving-Kindness (Metta Sutta)

143. This is what should be done by one skilled in the good, having made the breakthrough to that peaceful state: he should be able, upright, and very upright, amenable to advice and gentle, without arrogance. (1)

144. [He should be] content and easily supported, of few duties and a frugal way of living; of peaceful faculties and judicious, courteous, without greed when among families. (2)

145. He should not do anything, however slight, because of which other wise people might criticize him. May all beings be happy and secure; may they be inwardly happy! (3)

146. Whatever living beings there are whether frail or firm, without omission, those that are long or those that are large, middling, short, fine, or gross; (4)

147. whether they are seen or unseen, whether they dwell far or near, whether they have come to be or will come to be, may all beings be inwardly happy! (5)

148. No one should deceive another, nor despise anyone anywhere. Because of anger and thoughts of aversion no one should wish suffering for another. (6)

149. Just as a mother would protect her son, her only son, with her own life, so one should develop toward all beings a state of mind without boundaries. (7)

150. And toward the whole world one should develop loving-kindness, a state of mind without boundaries — above, below, and across — unconfined, without enmity, without adversaries. (8)

151. Whether standing, walking, sitting, or lying down, as long as one is not drowsy, one should resolve on this mindfulness: they call this a divine dwelling here. (9)

152. Not taking up any views, possessing good behavior, endowed with vision, having removed greed for sensual pleasures, one never again comes back to the bed of a womb. (10)

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

11.15 (5) Loving-Kindness

“Bhikkhus, when the liberation of the mind by loving-kindness has been pursued, developed, and cultivated, made a vehicle and basis, carried out, consolidated, and properly undertaken, eleven benefits are to be expected. What eleven?

(1) “One sleeps well; (2) one awakens happily; (3) one does not have bad dreams; (4) one is pleasing to human beings; (5) one is pleasing to spirits; (6) deities protect one; (7) fire, poison, and weapons do not injure one; (8) one’s mind quickly becomes concentrated; (9) one’s facial complexion is

serene; (10) one dies unconfused; and (11) if one does not penetrate further, one fares on to the brahmā world.

“When, bhikkhus, the liberation of the mind by loving-kindness has been repeatedly pursued, developed, and cultivated, made a vehicle and basis, carried out, consolidated, and properly undertaken, these eleven benefits are to be expected.”

October 2024 - Perfection of Equanimity (upekkhā pāramī)

The perfections (pāramīs) are a set of ten virtues that are cultivated in order to progress on the path to nibbāna, liberation from suffering (dukkha). An overview of the Ten Perfections are presented in the January 2024 Newsletter - The Perfection of Giving (dāna pāramī). The Ten Perfections (pāramīs) are:

1. Giving (dāna pāramī) discussed in the January 2024 Newsletter,
2. Virtue (sīla pāramī) discussed in the February 2024 Newsletter,
3. Renunciation (nekkhamma pāramī) discussed in the March 2024 Newsletter,
4. Wisdom (paññā pāramī) discussed in the April 2024 Newsletter,
5. Energy (vīriya pāramī) discussed in the May 2024 Newsletter,
6. Patience (khanti pāramī) discussed in the June 2024 Newsletter,
7. Truthfulness (saccā pāramī) discussed in the July 2024 Newsletter,
8. Determination (adhiṭṭhāna pāramī) discussed in the August 2024 Newsletter,
9. Loving-Kindness (mettā pāramī) discussed in the September 2024 Newsletter, and
10. Equanimity (upekkhā pāramī) is discussed in this Newsletter.

The Perfection of Equanimity (upekkhā pāramī) is to maintain mental balance and impartiality in all situations. The mind with equanimity is balanced and undisturbed by the ups and downs of life represented by The Eight Worldly Concerns (lokadhamma):

1. Hope for gain (lābha) is attachment to gaining material possessions, wealth, and favorable circumstances.
2. Fear of loss (alābha) is aversion to loss, poverty, and unfavorable conditions.
3. Hope for fame (yasa) is attachment to gaining recognition, praise, and popularity.
4. Fear of disrepute (ayasa) is aversion to insignificance and a negative reputation.
5. Hope for praise (pasamsā) is attachment to receiving praise, compliments, and positive feedback.
6. Fear of criticism (nindā) is aversion to criticism, negative feedback, and blame.
7. Hope for pleasure (sukha) is attachment to experiencing pleasure, comfort, and happiness.
8. Fear of pain (dukkha) is aversion to misery, discomfort, and suffering.

The mind with equanimity goes beyond indifference or apathy but is calm and steady under various circumstances. The mind is not disturbed by and is detached from internal or external impermanent phenomena.

Equanimity is a great virtue, as it is a state of mind that is not swayed by the above worldly concerns. The mind is compassionate (karuṇā) and has understanding (paññā) of the impermanence (anicca) and inherent unsatisfactoriness (dukkha) of all conditioned phenomena.

Equanimity is one of the Four Divine Abodes (brahma-vihāra), and one of the Seven Factors of Enlightenment (bojjhaṅga). The Four Divine Abodes, also known as the Four Immeasurables and Sublime Attitudes are discussed in the September 2023 Newsletter - Tranquility Meditation (samatha) and The Five Hindrances (pañca nīvaraṇā). The Four Divine Abodes are the following:

1. Loving-kindness (mettā),
2. Compassion (karuṇā),
3. Altruistic or Sympathetic Joy (muditā), and
4. Equanimity (upekkhā).

The Seven Factors of Enlightenment are the following:

8. Mindfulness (sati),
9. Investigation of Dhamma (dhamma-vicaya),
10. Energy (virīya),
11. Joy (pīti),
12. Tranquility (passaddhi),
13. Concentration (sāmādhī), and
14. Equanimity (upekkhā).

Examples of how the Perfection of Equanimity (upekkhā pāramī) is balanced and assisted by the other perfections follow.

- The Perfection of Generosity (dāna pāramī) provides a foundation for the development of equanimity by reducing attachment to material possessions and fostering a sense of interconnectedness with others.
- The Perfection of Equanimity is supported by the Perfection of Virtue (sīla pāramī), as the mind will tolerate the ups and downs of life with a clear conscience and a sense of inner stability.
- The Perfection of Renunciation (nekkhamma pāramī) supports the development of equanimity by not clinging to worldly pleasures and outcomes, resulting in a mind that is nonreactive to the changing conditions of life, thereby promoting mental balance.
- The Perfection of Wisdom (paññā pāramī) conditions equanimity with insight into the nature of reality, allows the mind to accept the impermanent and conditional nature of all things, leading to a balanced response to life's challenges.
- The Perfection of Equanimity is balanced by the Perfection of Energy (viriya pāramī). Effort is balanced and sustained in practice, meeting difficulties with resilience and patience, and energy applied wisely without the mind overwhelmed with tension and stress.
- The Perfection of Patience (khanti pāramī) conditions equanimity by allowing the mind to endure difficulties with calm acceptance and without agitation or resentment.

The following sutta excerpts provide teachings on equanimity.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Nanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi

118 Ānāpānasati Sutta: Mindfulness of Breathing

... 36. “He closely looks on with equanimity at the mind thus concentrated. On whatever occasion a bhikkhu closely looks on with equanimity at the mind thus concentrated — on that occasion the equanimity enlightenment factor is aroused in him, and he develops it, and by development it comes to fulfillment in him.

The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

36.31 (11) Spiritual

... “And what, bhikkhus, is carnal equanimity? There are, bhikkhus, these five cords of sensual pleasure. What five? Forms cognizable by the eye, sounds cognizable by the ear, odors cognizable by the nose, flavors cognizable by the tongue, and tactile objects cognizable by the body that are desirable, lovely, agreeable, pleasing, sensually enticing, tantalizing. These are the five cords of sensual pleasure. The equanimity that arises in dependence on these five cords of sensual pleasure: this is called carnal equanimity.

“And what, bhikkhus, is spiritual equanimity? With the abandoning of pleasure and pain, and with the previous passing away of joy and displeasure, a bhikkhu enters and dwells in the fourth jhāna, which is neither painful nor pleasant and includes the purification of mindfulness by equanimity.

“And what, bhikkhus, is equanimity more spiritual than the spiritual? When a bhikkhu whose taints are destroyed reviews his mind liberated from lust, liberated from hatred, liberated from delusion, there arises equanimity. This is called equanimity more spiritual than the spiritual.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Nanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi

137 Saḷāyatanavibhanga Sutta: The Exposition of the Sixfold Base

... 14. “Herein, what are the six kinds of equanimity based on the household life? On seeing a form with the eye, equanimity arises in a foolish infatuated ordinary person, in an untaught ordinary person who has not conquered his limitations or conquered the results [of action] and who is blind to danger. Such equanimity as this does not transcend the form; that is why it is called equanimity based on the household life.¹²⁴¹

“On hearing a sound with the ear... On smelling an odour with the nose... On tasting a flavour with the tongue... On touching a tangible with the body... On cognizing a mind-object with the mind, equanimity arises in a foolish infatuated ordinary person, in an untaught ordinary person who has not conquered his limitations or conquered the results [of action] and who is blind to danger. Such

equanimity as this does not transcend the mind-object; that is why it is called equanimity based on the household life. These are the six kinds of equanimity based on the household life.

15. "Herein, what are the six kinds of equanimity based on renunciation? When, by knowing the impermanence, change, fading away, and cessation of forms, one sees as it actually is with proper wisdom that forms both formerly and now are all impermanent, suffering, and subject to change, equanimity arises. Such equanimity as this transcends the form; that is why it is called equanimity based on renunciation.¹²⁴²

"When, by knowing the impermanence, change, fading away, and cessation of sounds... of odours... of flavours... of tangibles... of mind-objects, one sees as it actually is with proper wisdom that mind-objects both formerly and now are all impermanent, suffering, and subject to change, equanimity arises. Such equanimity as this transcends the mind-object; that is why it is called equanimity based on renunciation. These are the six kinds of equanimity based on renunciation.

... 17. "There is, bhikkhus, equanimity that is diversified, based on diversity; and there is equanimity that is unified, based on unity.¹²⁴³

18. "And what, bhikkhus, is equanimity that is diversified, based on diversity? There is equanimity regarding forms, sounds, odours, flavours, and tangibles. This, bhikkhus, is equanimity that is diversified, based on diversity.

19. "And what, bhikkhus, is equanimity that is unified, based on unity? There is equanimity regarding the base of infinite space, the base of infinite consciousness, the base of nothingness, and the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception. This, bhikkhus, is equanimity that is unified, based on unity.

20. "Here, bhikkhus, by depending and relying on equanimity that is unified, based on unity, abandon and surmount equanimity that is diversified, based on diversity. It is thus this is abandoned; it is thus this is surmounted.¹²⁴⁴

"Bhikkhus, by depending and relying on non-identification,¹²⁴⁵ abandon and surmount equanimity that is unified, based on unity. It is thus this is abandoned; it is thus this is surmounted.

"So it was in reference to this that it was said: 'Therein, by depending on this, abandon that.'

Notes:

1241 MA: This is the equanimity of unknowing that arises in one who has not conquered the limitations imposed by the defilements or the future results (of action). It "does not transcend the form" because it is stuck, fastened to the object like flies to a ball of sugar.

1242 MA: This is the equanimity associated with insight knowledge. It does not become lustful towards desirable objects that come into range of the senses, nor does it become angry because of undesirable objects.

1243 MA says that previously worldly equanimity was discussed, but here the contrast is between the equanimity in differentiated sense experience and the equanimity of the meditative attainments.

1244 MA paraphrases: "By the equanimity of the immaterial attainments, abandon the equanimity of the fine-material attainments; by insight into the immaterial sphere, abandon insight into the fine-material sphere."

1245 MA says that non-identification (*atammayatā*) here refers to "insight leading to emergence," i.e., the insight immediately preceding the arising of the supramundane path; for this effects the abandonment of the equanimity of the immaterial attainments and the equanimity of insight.

November 2024 - Rebirth (punabbhava or paccājāta) and a Brief Survey of Evidence for Rebirth

Rebirth, also known as re-becoming or renewed becoming, is continued existence from one life to another; i.e., to take birth again. The term "reincarnation" refers to a permanent fixed soul that is reborn while the term "rebirth" refers to a dynamic stream of consciousness (viññāṇa-sota) that transitions to another existence. Buddhism specifies "rebirth" and not "reincarnation."

Rebirth is governed by ignorance (avijjā), craving (taṇhā), clinging (upādāna), and kamma, and the process is defined by Dependent Origination (paticcasamuppāda).

Ignorance is not knowing the Four Noble Truths (ariya catusacca). The Noble Truths reveal the nature of existence and the path to liberation from suffering (dukkha).

5. The Noble Truth of Suffering (dukkha) acknowledges the existence of suffering, the reality of dissatisfaction and unsatisfactoriness in the cycle of birth, aging, sickness, death and rebirth (saṃsāra). This truth is discussed in the February 2023 Newsletter.
6. The Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering (samudaya) is craving (taṇhā), attachment and identification with that which is impermanent (anicca). This truth is discussed in the March 2023 Newsletter.
7. The Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering (nirodha) is the elimination of the causes for suffering and the result is nibbāna, the escape from saṃsāra. This truth is discussed in the April 2023 Newsletter.
8. The Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering (magga) is training in the Noble Eightfold Path (ariya aṭṭhaṅgika magga) that leads to nibbāna. This truth is discussed in the May 2023 Newsletter.

Kamma is intentional moral actions discussed in the August 2023 Newsletter.

Dependent Origination is the process of phenomena arising based on conditions discussed in the July 2023 Newsletter.

Rebirth takes place in the endless cycle of saṃsāra: birth (jāti), old age (jarā), sickness (byādhi), death (maraṇa), and rebirth. The endless cycle of saṃsāra results in suffering (dukkha), sorrow (soka), lamentation (parideva), pain (dukkha), grief (domanassa) and despair (upāyāsa) during each phase of the cycle. The Buddha taught the goal of practice is to escape from saṃsāra and be liberated from dukkha, that enlightened state is called nibbāna.

The evolving consciousness (samvattanika-viññāna) or stream of consciousness (viññāna-sotam); that is tainted by ignorance, craving and clinging, and conditioned by kamma; upon physical death, is propelled to be embodied by a new form. At the death of one personality, a new one comes into being, just as the flame of a dying candle can serve to light the flame of another. The consciousness in the new person is neither identical to nor entirely different from that in the deceased but the two form a causal continuum or stream.

Concepts Related to Rebirth

• Not-self (anattā)

Rebirth is not the transmigration of a permanent soul or self. Instead, what we think of as "self" is a collection of ever-changing components, the Five Aggregates (pañcakkhandhā):

1. material form (rūpa khandha),
2. mental formations (saṅkhāra khandha),
3. perceptions (saññā khandha),
4. feelings (vedanā khandha), and
5. sense consciousness (viññāṇa khandha).

Since these aggregates are always changing and are impermanent, there is no enduring permanent self that can be reborn. The concept of not-self (anattā) refers to the understanding that there is no permanent, unchanging self, ego or soul. The self, ego or personality is discussed in the January 2023 Newsletter,

- Saṃsāra is the endless cycle of birth, ageing, sickness, death, and rebirth. Saṃsāra literally means ‘perpetual wandering’. Rebirth occurs within saṃsāra and in a number of different cosmological realms. The Buddha taught that there is another world; i.e. different rebirth realms.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya

translated by Bhikkhu Nanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi

60 Aparaṇṇaka Sutta: The Incontrovertible Teaching

8. “Since there actually is another world, one who holds the view ‘there is no other world’ has wrong view. ...”

Rebirth may occur in any of the following six main realms of existence.

1. Heavenly Realm (deva loka), also known as the realm of gods, are inhabited by devas. Devas are celestial beings or deities who experience mostly pleasure and a long lifespan. Devas are still subject to birth, ageing, sickness, death, and rebirth.
2. Titan or Demigod Realm (asura loka) are inhabited by asuras. Asuras are powerful beings who are driven by jealousy, aggression, and a desire for power. Asuras are often fighting battles with each other and with the devas. Despite their immense strength, they are dissatisfied and tormented.
3. Human Realm (manussa loka) are inhabited by human beings. This is a favorable realm due to the experience of both happiness (sukha) and suffering (dukkha). Dukkha motivates people to cultivate such spiritual qualities as wisdom (paññā) and loving-kindness (mettā) which are required to achieve nibbāna, the complete liberation from suffering.
4. Animal Realm (tiracchāna loka) are inhabited by animals who have a preponderance of ignorance and instinctual behavior. Animals have limited cognitive abilities, are motivated by survival instincts; and suffer greatly from hunger, fear, and predation.
5. Hungry Ghost Realm (peta loka) are inhabited by pretas who suffer from intense hunger and thirst. Pretas have insatiable appetites but due to their extremely narrow throats and tiny mouths, they are constantly frustrated and tormented by the impossibility of satisfying their cravings.
6. Hell Realm (niraya loka) are inhabited by beings who experience intense suffering and torment. Hell beings experience excruciating pain as a result of unwholesome actions (akusalakamma).

When a being dies, the intentional moral actions (kamma) accumulated throughout their current and past lives influences the conditions of their next rebirth. Beings are not necessarily reborn in the same realm in which they were born and may fall into a lower realm.

Volitional or mental formations are kamma formations, patterns of behaviour that are conditioned by past ignorance. Volitional formations (saṅkhārā), ignorance (avijjā), craving (taṇhā) and clinging (upādāna) are the causes that result in rebirth within saṃsāra from one life to the next. Ignorance (avijjā) is the primary cause for saṃsāra and is also the primary cause of suffering (dukkha) inherent in saṃsāra. The Second Noble Truth, discussed in the March 2023 Newsletter - The Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering, states that craving (taṇhā) is the proximate cause for dukkha, however ignorance is the fundamental cause.

Ignorance, craving, clinging, and kamma propels a being to wander in saṃsāra. The type of rebirth a person experiences depends on the kamma they have generated. The life of beings caught within saṃsāra experience suffering (dukkha) as they continuously wander across various realms of existence by taking repeated birth in fortunate and unfortunate realms. The aim of the teachings of Buddha is to escape from saṃsāra by uprooting the defilements (kilesa) that produce kamma and empower the cycle of saṃsāra. The primary defilements (kilesa), obstacles of mind, are the Three Unwholesome Roots (akusala mūla):

1. delusion (moha) = ignorance (avijjā),
2. greed (lobha), and
3. hatred (dosa).

Noble Truths, Noble Path: The Heart Essence of the Buddha's Original Teachings by Bhikkhu Bodhi; p.

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“Ignorance was banished and clear knowledge arose, darkness was banished and light arose,” and his mind was liberated from the āsavas, the primordial “influxes” that sustain the round of rebirths.⁷

Note 7: ... The three āsavas are:

1. sensual craving,
2. craving for existence, and
3. ignorance.

- Intentional moral action (kamma) is discussed in the August 2023 Newsletter, whether they are thoughts, speech, or deeds, create moral consequences. The effects of kamma necessitates a process beyond a single lifetime, as not all actions bear fruit within one lifetime.

The law of kamma states that intentional moral actions have results which operate as cause and effect; i.e., intentional moral actions have consequences. Kamma may be either wholesome (kusala) or unwholesome (akusala). Wholesome kamma cause rebirth in a good realm with pleasant experiences, while unwholesome kamma cause rebirth in a bad realm with unpleasant experiences. Past kamma has the potential to effect current and future lives, and the kamma created in the present life has the potential to effect the current life and future existence. Kamma determines the cosmic realm where rebirth will take place and whether the circumstances are fortunate or unfortunate within that realm.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya

translated by Bhikkhu Nanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi

136 Mahākammavibhanga Sutta: The Greater Exposition of Action

8. “Ānanda, there are four kinds of persons to be found existing in the world. What four? Here some person kills living beings, takes what is not given, misconducts himself in sensual pleasures, speaks falsehood, speaks maliciously, speaks harshly, gossips; he is covetous, has a mind of ill will, and holds wrong view. On the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in a state of deprivation, in an unhappy destination, in perdition, even in hell.

“But here some person kills living beings... and holds wrong view. On the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in a happy destination, even in the heavenly world.

“Here some person abstains from killing living beings, from taking what is not given, from misconduct in sensual pleasures, from false speech, from malicious speech, from harsh speech, from gossip; he is not covetous, his mind is without ill will, and he holds right view. On the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in a happy destination, even in the heavenly world.

- Dependent Origination (paticcasamuppāda) or the Law of Conditionality is discussed in the July 2023 Newsletter, contains twelve links that are interdependent, in which the Buddha taught the causes and conditions leading to suffering and the possibility of liberation from suffering. The links illustrate how ignorance (avijjā), craving (taṇhā) and clinging (upādāna) lead to suffering (dukkha) and perpetuate the cycle of saṃsāra. The interconnectedness of all twelve links of Dependent Origination is the presentation that all phenomena is influenced by causes and conditions, and nothing exists in isolation.

Dependent Origination demonstrates the constant change and impermanence of all phenomena. Each link in the chain is impermanent, including sense consciousness and the Five Aggregates (pañcakkhandhā). If there were a permanent self, it would have to remain unchanged amidst this constant flux. There is no permanent self because any notion of self implies something separate from the interdependent web of existence.

What one thinks is conditioned by an underlying tendency (anusaya) in the mind and forms the object that (rebirth) consciousness grasps onto. The establishment of rebirth consciousness conditions the dependent arising of re-birth. The underlying tendencies are latent dispositions or inclinations in the mind. The Seven Latent Tendencies (anusaya) are:

1. lust for sensual pleasures (kāmarāga),
2. aversion (patigha),
3. conceit (māna),
4. views (ditthi),

5. doubt (vicikicchā),
6. craving for continued existence or becoming (bhavarāga),
7. ignorance (avijjā).

The following passages relate these tendencies underlying one's deluded thought processes to rebirth because they provide a basis for the continuity of consciousness in saṃsāra.

The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi.

38 (8) Volition (1)

At Sāvathī. “Bhikkhus, what one intends, and what one plans, and whatever one has a tendency towards: this becomes a basis for the maintenance of consciousness. When there is a basis there is a support for the establishing of consciousness. When consciousness is established and has come to growth, there is the production of future renewed existence. When there is the production of future renewed existence, future birth, aging-and-death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure, and despair come to be. Such is the origin of this whole mass of suffering.

“If, bhikkhus, one does not intend, and one does not plan, but one still has a tendency towards something, this becomes a basis for the maintenance of consciousness. When there is a basis, there is a support for the establishing of consciousness.... Such is the origin of this whole mass of suffering.

“But, bhikkhus, when one does not intend, and one does not plan, and one does not have a tendency towards anything, no basis exists for the maintenance of consciousness. When there is no basis, there is no support for the establishing of consciousness. When consciousness is unestablished and does not come to growth, there is no production of future renewed existence. When there is no production of future renewed existence, future birth, aging-and-death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure, and despair cease. Such is the cessation of this whole mass of suffering.”

39 (9) Volition (2)

At Sāvathī. “Bhikkhus, what one intends, and what one plans, and whatever one has a tendency towards: this becomes a basis for the maintenance of consciousness. When there is a basis, there is a support for the establishing of consciousness. When consciousness is established and has come to growth, there is a descent of name-and-form. With name-and-form as condition, the six sense bases [come to be]; with the six sense bases as condition, contact; with contact as condition, feeling ... craving ... clinging ... existence ... birth; with birth as condition, aging-and-death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure, and despair come to be. Such is the origin of this whole mass of suffering.

“If, bhikkhus, one does not intend, and one does not plan, but one still has a tendency towards something, this becomes a basis for the maintenance of consciousness. When there is a basis, there is a support for the establishing of consciousness. When consciousness is established and has come to growth, there is a descent of name-and-form. With name-and-form as condition, the six sense bases [come to be].... Such is the origin of this whole mass of suffering.

Rebirth occurs according to the process of Dependent Origination. As long as there is ignorance, craving and clinging tainting the stream of consciousness there will be rebirth within saṃsāra.

- The end of rebirth and saṃsāra is nibbāna, discussed in the April 2023 Newsletter - The Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering. The ultimate goal of spiritual practice is to break free from the cycle of saṃsāra and realize nibbāna. Nibbāna is the cessation of suffering, ignorance, craving, and clinging, and thus the end of rebirth. When a sentient being realizes nibbāna, they are no longer subject to the conditions that lead to rebirth.

Brief Survey of Evidence for Rebirth/Reincarnation

- Young children who have past life memories is evidence for rebirth. There are children who report detailed memories of past lives, which manifest as spontaneous recollections. These memories may fade over time, but during early childhood, they appear vividly.

These cases have been studied by researchers like Dr. Ian Stevenson, who compiled detailed investigations of children who provided specific and verifiable details about past lives, such as names, locations, and events that were later confirmed. Psychologist Ian Stevenson conducted extensive research on children who remember past lives, finding correspondences between their memories and the lives of deceased individuals. Wikipedia reports the following:

Dr. Ian Pretyman Stevenson (October 31, 1918 – February 8, 2007) was a Canadian-born American psychiatrist, the founder and director of the Division of Perceptual Studies at the University of Virginia School of Medicine. He was a professor at the University of Virginia School of Medicine for fifty years. He was chair of their department of psychiatry from 1957 to 1967, Carlson Professor of Psychiatry from 1967 to 2001, and Research Professor of Psychiatry from 2002 until his death in 2007.

As founder and director of the University of Virginia School of Medicine's Division of Perceptual Studies (originally named "Division of Personality Studies"), which investigates the paranormal, Stevenson became known for his research into cases he considered suggestive of reincarnation – the idea that emotions, memories, and even physical bodily features can be passed on from one incarnation to another. In the course of his forty years doing international fieldwork, he researched three thousand cases of children who claimed to remember past lives. His position was that certain phobias, phobias, unusual abilities and illnesses could not be fully explained by genetics or the environment. He believed that, in addition to genetics and the environment, reincarnation might possibly provide a third, contributing factor.

- Near-Death Experiences (NDEs) or Out-of-Body Experiences (OBEs) are people who have been declared clinically dead and then revived, they report having left their bodies and observed their own resuscitation. NDEs report seeing visions of previous lives or feeling a sense of life continuity. These experiences may include a sense of moving toward another realm or returning to life in a new form.
NDEs demonstrate that consciousness continues to exist when the physical body is medically declared dead. NDEs report heightened awareness, vivid perceptions, and a sense of separation from their body. This is evidence that consciousness can exist independently of the body and therefore is capable of surviving death and being reborn in a new body. After death, the stream of consciousness continues its journey, through multiple lives, rather than ceasing to exist.
During NDEs, consciousness experience a "life review," where there is a re-experiencing of major events from the recently lived life. This phenomenon may be part of the learning process to develop wisdom (*paññā*) and loving-kindness (*mettā*), which continues over multiple lifetimes. The stream of consciousness is given opportunities to grow and evolve through repeated rebirths, with the life review acting as a reflection or assessment.
NDEs describe a profound sense of peace, detachment from worldly concerns, and a sense that physical death is not something to be feared. This is an indication that physical death is a transition rather than an ending, and that the stream of consciousness transitions to new experiences, in another form through rebirth.
- Child Prodigies demonstrate inexplicable skills, knowledge, or traits that were learnt from past lives. These children have abilities or information they did not learn in their current lifetime in areas such as music, mathematics, or the arts.. The existence of prodigies is evidence of past lives.
Prodigies display remarkable abilities at an unusually young age. For instance, child musicians like Mozart or mathematical geniuses like Srinivasa Ramanujan are cited as examples of people who seem to "know" things without having been explicitly taught in their current lives. Such talents are the result of learning and practice from a previous life.
Intentional moral actions (*kamma*) in past lives can influence the conditions of the present life. Prodigies are examples of children who accumulated abilities or knowledge in previous lives and are now reaping the fruits of that *kamma* in their current life. Talents and abilities are not random but arise from past causes and conditions.
- Xenoglossy, is Greek for "foreign tongue" or "foreign language," is a situation in which a person is able to speak, write or understand a foreign language that they have never learned or been exposed

to in their current lifetime. Xenoglossy is evidence for rebirth because the language was learnt in a past life. In some xenoglossy cases, the entire past life personality emerges and essentially takes over the body of the contemporary personality.

- Déjà Vu, is French for “already seen”, is the feeling of having experienced a situation before, even if it's the first time, and may be a memory from a past life. Dr. Brian Weiss, psychiatrist and author of Many Lives, Many Masters have said:

When you look into the eyes of another, often a stranger, and you feel a familiarity, a déjà vu, a vague recognition, or an electric rush... pay attention. You may be experiencing a past life connection and this is not a coincidental encounter.

- Certain marks on the body may correspond to injuries or characteristics from a previous existence. Birthmarks may correspond to particular injuries or wounds, like scars or lesions, that were caused in a past life. The placement of the birthmark correspond to the spot of something that characterized the past person. Ian Stevenson wrote in Birthmarks and Birth Defects Corresponding to Wounds on Deceased Persons the following:

In cases in which a deceased person was identified the details of whose life unmistakably matched the child's statements, a close correspondence was nearly always found between the birthmarks and/or birth defects on the child and the wounds on the deceased person.

- During pregnancy, the mother-to-be may have dreams about the child's past life identity. The dreams offer insights about their child's past life experiences.
- Spontaneous involuntary memories arising in a waking state or dreams may be of past life experiences. The stream of consciousness carries memories from previous lives. Spontaneous memories, whether experienced during waking moments or dreams, may be interpreted as echoes of these past experiences.

Some individuals report sudden, vivid memories that seem to come from nowhere, involving unfamiliar people, places, or events. These recollections might be of a past life.

- Pregnant women craving foods the deceased person liked may be an indication of rebirth. Pregnancy Cravings in Reincarnation Cases by James G. (Jim) Matlock, Ph.D. report the following:

Unusual food cravings and behaviors are fairly common during pregnancy and most have no discernible reincarnation connection. However, when the children born of those pregnancies crave the same foods, one has to wonder if they were influencing their mothers in some way while in the womb. The phenomenon becomes even more intriguing when the children recall previous lives that can be verified and it turns out that the people whose lives they remember were fond of those foods.

- A child that exhibit behaviors, traits, preferences, skills or memories reminiscent of a deceased person may be evidence of rebirth. This can include specific interests, mannerisms, or ways of speaking. Children of rebirth cases may act like the people whose lives they remember. These behavioral memories may extend to skills, such as those displayed by child prodigies.
- Drawings made by children that depict scenes, people, or experiences from past lives may be evidence for rebirth. There are children who have created drawings that vividly represent scenes or figures they've never been exposed to in their current life. These artworks may include elements like historical clothing, unfamiliar settings, or events that might be created from recollections of a past life.
- Past-Life Regression Therapy uses hypnosis to recover memories of past lives. Hypnosis is focused attention and absorption on specific thoughts, images, or sensations that produce an altered state of consciousness which may reveal past memories.
- Micro-cell regeneration is the natural biological process of replacing or restoring damaged or missing cells, tissues, organs, and entire body parts. All living organisms, including plants and animals, have some ability to regenerate as part of their natural maintenance of tissues and organs. The

regeneration of cells is a reflection of the insight into the ever-changing nature of existence and the illusion of a permanent self.

Using sophisticated Carbon-14 dating methods, Dr. Frisen and his team of stem cells researchers in the Karolinska Institute, Stockholm, Sweden, found that the average age of cells in an adult body would be between 7 and 10 years.

Micro-cell regeneration is a biological example of impermanence (anicca). Cells are constantly dying and regenerating, reflecting the ongoing process of change and decay. No-things remains static.

Both rebirth and cell regeneration deal with the idea of continuity within change. In micro-cell regeneration, there is a continual replacement of cells that maintain the overall organism's form, similar to the continuity of consciousness in rebirth. Despite the apparent "rebirth" of individual cells, the organism maintains a fluid integrity, just as the continuity of consciousness maintains a fluid integrity within saṃsāra. Micro-cell regeneration operates on biological mechanisms, rebirth is influenced by kamma; both processes describe a continuity.

The teaching of not-self (anattā) presents the illusion of a permanent, unchanging self. Micro-cell regeneration metaphorically illustrates anattā by showing that the human body, which unenlightened people identify with their "self," is constantly changing at a cellular level, leading to the insight that the "self" is not a fixed, permanent and an unchanging entity.

December 2024 - Taints (āsava) and their Removal

Taints (āsava) are the fundamental pollutions or corruptions that darken awareness, trapping beings in transmigration (saṃsāra).

Saṃsāra is the round of rebirths; literally means ‘perpetual wandering’ between various realms in the cosmos. Beings caught in saṃsāra experience the suffering of repeated birth, old age, sickness, death and rebirth.

The taints have three shades of meaning.

1. Taint as defilement (kilesa) because it flows out, discharges, oozes from the sense faculties: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and the mind.
2. Taint as unwholesome kamma because it has been fermenting for a long time within the stream of consciousness.
3. Taint as suffering (dukkha) because it extends, prolongs and perpetuates the process of suffering.

The destruction of the taints allows beings to escape from saṃsāra and experience nibbāna.

Nibbāna is realized by Arahants with "knowing and seeing:" the penetrating insight that arises from meditative concentration (samādhi).

Nibbāna is the destruction of the Three Unwholesome Roots (akusala mūla) or the destruction of the taints (āsava). The Three Unwholesome Roots are fundamental defilements:

1. delusion (moha) = ignorance (avijjā),
2. greed (lobha), and
3. hatred (dosa).

The taints are a category of defilements that exist at the subtle level of mind. The literal translation of the pāli word āsava is “influxes” and has been translated as taints, defilements, corruptions, cankers, intoxicants, pollutants or fermentations. The taints are listed as four and also as three.

The Four Taints (cattāri āsava) are:

1. sense-desire (kā mā sava): craving for sensual pleasures; arises by attending to the gratification of sensual pleasures.
2. desire for eternal existence (bhavā sava): desire to be re-born, craving for being, becoming, and existence; arises through attachment to the realms of form and the formless.
3. false or wrong views (diṭṭhā sava), and
4. ignorance (avijjā sava). Ignorance is lack of comprehension of the Four Noble Truths (ariya catusacca). Ignorance is also paying attention to mundane things with The Four Perversions (vipallāsa). The Four Perversions are:
 - i. perceiving the impermanent as permanent,
 - ii. perceiving the painful as pleasurable,
 - iii. perceiving what is not self as self, and
 - iv. perceiving what is foul or impure as beautiful or pure.

The three levels on which these perversions may occur are perception (sañña), thought or cogitation (citta), and views (diṭṭhi). The defilements are responsible for the perversions.

Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Nanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi

Introduction

The āsavas or taints are a classification of defilements considered in their role of sustaining the saṃsāric round. The commentaries derive the word from a root su meaning “to flow.” Scholars differ as to whether the flow implied by the prefix ā is inward or outward; hence some have rendered it as “influxes” or “influences,” others as “outflows” or “effluents.” A stock passage in the suttas indicates the term’s real significance independently of etymology when it describes the āsavas as states “that defile, bring renewal of being, give trouble, ripen in suffering, and lead to future birth, ageing, and death” (MN 36.47, etc.). Thus other translators, bypassing the literal meaning, have rendered it “cankers,” “corruptions,” or “taints,” the latter being the choice of Ven. Nāṇamoli. The three taints mentioned in the suttas are virtual synonyms for craving for sensual pleasures, craving for being, and the ignorance that appears at the head of the formula for dependent origination. When the disciple’s mind has been

liberated from the taints by the completion of the path of arahantship, he reviews his newly won freedom and roars his lion's roar: "Birth is destroyed, the holy life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more coming to any state of being."

Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Nanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi

36 Mahāsaccaka Sutta: The Greater Discourse to Saccaka

47. "Him I call deluded, Aggivessana, who has not abandoned the taints that defile, bring renewal of being, give trouble, ripen in suffering, and lead to future birth, ageing, and death; for it is with the non-abandoning of the taints that one is deluded. Him I call undeluded who has abandoned the taints that defile, bring renewal of being, give trouble, ripen in suffering, and lead to future birth, ageing, and death; for it is with the abandoning of the taints that one is undeluded. The Tathāgata, Aggivessana, has abandoned the taints that defile, bring renewal of being, give trouble, ripen in suffering, and lead to future birth, ageing, and death; he has cut them off at the root, made them like a palm stump, done away with them so that they are no longer subject to future arising. Just as a palm tree whose crown is cut off is incapable of further growth, so too, the Tathāgata has abandoned the taints that defile... done away with them so that they are no longer subject to future arising."

The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Digha Nikaya translated by Maurice O'C. Walshe

16 Mahāparinibbāna Sutta: The Great Passing

1.12. And then the Lord, while staying at Vultures' Peak, gave a comprehensive discourse: 'This is morality, this is concentration, this is wisdom. Concentration, when imbued with morality, brings great fruit and profit. Wisdom, when imbued with concentration, brings great fruit and profit. The mind imbued with wisdom becomes completely free from the corruptions, that is, from the corruption of sensuality, of becoming, of false views and of ignorance.'

The Three Taints (*tīṇi āsava*), omitting the taint of wrong views, is possibly older and is more frequent in the suttas.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Nanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi

2 Sabbāsava Sutta: All the Taints

6. "What are the things unfit for attention that he attends to? They are things such that when he attends to them, the unarisen taint of sensual desire arises in him and the arisen taint of sensual desire increases, the unarisen taint of being arises in him and the arisen taint of being increases, the unarisen taint of ignorance arises in him and the arisen taint of ignorance increases. These are the things unfit for attention that he attends to. And what are the things fit for attention that he does not attend to? They are things such that when he attends to them, the unarisen taint of sensual desire does not arise in him and the arisen taint of sensual desire is abandoned, the unarisen taint of being does not arise in him and the arisen taint of being is abandoned, the unarisen taint of ignorance does not arise in him and the arisen taint of ignorance is abandoned. These are the things fit for attention that he does not attend to. By attending to things unfit for attention and by not attending to things fit for attention, both unarisen taints arise in him and arisen taints increase.

Noble Truths, Noble Path: The Heart Essence of the Buddha's Original Teachings by Bhikkhu Bodhi; p. 32

"Ignorance was banished and clear knowledge arose, darkness was banished and light arose," and his mind was liberated from the *āsavas*, the primordial "influxes" that sustain the round of rebirths.⁷

Note 7: The word *āsava* is derived from the verb *savati*, meaning "to flow." It is uncertain whether the direction of the flow is intended to be inward or outward. Some translators have rendered *āsava* as "outflow," others as "canker," "taint," "intoxicant," and "pollutant." The three *āsavas* are:

1. sensual craving (*kāmāsava*),
2. craving for existence (*bhavāsava*), and

3. ignorance (avijjāsava).

The Streamwinner (sotāpanna) destroyed the taint of wrong views. The Non-Returner (anāgāmi) destroyed the taint of sense-desire. The Perfected One (arahant) destroyed the taints of becoming and ignorance.

With the arising of the taints there is the arising of ignorance. With the arising of ignorance there is the arising of the taints.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Nanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi

9 Sammāditṭhi Sutta: Right View

66. “And what is ignorance, what is the origin of ignorance, what is the cessation of ignorance, what is the way leading to the cessation of ignorance? Not knowing about suffering, not knowing about the origin of suffering, not knowing about the cessation of suffering, not knowing about the way leading to the cessation of suffering — this is called ignorance. With the arising of the taints there is the arising of ignorance. With the cessation of the taints there is the cessation of ignorance. The way leading to the cessation of ignorance is just this Noble Eightfold Path; that is, right view... right concentration. ...

69. “When, friends, a noble disciple understands the taints, the origin of the taints, the cessation of the taints, and the way leading to the cessation of the taints, in that way he is one of right view, whose view is straight, who has unwavering confidence in the Dhamma, and has arrived at this true Dhamma.

70. “And what are the taints, what is the origin of the taints, what is the cessation of the taints, what is the way leading to the cessation of the taints? There are these three taints: the taint of sensual desire, the taint of being, and the taint of ignorance. With the arising of ignorance there is the arising of the taints.¹³² With the cessation of ignorance there is the cessation of the taints. The way leading to the cessation of the taints is just this Noble Eightfold Path; that is, right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.

71. “When a noble disciple has thus understood the taints, the origin of the taints, the cessation of the taints, and the way leading to the cessation of the taints, he entirely abandons the underlying tendency to lust, he abolishes the underlying tendency to aversion, he extirpates the underlying tendency to the view and conceit ‘I am,’ and by abandoning ignorance and arousing true knowledge he here and now makes an end of suffering. In that way too a noble disciple is one of right view, whose view is straight, who has unwavering confidence in the Dhamma, and has arrived at this true Dhamma.”

Note 132

It should be noted that while ignorance is a condition for the taints, the taints — which include the taint of ignorance — are in turn a condition for ignorance. MA says that this conditioning of ignorance by ignorance should be understood to mean that the ignorance in any one existence is conditioned by the ignorance in the preceding existence. Since this is so, the conclusion follows that no first point can be discovered for ignorance, and thus that saṃsāra is without discernible beginning.

The taints are controlled and relinquished with five aspects of restraint (saṃvara):

1. virtue (sīla), is illustrated by avoiding unsuitable seats and resorts in Method V;
2. mindfulness (sati), is illustrated by restraining the sense faculties in Method II;
3. knowledge (paññā), is illustrated by the repeated phrase “reflecting wisely” in Method III;
4. energy (vīrya), is illustrated by the removing of unwholesome thoughts in Method VI; and
5. patience (khanti), is illustrated by enduring in Method IV.

In the Majjhima Nikaya 2 Sabbāsava Sutta: All the Taints, the Buddha taught Seven Methods for restraining and abandoning the taints.

- I. Taints are abandoned by Seeing (āsavā dassanā pahātabbā) with insight (vipassanā) into the Four Noble truths (ariya catusacca):
 1. The Noble Truth of Suffering - discussed in the February 2023 Newsletter,
 2. The Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering - discussed in the March 2023 Newsletter,
 3. The Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering - discussed in the April 2023 Newsletter, and
 4. The Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering - discussed in the May 2023 Newsletter.

- Method I also achieves intuitive insights (vipassanā-ñāṇa) that abandons the taints by perceiving (sañña) all phenomena in saṃsāra with The Three Characteristics of Existence (tilakkhaṇa):
 4. impermanence (anicca),
 5. suffering (dukkha) or being oppressed, and
 6. not-self (anatta).
 See the October 2023 Newsletter - Insight Meditation (vipassanā) for a discussion of The Three Characteristics of Existence.

Mind Overcoming Its Cankers by Venerable Acharya Buddhārakkhita
p. 102

When insight into the characteristics becomes a direct experience, as different from an intellectual one, the mind is freed of all distortions and impurities, and the insights into the Four Noble Truths flash, illuminating the consciousness.

- The practice is to See things which do not cause the taints to arise and the arisen taints are abandoned. The destruction of taints is for one who knows how to arouse wise attention (yoniso manasikāra) and who sees to it that unwise attention (ayoniso manasikāra) does not arise. Things unfit for attention (ayoniso manasikāra) causes the un-arisen taints to arise and the arisen taints to increase.
- The practice is to not attend to views and doubts concerning a perceived 'self' (atta). By doing so, Streamwinner (sotāpanna) is achieved by abandoning three fetters (saṃyojana):
 4. personality view (sakkāya diṭṭhi),
 5. doubt (vicikicchā), and
 6. clinging to rites and rituals (sīlabbata parāmāsa).

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Nanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi
2 Sabbāsava Sutta: All the Taints

3. "Bhikkhus, I say that the destruction of the taints is for one who knows and sees, not for one who does not know and see. Who knows and sees what? Wise attention and unwise attention.³³ When one attends unwisely, unarisen taints arise and arisen taints increase. When one attends wisely, unarisen taints do not arise and arisen taints are abandoned.

4. "Bhikkhus, there are taints that should be abandoned by seeing. There are taints that should be abandoned by restraining. There are taints that should be abandoned by using. There are taints that should be abandoned by enduring. There are taints that should be abandoned by avoiding. There are taints that should be abandoned by removing. There are taints that should be abandoned by developing.

Note 33

Wise attention (yoniso manasikāra) is glossed as attention that is the right means (upāya), on the right track (patha). It is explained as mental advertence, consideration, or preoccupation that accords with the truth, namely, attention to the impermanent as impermanent, etc. Unwise attention (ayoniso manasikāra) is attention that is the wrong means, on the wrong track (uppatha), contrary to the truth, namely, attention to the impermanent as permanent, the painful as pleasurable, what is not self as self, and what is foul as beautiful. Unwise attention, MA informs us, is at the root of the round of existence, for it causes ignorance and craving to increase; wise attention is at the root of liberation from the round, since it leads to the development of the Noble Eightfold Path. MA sums up the point of this passage thus: the destruction of the taints is for one who knows how to arouse wise attention and who sees to it that unwise attention does not arise.

- II. Taints are abandoned by Restraining (āsavā saṃvarā pahātabbā) with Sense-Control (indriya saṃvara). The Six Sense Faculties (indriya) are:
 1. eye (cakkhu),
 2. ear (sotā),
 3. nose (ghāna),

4. tongue (jihvā),
 5. body (kāya), and
 6. mind (mana).
- Mindfulness (sati) is the primary factor cultivated and used to restrain the sense faculties. Sense control is being watchful at the sense faculties and thereby having full control over them. The Four Foundations of Mindfulness (satipaṭṭhāna) cultivates mindfulness (sati) and awareness (sampajañña) with the following four contemplations:
 4. Contemplation of the Body (kāyānupassanā),
 5. Contemplation of Feelings (vedanā sañña),
 6. Contemplation of Mind (citta sañña), and
 7. Contemplation of Mind Objects (Dhammā sañña).
 The Four Foundations of Mindfulness is described in the October 2023 Newsletter - Insight Meditation (vipassanā).
 - The six sense bases are also called "sense doors" because they are the six perceptual gateways through which the mind experiences the world. The Buddha taught that the six sense doors should be guarded with mindfulness, so as not to crave, cling and attach to the sense objects, thereby avoiding the accumulation of mental defilements - the taints.
 - Sense restraint is freeing the mind from addiction to sense stimulation.

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It is like placing a sentry at a gateway or door, who has full control over his area by virtue of his vigilance thereon. Similarly, when a seeker applies mindfulness on any one of the sense-doors, by this simple act of attentiveness or vigilance, all cankers are automatically removed, if they have arisen, and if there are none, the mind is so fortified that they cannot arise.

- III. Taints are abandoned by Using (āsavā paṭisevanā pahātabbā) with wisdom (paññā) the necessities of life. The necessities of life are the four requisites (cattāro paṭiccaye):
 1. clothing, robes (cīvara),
 2. food, alms (piṇḍapāta),
 3. lodging (senāsana) and
 4. medicine (bhesajja).
 - The practice is to wisely reflect on why these necessities are required and how they are to be utilized in the best possible way. Wise reflection is rooted in ethical conduct, simplicity, and awareness of impermanence. Reflecting wisely on necessities recognizes the difference between what is truly needed for physical well-being and what is driven by greed or craving.
 - Taints are not nurtured and are abandoned when the necessities of life are used wisely. Suffering is experienced when the necessities of life is not used properly.
 - Knowledge of the proper use of the necessities of life is developed.
- IV. Taints are abandoned by Enduring (āsavā adhvīsanā pahātabbā) patiently physical hardships, harsh speech and painful feelings. The practice is to consciously and deliberately endure difficulties and afflictions caused by external circumstances, harsh treatment by others, and adversity in general. In order to withstand a hostile and disagreeable environment without becoming upset, anxious and angry, the cultivation of patience (khanti), restraint and forgiveness is required to remain calm and collected. Patience was taught by the Buddha as a great virtue and a spiritual perfection; see the June 2024 Newsletter - Perfection of Patience (khanti pāramī) for elaboration.

The Dhammapada: The Buddha's Path of Wisdom translated by Acharya Buddharakkhita
Verse 184

Enduring patience is the highest austerity. "Nibbāna is Supreme," say the Buddhas.
He is not a true monk who harms another, nor a real renunciate who oppresses others.

- V. Taints are abandoned by Avoiding (āsavā parivajjanā pahātabbā) dangerous environments and bad friends.

- Avoidance is an ethical response, based on Fear of Wrongdoing (ottappa) and Sense of Shame (hiri). The practice is to refrain from anything and any situation that may endanger one morally. Virtue (sīla) or moral purification constitutes the moving force of Method V.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Nanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi

Note 416

Shame (hiri) and fear of wrongdoing (ottappa) are two complementary qualities designated by the Buddha “the guardians of the world” because they serve as the foundation for morality. Shame has the characteristic of disgust with evil, is dominated by a sense of self-respect, and manifests itself as conscience. Fear of wrongdoing has the characteristic of dread of evil, is dominated by a concern for the opinions of others, and manifests itself as fear of doing evil.

- Monastics train to avoid sitting on unsuitable seats occupied by (women for a monk and men for a nun) and unsuitable resorts (gocara).
 - Unsuitable seats are two kinds: sitting with a woman/man on a screened seat convenient for sexual intercourse, and sitting alone with a woman/man in a private place.
 - Resort is a proper resort for alms and the proper deportment of a monastic: serene and self-possessed bearing.
- VI. Taints are abandoned by Removing (āsavā vinodanā pahātabbā) arisen unwholesome thoughts of sensual desire (kāmacchanda), ill will (vyāpāda), and cruelty (vihimsā).
- The first step in dispelling harmful thoughts is to recognize that they are unwholesome, which requires mindfulness, concentration and equanimity. Mindfulness of the unwholesome thought (akusala vitakka) wears away the greed, hate, and delusion that fuels it and the unwholesome thought is then diminished.
 - Right Effort (sammā-vāyāma) is the sixth path factor in The Noble Eightfold Path (ariya aṭṭhaṅgika magga) which diminishes and eliminates unwholesome (akusala) contents of mind and to encourage the emergence and maintenance of wholesome (kusala) contents of mind. This is the cultivation and arousal of energy to purify the mind of defilements: the Three Unwholesome Roots and the taints. Right Effort consists of generating four states of mind:
 1. the effort to avoid unwholesome states of mind from arising (saṃvara-padhāna),
 2. the effort to overcome unwholesome states of mind that have arisen (pahāna-padhāna),
 3. the effort to cultivate wholesome states of mind (bhāvanā-padhāna), and
 4. the effort to maintain wholesome states of mind that have arisen (anurakkhaṇa-padhāna).
- The Noble Eightfold Path is discussed in the May 2023 Newsletter - Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering.
- VII. Taints are abandoned by Developing (āsavā bhāvanā pahātabbā) The Seven Enlightenment Factors (satta bojjhaṅgā):
15. mindfulness (sati),
 16. discrimination of phenomena, analysis of qualities, investigation of Dhamma (dhamma-vicaya),
 17. energy, persistence (viriya),
 18. rapture, joy (pīti),
 19. tranquility, calm (passaddhi),
 20. concentration (sāmādhī), and
 21. equanimity (upekkhā).
- Method I eradicates the first three fetters resulting in Streamwinner, Method VII eradicates the remaining seven fetters resulting in the three remaining Noble Ones. There are ten fetters (saṃyojana) tying beings to saṃsāra:
 1. personality belief (sakkāya diṭṭhi),
 2. doubt (vicikicchā),
 3. clinging to rites and rituals (sīlabbata parāmāsa),
 4. sensual desire (kāma rāga),
 5. ill will (vyāpāda),
 6. craving for existence in the Form World (rūpa rāga), fine material existence,

7. craving for existence in the Formless World (arūpa rāga), immaterial existence,
8. conceit (māna),
9. restlessness (uddhacca), and
10. ignorance (avijjā).

Noble Ones (ariya puggala)

1. Streamwinner (sotāpanna) is free from fetters 1-3. Realized in Method I.
2. Once Returner (sakadāgāmi) is free from fetters 1-3 and has overcome fetters 4 and 5 in their grosser form. Realized in Method VII.
3. Non-Returner (anāgāmi) is free from fetters 1-5. Realized in Method VII.
4. Perfected One (arahant) is free from all 10 fetters. Realized in Method VII.

The Dhammapada: The Buddha's Path of Wisdom translated by Acharya Buddharakkhita
Verse 89

Those whose minds have reached full excellence in the factors of enlightenment, who, having renounced acquisitiveness, rejoice in not clinging to things—rid of cankers, glowing with wisdom, they have attained Nibbāna in this very life.¹⁰

Note 10

This verse describes the arahat ... The “cankers” (āsava) are the four basic defilements of sensual desire, desire for continued existence, false views, and ignorance.

Methods I and VII ultimately destroys the taints; while Methods II-VI keeps the taints restrained. By restraining and overcoming the taints repeatedly, they become weakened, not fed, and made to atrophy and die of attrition. The final fruit of developing insight (vipassanā) is the knowledge of the destruction of the taints (āsavakkhaya) and is the enlightenment of the Perfected One (arahant).

January 2025 - Removal of Distracting Thoughts

The Buddha taught five practical methods for removing unwholesome thoughts (akusala vitakka) from the mind. This teaching is found in The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya Number 20, Vitakkasaṅḥāna Sutta: The Removal of Distracting Thoughts.

An unwholesome thought is unskillful (akusala) and does not lead to Nibbāna but instead conditions the experience of suffering (dukkha). These thoughts arise due to mental defilements (kilesa). The unwholesome thoughts distract the mind and prevent the meditator the ability to stay focused on the meditation subject (kammaṭṭhāna). The five methods for removing distracting thoughts is used only when the unwholesome thoughts distract the mind from the meditation subject.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Nanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi

20 Vitakkasaṅḥāna Sutta: The Removal of Distracting Thoughts

Note 239 MA: ... practical methods of removing the distracting thoughts. They should be resorted to only when the distractions become persistent or obtrusive; at other times the meditator should remain with his primary subject of meditation.

The **defilements (kilesa)** are obstacles of mind, they are listed in the following ways.

A. Three Unwholesome Roots (akusala mūla) are the fundamental defilements:

5. delusion (moha) = ignorance (avijjā),
6. greed (lobha), and
7. hatred (dosa).

The three unwholesome roots cause the cycle of repeated birth, ageing, sickness, death, and rebirth (saṃsāra) and also the suffering (dukkha) experienced within saṃsāra.

B. Three Defilements, Round of Defilements (kilesavaṭṭa) in Dependent Origination (paṭicca samuppāda):

1. ignorance (avijjā),
2. craving (taṇhā), and
3. clinging (upādāna).

Dependent Origination (paṭicca samuppāda) is discussed in the July 2023 Newsletter.

C. Seven Latent Tendencies (satta anusaya):

1. lust for sensual pleasures (kāmarāga),
2. aversion (patigha),
3. conceit (māna),
4. views (ditthi),
5. doubt (vicikicchā),
6. craving for continued existence or becoming (bhavarāga),
7. ignorance (avijjā).

These defilements exist at the subtle level of mind.

D. Taints (āsava):

- Four Taints (cattāri āsava):
 5. craving for sensual pleasures (kāmarāga),
 6. craving for continued existence (bhavarāga),
 7. wrong views (ditthāsava), and
 8. ignorance (avijjāsava).
- Three Taints (tīṇi āsava):
 8. craving for sensual pleasures (kāmarāga),
 9. craving for continued existence (bhavarāga), and
 10. ignorance (avijjāsava).

The taints are discussed in the December 2024 Newsletter.

- E. Four Perversions (cattāri vipallāsa):
 5. perceiving the impermanent (anicca) as permanent,
 6. perceiving the painful (dukkha) as pleasurable,
 7. perceiving what is not self (anattā) as self, and
 8. perceiving what is foul or impure (asubha) as beautiful or pure.
- F. Ten Fetters (dasa samyojana):
 1. illusion of self or personality belief (sakkāya diṭṭhi),
 2. doubt (vicikicchā),
 3. attachment to rites and rituals (sīlabbata parāmāsa),
 4. sensual desire (kāma rāga),
 5. ill will (patigha or vyāpāda),
 6. desire to be born in form worlds (rūpa rāga),
 7. desire to be born in formless worlds (arūpa rāga),
 8. conceit (māna),
 9. restlessness (uddhacca), and
 10. ignorance (avijjā).
- G. Five Hindrances (pañca nīvaraṇā)
 1. sensual desire (kāmacchanda),
 2. ill will (vyāpāda),
 3. sloth and torpor (thīna-middha),
 4. restlessness and remorse (uddhaccakukkucca), and
 5. doubt (vicikicchā).
- H. Ten Defilements (dasa kilesa)
 1. greed (lobha),
 2. hate (dosa),
 3. delusion (moha),
 4. conceit (māna),
 5. wrong views (micchā diṭṭhi),
 6. doubt (vicikicchā),
 7. sloth, mental torpor (thīna),
 8. restlessness (uddhacca),
 9. shamelessness (ahirika), and
 10. lack of moral dread (anottappa).
- I. Sixteen Impurities of the Mind (cittassa upakkilesa):
 1. covetousness and unrighteous greed (abhijjhā-visama-lobha),
 2. ill will (vyāpāda),
 3. anger (kodha),
 4. hostility (upanāha),
 5. denigration (makkha),
 6. domineering (palāsa),
 7. envy (issā),
 8. stinginess (macchariya),
 9. hypocrisy (māyā),
 10. fraud (sāṭṭheyya),
 11. obstinacy (thambha),
 12. presumption (sārambha),
 13. conceit (māna),
 14. arrogance (atimāna),
 15. vanity (mada), and
 16. negligence (pamāda).
- J. Craving (taṇhā)
 1. craving for sensual pleasures (kāma taṇhā),
 2. craving for existence (bhava taṇhā), and

3. craving for non-existence (vibhava taṇhā).
- K. Clinging (upādāna)
 1. clinging to sensuality (kāmupādāna),
 2. clinging to views (diṭṭhupādāna),
 3. clinging to mere rule and ritual (sīlabbatupādāna), and
 4. clinging to the ego belief or self doctrine (attavādupādāna).

The defilements occur at three levels.

1. Subtle level (anusaya): where they remain as mere latent dispositions in the mind - The Seven Latent Tendencies.
2. Middle level (pariyuṭṭhāna): where they rise up to obsess and enslave the mind and manifest as unwholesome thoughts.
3. Gross level (vītikkama): where they motivate unwholesome bodily and verbal conduct.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Nanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi

20 Vitakkasaṇṭhāna Sutta: The Removal of Distracting Thoughts

... giving attention to some sign, and owing to that sign there arise in him evil unwholesome thoughts connected with desire, with hate, and with delusion, then ...

Buddhaghosa was a 5th-century Indian Theravada Buddhist commentator and in the Visuddhimagga: Path of Purification he organized the Buddha's teachings found in the Pāli Suttas and described the following **Forty Meditation Subjects (kammaṭṭhāna)**.

- I. Visual Objects (kasiṇa)
 1. earth (paṭhavī kasiṇa)
 2. water (āpo kasiṇa)
 3. fire (tejo kasiṇa)
 4. air/wind (vāyo kasiṇa)
 5. blue (nīla kasiṇa)
 6. yellow (pīṭa kasiṇa)
 7. red (lohita kasiṇa)
 8. white (odāta kasiṇa)
 9. enclosed space, hole, aperture (ākāsa kasiṇa)
 10. consciousness (viññāṇa kasiṇa) is stated in the suttas. Commentarial literature describes this consciousness as the luminous mind (āloka kasiṇa).
- II. Cemetery Contemplations (sīvathikā-manasikāra) as impure (asubha) objects of repulsion (paṭikkūla)
 11. a swollen corpse
 12. a discolored bluish corpse
 13. a festering corpse
 14. a fissured corpse
 15. a gnawed corpse
 16. a dismembered corpse
 17. a hacked and scattered corpse
 18. a bleeding corpse
 19. a worm-eaten corpse
 20. a skeleton
- III. Recollections (anussati)
 21. Buddha
 22. Dhamma
 23. Noble Saṅgha
 24. morality (sīla)
 25. generosity, liberality (cāga)
 26. the wholesome attributes of Devas
 27. the body (kāya)

28. death (maraṇa)
29. the breath (prāna) or breathing (ānāpāna)
30. peace (Nibbāna)
- IV. Four Divine Abodes (brahmavihāra)
 31. unconditional loving-kindness and goodwill (mettā)
 32. compassion (karuna)
 33. sympathetic joy over another's success (mudita)
 34. evenmindedness, equanimity (upekkha)
- V. Four formless states (arūpa-āyatana)
 35. infinite space (ākāsānañcāyatana)
 36. infinite consciousness (viññāṇañcāyatana)
 37. infinite nothingness (ākiñcaññāyatana)
 38. neither perception nor non-perception (nevasaññānāsaññāyatana)
- VI. Misc
 39. perception of disgust for food (āhāre patikkūla-saññā)
 40. analysis of the four elements (catudhātuvaṭṭhāna): earth (pathavi), water (apo), fire (tejo), and air (vayo).

Method 1 for Removing Distracting Thoughts

Replace the unwholesome thoughts (akusala vitakka) with wholesome thoughts (kusala vitakka). Pay attention only to wholesome thoughts.

- When confronted with thoughts of desire (chandarāga) for living beings, contemplate the unattractiveness of the body (asubhakammaṭṭhāna) by paying attention to the foulness of the 32 parts of the body (asubha, dvattiṃs-ākāra).
- When confronted with thoughts of desire (kāmacchanda) for inanimate objects, contemplate the object as impermanent (anicca) and lack an intrinsic, enduring self (anattā). Inanimate things arise, exist momentarily, and decay due to causes and conditions, they cannot inherently "belong" to anyone, as neither the object nor the possessor is a fixed, unchanging entity. Ownership is a mental construct rather than an inherent quality of an object.
- When confronted with thoughts of hate (dosā) for living beings, cultivate loving-kindness (mettā), compassion (karunā), or equanimity (upekkhā), and the ownership of kamma (kammassakomhi kammassakāro kammayoni kammadāyādo kammabandhū kammappaṭisaraṇo).

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

5.II. RESENTMENT 161 (1) Removing Resentment (1)

“Bhikkhus, there are these five ways of removing resentment by which a bhikkhu should entirely remove resentment when it has arisen toward anyone. What five?”

- (1) One should develop loving-kindness for the person one resents; in this way one should remove the resentment toward that person.
- (2) One should develop compassion for the person one resents; in this way one should remove the resentment toward that person.
- (3) One should develop equanimity toward the person one resents; in this way one should remove the resentment toward that person.
- (4) One should disregard the person one resents and pay no attention to him; in this way one should remove the resentment toward that person.
- (5) One should apply the idea of the ownership of kamma to the person one resents, thus: ‘This venerable one is the owner of his kamma, the heir of his kamma; he has kamma as his origin, kamma as his relative, kamma as his resort; he will be the heir of any kamma he does, good or bad.’

In this way one should remove the resentment toward that person. These are the five ways of removing resentment by which a bhikkhu should entirely remove resentment when it has arisen toward anyone.”

The parable of the saw is a teaching that points to the right attitude to have when confronted with challenging people.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Nanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi

21 Kakacūpama Sutta: The Simile of the Saw

20. “Bhikkhus, even if bandits were to sever you savagely limb by limb with a two-handled saw, he who gave rise to a mind of hate towards them would not be carrying out my teaching. Herein, bhikkhus, you should train thus: ‘Our minds will remain unaffected, and we shall utter no evil words; we shall abide compassionate for their welfare, with a mind of loving-kindness, without inner hate. We shall abide pervading them with a mind imbued with loving-kindness; and starting with them, we shall abide pervading the all-encompassing world with a mind imbued with loving-kindness, abundant, exalted, immeasurable, without hostility and without ill will.’ That is how you should train, bhikkhus.

- When confronted with hatred (dosā) towards inanimate things, the analysis of the elements (dhātu vavatthāna) are performed. The Four Great Elements (mahābhūta) are symbolic representations of the primary qualities and behavioral patterns of matter.
 1. earth element (paṭhavi dhātu): solid; hardness, extension;
 2. water element (āpo dhātu): liquid; cohesion, fluidity;
 3. fire element (tejo dhātu): heat; heating, radiation; and
 4. air element (vāyo dhātu): wind, motion; distention, strengthening, supporting.The elements are components of a body and are also found in the world. The elements are investigated wherever they are found, to be impermanent (anicca), a source of suffering (dukkha) and not a self (anattā), thereby there is an experience of disenchantment (nibbidā) with inanimate things.
- When confronted with thoughts that are influenced with delusion (moha), the Five Dhamma Supports (dhammūpanissaya) are recruited.
 1. Guidance of a teacher through association (garu saṁvāsa).
 2. Intent on learning and reciting the Dhamma (uddesa).
 3. Intent on inquiring into the meaning of Dhamma teachings (uddiṭṭha paripucchana).
 4. Listening to the Dharma at proper times (kālena dhamma savana).
 5. Inquiry into what are and are not the causes (ṭhānāṭṭhāna vinicchaya) of phenomena.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Nanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi

20 Vitakkasaṅṭhāna Sutta: The Removal of Distracting Thoughts

Note 240

MA: When thoughts of sensual desire arise directed towards living beings, the “other sign” is the meditation on foulness (see MN 10.10); when the thoughts are directed to inanimate things, the “other sign” is attention to impermanence. When thoughts of hate arise directed towards living beings, the “other sign” is the meditation on loving-kindness; when they are directed to inanimate things, the “other sign” is attention to the elements (see MN 10.12). The remedy for thoughts connected with delusion is living under a teacher, studying the Dhamma, inquiring into its meaning, listening to the Dhamma, and inquiring into causes.

Method 2 for Removing Distracting Thoughts

Examine the danger (bhaya) of unwholesome thoughts.

- Reflect on the consequences, ponder on the disadvantages, examine the dangers, and scrutinize the drawbacks of unwholesome thoughts. Contemplate the unwholesome thoughts as blameworthy and they bring suffering.
- Investigate the wholesome thought to understand what causes it to arise and continue, and what counter measure or condition would deprive it of nourishment.

- Cultivate Fear of Wrongdoing (ottappa) and Sense of Shame (hiri) to guard against unwholesome thoughts.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Nanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi
Note 416

Shame (hiri) and fear of wrongdoing (ottappa) are two complementary qualities designated by the Buddha “the guardians of the world” because they serve as the foundation for morality. Shame has the characteristic of disgust with evil, is dominated by a sense of self-respect, and manifests itself as conscience. Fear of wrongdoing has the characteristic of dread of evil, is dominated by a concern for the opinions of others, and manifests itself as fear of doing evil.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Nanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi
20 Vitakkasaṅṭhāna Sutta: The Removal of Distracting Thoughts
Note 241

This method can be illustrated by the reflections of the Bodhisatta in MN 19.3–5. Calling to mind the unworthiness of the evil thoughts produces a sense of shame (hiri); calling to mind their dangerous consequences produces fear of wrongdoing (ottappa).

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Nanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi
19 Dvedhāvitakka Sutta: Two Kinds of Thought

3. “As I abided thus, diligent, ardent, and resolute, a thought of sensual desire arose in me. I understood thus: ‘This thought of sensual desire has arisen in me. This leads to my own affliction, to others’ affliction, and to the affliction of both; it obstructs wisdom, causes difficulties, and leads away from Nibbāna.’ When I considered: ‘This leads to my own affliction,’ it subsided in me; when I considered: ‘This leads to others’ affliction,’ it subsided in me; when I considered: ‘This leads to the affliction of both,’ it subsided in me; when I considered: ‘This obstructs wisdom, causes difficulties, and leads away from Nibbāna,’ it subsided in me. Whenever a thought of sensual desire arose in me, I abandoned it, removed it, did away with it.

4–5. “As I abided thus, diligent, ardent, and resolute, a thought of ill will arose in me... a thought of cruelty arose in me. I understood thus: ‘This thought of cruelty has arisen in me. This leads to my own affliction, to others’ affliction, and to the affliction of both; it obstructs wisdom, causes difficulties, and leads away from Nibbāna.’ When I considered thus... it subsided in me. Whenever a thought of cruelty arose in me, I abandoned it, removed it, did away with it.

6. “Bhikkhus, whatever a bhikkhu frequently thinks and ponders upon, that will become the inclination of his mind. If he frequently thinks and ponders upon thoughts of sensual desire, he has abandoned the thought of renunciation to cultivate the thought of sensual desire, and then his mind inclines to thoughts of sensual desire. If he frequently thinks and ponders upon thoughts of ill will... upon thoughts of cruelty, he has abandoned the thought of non-cruelty to cultivate the thought of cruelty, and then his mind inclines to thoughts of cruelty.

The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi
35.246 (9) The Simile of the Lute

“Bhikkhus, if in any bhikkhu or bhikkhunī desire or lust or hatred or delusion or aversion of mind should arise in regard to forms cognizable by the eye, such a one should rein in the mind from them thus: ‘This path is fearful, dangerous, strewn with thorns, covered by jungle, a deviant path, an evil path, a way beset by scarcity. This is a path followed by inferior people; it is not the path followed by superior people. This is not for you.’ In this way the mind should be reined in from these states regarding forms cognizable by the eye. So too regarding sounds cognizable by the ear ... regarding mental phenomena cognizable by the mind.

Method 3 for Removing Distracting Thoughts

Forget those unwholesome thoughts, avoid and not give attention to them.

- Withdraw attention, disregard and turn away; i.e., the mind does not give attention and reflection, and forgets those unwholesome thoughts.
- Commentary Majjhima Nikāya Aṭṭhakathā (MA) 3:90 recommended the following methods for disregarding distracting thoughts:
 6. Occupy oneself with something else.
 7. Recite some work explaining a teaching of Dhamma.
 8. Read a Dhamma text (like a pūjā book).
 9. Examine the parts of an object from his bag, like fire-sticks (“this is the upper stick; this is the lower stick”).
 10. Carefully and reflectively examine his requisites (“this is the awl; this is a pair of scissors; this is the nail cutter; this is the needle”).
 11. Darn the worn-out parts of the robe.

Method 4 for Removing Distracting Thoughts

Give attention to stilling the thought-formation of the unwholesome thoughts.

- Still the root of the thought-formation, remove the source of the unwholesome thoughts, eliminate the intentional thought process, and relax the thought-fabrication process.
- Progressively identify the causes of the unwholesome thoughts and eliminate the cause of the thought. Use intention and volition to gradually decrease the unwholesome thought. This is accomplished by investigating the unwholesome thought thus: “What is the cause? What is the cause of its cause?” and so on. The investigation would loosen the mind from the flow of unwholesome thoughts, eventually ending them.
- Switch, warn, ignore, trace, and chop an unskillful thought as soon as it arises.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Nanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi

20 Vitakkasaṅṭhāna Sutta: The Removal of Distracting Thoughts

Note 242

... “stopping the cause of the thought.” This is accomplished by inquiring, when an unwholesome thought has arisen: “What is its cause? What is the cause of its cause?” etc. Such an inquiry, according to MA, brings about a slackening, and eventually the cessation, of the flow of unwholesome thought.

Method 5 for Removing Distracting Thoughts

Apply sustained effort, clench the teeth and the tongue pressing on the palate, subdue and beat down the unwholesome mind by the wholesome mind.

- Develop intense resolve, a strong determination to not think a thought that is unwholesome.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Nanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi

36 Mahāsaccaka Sutta: The Greater Discourse to Saccaka

20. “I thought: ‘Suppose, with my teeth clenched and my tongue pressed against the roof of my mouth, I beat down, constrain, and crush mind with mind.’ So, with my teeth clenched and my tongue pressed against the roof of my mouth, I beat down, constrained, and crushed mind with mind. While I did so, sweat ran from my armpits. Just as a strong man might seize a weaker man by the head or shoulders and beat him down, constrain him, and crush him, so too, with my teeth clenched and my tongue pressed against the roof of my mouth, I beat down, constrained, and crushed mind with mind, and sweat ran from my armpits. But although tireless energy was aroused in me and unremitting mindfulness was established, my body was overwrought and uncalm because I was exhausted by the painful striving. But such painful feeling that arose in me did not invade my mind and remain.

The fifth method does not produce enlightenment (bodhi) but does produce energy and determination to remove the unwholesome thoughts and the associated defilements. This method is used as last resort only when all the other methods to overcome unwholesome thoughts have failed.

The five methods will bring control over the process of thinking and the quality of thoughts. The wise and skillful mind will have the ability to think only wholesome thoughts, eliminate the defilements and put an end to suffering.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Nanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi

20 Vitakkasaṅḥāna Sutta: The Removal of Distracting Thoughts

8. ... This bhikkhu is then called a master of the courses of thought. He will think whatever thought he wishes to think and he will not think any thought that he does not wish to think. He has severed craving, flung off the fetters, and with the complete penetration of conceit he has made an end of suffering.

Additional Method: Keeping Track of the Quality of Thoughts

The following story is about Upagupta who was an Arahant and does not appear in the Pāli Canon. As a lay person Upagupta was taught by his teacher a method to purify his mind of distracting unwholesome thoughts.

The Legend and Cult of Upagupta: Sanskrit Buddhism in North India and Southeast Asia by John S. Strong

Chapter Four: Lay Life, Ordination, and Arhatship

The story of Upagupta's birth in Mathura makes it clear that his destiny is to be a monk—indeed, a Master of the Dharma. That destiny, however, takes some time to unfold. Though conditionally committed by his father to become Sāṅakavāsin's pascācchramaṇa [a junior monk who assists a senior monk with their needs], Upagupta at first remains at home and helps out in his family's perfume shop. There he leads the ordinary life of a layman, and it is as a layman that he starts his meditative endeavors, preaches his first sermon, makes his first convert, and attains his initial realization of enlightenment. This is significant, for, although Upagupta's fame is to be as a member of the Sangha, his life story also reveals certain possibilities for spiritual attainment that are open to the laity.

Business in the perfume shop is good. According to the Divyāvadāna, this is because Mara has filled the whole city with such a horrible stench that its inhabitants are prompted to purchase many perfumes. Mara, as we shall see, plays a crucial and somewhat ambiguous role in Upagupta's career, but his actions here need to be seen in the context of Upagupta's father's agreement with Sāṅakavāsin. Gupta, it will be remembered, had promised he would let his son enter the Sangha when his trade made "neither profit nor loss." Mara, by making sure that his business thrives, is trying to put off the start of Upagupta's monastic career.

Mara's interference, however, does not prevent Sāṅakavāsin, Upagupta's future preceptor, from beginning his spiritual training. Indeed, Sāṅakavāsin visits Upagupta in his family's shop and asks him whether in doing business his mental states are defiled or undefiled. This is a fairly technical question for a young layman, and Upagupta answers frankly that he does not know what is meant by "defiled and undefiled mental states." Sāṅakavāsin defines them for him in straightforward terms: defiled mental states are when humans feel desire, passion, and anger towards others; undefiled mental states are the absence of these emotions. He then teaches Upagupta a simple technique for keeping track of the states of his thoughts: he gives him some black and white "strips" of cloth or of wood and tells him to put aside one black strip every time a defiled thought arises and one white strip every time an undefiled thought arises.

This curious meditative technique is obviously related to the practice of mindfulness, in which meditators endeavor to note and eventually to control mental phenomena as they occur; but, by its use of physical mnemonic devices, it makes that technique very concrete and gives it a specifically moralistic focus.

The colors white and black in Buddhism, as in many traditions, symbolic of purity and impurity, merits and demerits, good and evil. Indeed, one of the constant refrains of the Sanskrit avadānas [avadāna is a Sanskrit word that refers to a type of Buddhist literature that connects a person's virtuous deeds in a past life to events in their current life] is that "the karmic fruit of completely black deeds is completely black; that of completely white deeds completely white; and that of mixed deeds mixed," a statement that is always followed by an exhortation to "shun completely black and mixed deeds and abound in completely white ones." Sāṅakavāsin, it seems is here showing Upagupta a very practical way of doing just this, and one which encourages him to develop more and more positive states, in the midst of his day-to-day activities in the perfume shop. Thus, Upagupta at first finds he is putting aside two black strips for every white one; but he soon comes to put aside equal numbers of black and white stripes, then two white ones for every black one, and finally white strips alone.

Patrul Rinpoche reports a similar method to remove distracting unwholesome thoughts.

Words of My Perfect Teacher by Patrul Rinpoche

"Long ago, there was a brahmin called Ravi who examined his mind at all times. Whenever a bad thought arose, he would put aside a black pebble, and whenever a good thought arose he would put aside a white pebble. At first, all the pebbles he put aside were black. Then, as he persevered in developing antidotes and in adopting positive actions and rejecting negative ones, a time came when his piles of black and white pebbles were equal. In the end he had only white ones. This is how you should develop positive actions as an antidote with mindfulness and vigilance, and not contaminate yourself with even the smallest harmful actions."

February 2025 - The Middle Way (majjhimā-paṭipadā)

The Middle Way teaching of the Buddha is a practice that avoids the extremes of asceticism (attakilamathānuyoga) and indulgence (kāmasukhallikānuyoga). In the context of the Middle Way, “asceticism” is the practice of physical mortification or devotion to physical torment; and “indulgence” is the behavior that feverishly pursues sensual pleasures or unrestrained preoccupation with sensual happiness.

The Buddha realized that pursuing sensual pleasures (kāma) will lead to attachment (rāga), suffering (dukkha), and distraction from the training that removes defilements (kilesa) from the mind. The removal of defilements from the mind is a necessary condition for enlightenment (nibbāna). The practice of extreme asceticism in an attempt to purify the mind and remove unwholesome kamma does not work nor does it lead to enlightenment. Extreme asceticism harms both the body and mind.

The Middle Way is a practice that avoids the extremes of asceticism which tortures the body and indulgence without restraint in sensual pleasures. The Buddha taught moderation: take care of physical well-being without attachment to sensual pleasures; and do so in a manner that removes the defilements.

The defilements obstruct and obscure the luminous mind (āloka kasiṇa). The Three Unwholesome Roots (akusala mūla) are the fundamental defilements:

12. delusion (moha) = ignorance (avijjā),
13. greed (lobha), and
14. hatred (dosa).

The various defilements are listed in the January 2025 Newsletter - Removal of Distracting Thoughts.

Buddhadhamma by Bhikkhu P. A. Payutto

Introduction

Later, when he [the Buddha] proclaimed to others the truth, the Dhamma, that he had discovered, he referred to it as the middle truth (majjhena-dhamma) or the middle teaching (majjhena-dhammadesaṇā), and he referred to the system of practice that he laid down for others as the middle way (majjhimā-paṭipadā; the ‘middle path of practice’).

The Buddha taught the Middle Way in his first sermon after enlightenment, the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta: Setting in Motion the Wheel of the Dhamma. The teaching is a guide for his disciples to achieve liberation from suffering without falling into extremes.

The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

56.11 (1) Setting in Motion the Wheel of the Dhamma

“Bhikkhus, these two extremes should not be followed by one who has gone forth into homelessness. What two? The pursuit of sensual happiness in sensual pleasures [kāma-sukha], which is low, vulgar, the way of worldlings, ignoble, unbeneficial; and the pursuit of self-mortification [atta-kilamatha], which is painful, ignoble, unbeneficial. Without veering towards either of these extremes, the Tathāgata has awakened to the middle way, which gives rise to vision, which gives rise to knowledge, which leads to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbāna.

“And what, bhikkhus, is that middle way awakened to by the Tathāgata, which gives rise to vision ... which leads to Nibbāna? It is this Noble Eightfold Path; that is, right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration. This, bhikkhus, is that middle way awakened to by

the Tathāgata, which gives rise to vision, which gives rise to knowledge, which leads to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbāna.

The Middle Way is the Noble Eightfold Path (ariya aṭṭhaṅgika magga) leading to enlightenment and the escape from the round of rebirths (saṃsāra); consisting of the following eight interconnected path factors:

1. Right View (sammā diṭṭhi),
2. Right Intention (sammā saṅkappa),
3. Right Speech (sammā vācā),
4. Right Action (sammā kammanta),
5. Right Livelihood (sammā ājiva),
6. Right Effort (sammā vāyāma),
7. Right Mindfulness (sammā sati), and
8. Right Concentration (sammā samādhi).

The path of practice is the training in ethical behavior (sīla), concentration (samādhi) and wisdom (paññā).

The main topic of the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta is the Four Noble Truths (ariya catusacca). The Middle Way is the Fourth Noble Truth.

1. The Noble Truth of Suffering (dukkha) acknowledges the existence of suffering, discussed in the February 2023 Newsletter.
2. The Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering (samudaya) identifies the cause of suffering as craving (taṇhā), discussed in the March 2023 Newsletter.
3. The Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering (nirodha) is nibbāna, discussed in the April 2023 Newsletter.
4. The Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering (magga) is the Noble Eightfold Path which embodies the Middle Way, discussed in the May 2023 Newsletter.

The Middle Way cultivates equanimity (upekkhā) or mental balance. The mind observes experiences with peace, neither clinging to pleasant experiences nor resisting unpleasant ones. The practice is to observe all experiences with a sense of detachment (virāga) and patience (khanti), accepting phenomena as they appear without proliferating, clinging or being swayed by them. Acceptance is an attribute of khanti, a pāli word usually translated as patience and endurance.

Equanimity is an immeasurable or divine abode. The Four Immeasurables or Divine Abodes (brahmavihāra) are:

1. loving-kindness (mettā),
2. compassion (karunā),
3. sympathetic joy (muditā), and
4. equanimity (upekkhā).

The Four Divine Abodes are discussed in the September 2023 Newsletter - Tranquility Meditation (samatha) and The Five Hindrances (pañca nīvaraṇā).

The recognition of the impermanence (anicca) of all things and practicing acceptance, the mind will maintain calm (santi) and equanimity even in the face of life's challenges. The Middle Way cultivates an attitude of equanimity where the mind does not react with attachment (rāga), greed (lobha) or aversion (dosā).

The Middle Teaching (majjhena-dhammadesanā) is Dependent Origination (paticcasamuppāda).

Dependent Origination is an 'impartial teaching of truth' or a 'middle teaching'.

The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

12.15 (5) Kaccānagotta

...

"This world, Kaccāna, for the most part depends upon a duality—upon the notion of existence and the notion of nonexistence.²⁹ But for one who sees the origin of the world as it really is with correct wisdom, there is no notion of nonexistence in regard to the world. And for one who sees the cessation of the world as it really is with correct wisdom, there is no notion of existence in regard to the world.³⁰

"This world, Kaccāna, is for the most part shackled by engagement, clinging, and adherence. But this one [with right view] does not become engaged and cling through that engagement and clinging, mental standpoint, adherence, underlying tendency; he does not take a stand about 'my self.' He has no perplexity or doubt that what arises is only suffering arising, what ceases is only suffering ceasing. His knowledge about this is independent of others. It is in this way, Kaccāna, that there is right view.³³ "All exists': Kaccāna, this is one extreme. 'All does not exist': this is the second extreme. Without veering towards either of these extremes, the Tathāgata teaches the Dhamma by the middle: 'With ignorance as condition, volitional formations [come to be]; with volitional formations as condition, consciousness.... Such is the origin of this whole mass of suffering. But with the remainderless fading away and cessation of ignorance comes cessation of volitional formations; with the cessation of volitional formations, cessation of consciousness.... Such is the cessation of this whole mass of suffering."

Notes:

29 The notion of existence (atthitā) is eternalism (sassata); the notion of nonexistence (natthitā) is annihilationism (uccheda). Spk-pt: The notion of existence is eternalism because it maintains that the entire world (of personal existence) exists forever. The notion of nonexistence is annihilationism because it maintains that the entire world does not exist (forever) but is cut off.

30 Spk: The origin of the world: the production of the world of formations. There is no notion of nonexistence in regard to the world: there does not occur in him the annihilationist view that might arise in regard to phenomena produced and made manifest in the world of formations, holding "They do not exist."

Spk: The cessation of the world: the dissolution (bhaṅga) of formations. There is no notion of existence in regard to the world: There does not occur in him the eternalist view which might arise in regard to phenomena produced and made manifest in the world of formations, holding "They exist."

33 Spk explains dukkha here as "the mere five aggregates subject to clinging". Thus what the noble disciple sees, when he reflects upon his personal existence, is not a self or a substantially existent person but a mere assemblage of conditioned phenomena arising and passing away through the conditioning process governed by dependent origination.

... "knowledge independent of others," is glossed by Spk as "personal direct knowledge without dependence on another." This is said because the noble disciple, from the point of stream-entry on, has seen the essential truth of the Dhamma and thus is not dependent on anyone else, not even the Buddha, for his or her insight into the Dhamma. Until arahantship is attained, however, such a disciple might still approach the Buddha (or another enlightened teacher) for practical guidance in meditation.

The Kaccānagotta Sutta state that "the Tathagatha teaches the Dhamma by the middle [way or teaching]"; i.e., the teaching of Dependent Origination (paticcasamuppāda) as a view between the extremes of eternalism (sassatavāda) and annihilationism (ucchedavāda) as well as the extremes of existence (bhava) and non-existence (abhāva).

The teaching of Dependent Origination is composed of a sequence of twelve factors. Each factor arises in dependence on the preceding factor and ceases when that preceding factor is no longer active. Dependent Origination is discussed in the July 2023 Newsletter. The twelve factors of the forward sequence of Dependent Origination (anulōma paṭicca samuppāda) are as follows:

1. ignorance (avijjā) give rise to (paccayā)¹

2. volitional formations (saṅkhārā), volitional formations give rise to (paccayā)
3. consciousness (viññāṇa), consciousness give rise to (paccayā)
4. mentality-materiality (nāmarūpa), mentality-materiality give rise to (paccayā)
5. six sense bases (saḷāyatana), six sense bases give rise to (paccayā)
6. contact (phassa), contact give rise to (paccayā)
7. feeling (vedanā), feeling give rise to (paccayā)
8. craving (taṇhā), craving give rise to (paccayā)
9. clinging (upādāna), clinging give rise to (paccayā)
10. becoming-existence (bhava), becoming-existence give rise to (paccayā)
11. birth (jāti), birth give rise to (paccayā)
12. suffering (dukkha)
 - a. aging (jarā) and death (maraṇa),
 - b. sorrow (soka),
 - c. lamentation (parideva),
 - d. pain (dukkha),
 - e. grief, displeasure (domanassa), and
 - f. despair (upāyāsa).

Note 1: The pāli word paccayā means ‘condition’, a significant influence that determine something, and may be expressed as “give rise to”.

The two extreme metaphysical views are avoided through the teaching of Dependent Origination.

- Eternalism is the view that there is an indestructible and eternal self. The problem with this view is that it leads to grasping at the five aggregates (pañca khandhā), which are impermanent (anicca), suffering (dukkha) and not a self (anattā). The five clinging aggregates (pañcupādānakkhandhā) constitute the empirical being and are listed as follows:
 6. material form, body, matter (rūpa khandha);
 7. feeling, sensation (vedanā khandha);
 8. perception, memory (saññā khandha);
 9. mental formations, volitional formations, karmic activity, emotions, attention, thought, imaginative thinking (saṅkhāra khandha); and
 10. sense consciousness, sensory awareness (viññāṇa khandha).
- Annihilationism is the view that a person is annihilated at death and there is nothing which survives. The problem with this view is that it leads to nihilism, particularly ethical nihilism. Dependent Origination avoids the two extremes by teaching that existence is a dynamic current of conditioned phenomena devoid of an unchanging self, yet the stream of causes continue from birth to birth within the round of becoming (saṃsāra), as long as the causes within the stream are active.

The Noble Eightfold Path and Dependent Origination are the teachings that describe the Middle Way.

Information About the Kalyāṇa-Mitta Meditation Center

Announcements

- Kalyāṇa-Mitta Meditation Center has a presence on Meet-Up social media and we ask that you please sign-up for every event that you are planning to attend at www.MeetUp.com. Some people are intimidated by a small number of attendees and a larger number will be encouraging.
- Please help advertise Kalyāṇa-Mitta Meditation Center by providing a review at www.google.com/maps.

Activities of the Meditation Center

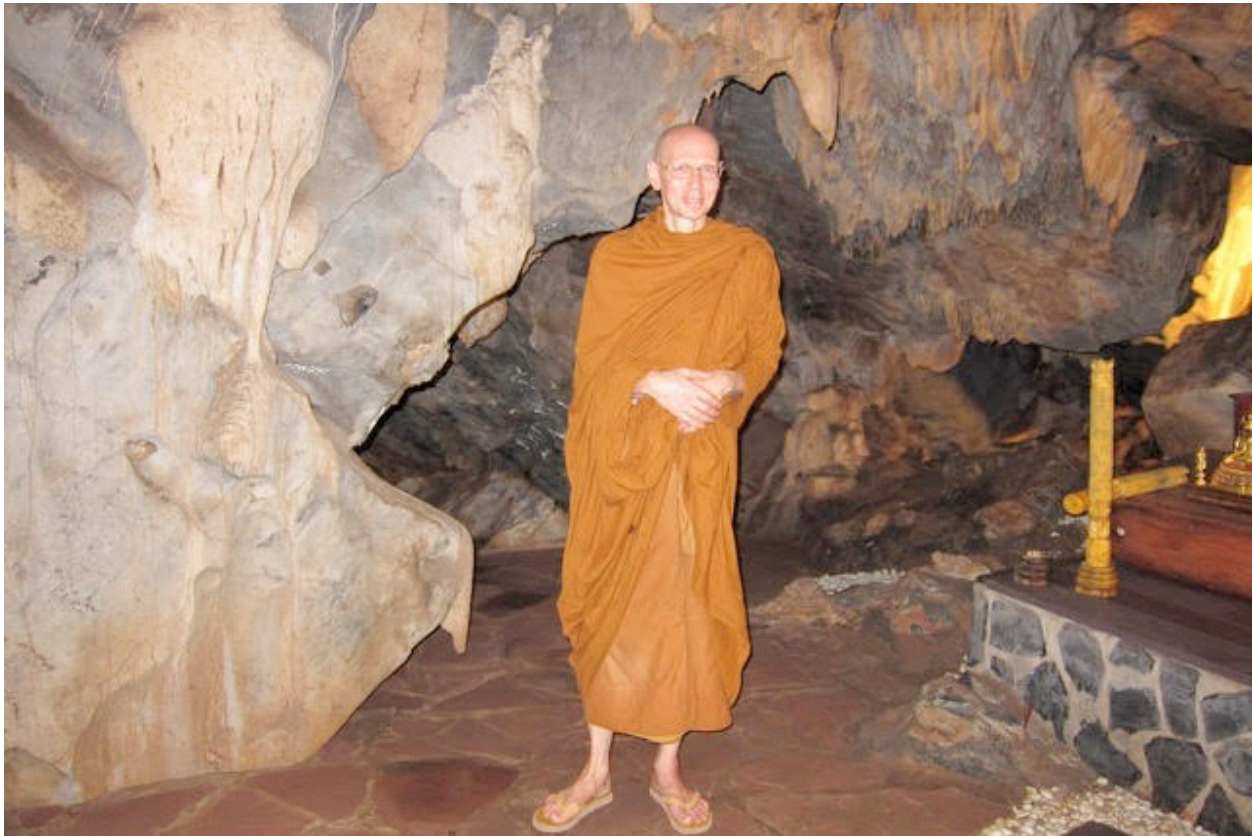
- Group sitting meditation practice for one hour is held Monday through Friday at 6:30AM and everyday at 5:30PM. After meditation, Ajahn Kumāro is available to answer questions and discuss the Dhamma. Please sign up on Meet-Up or send an email mittameditation@gmail.com on the days and time you would like to participate.
- Group sitting meditation practice for two hours is held every Saturday and Sunday at 6:30AM.
- The days of the full moon, new moon and the two half moons are called in Pāli: The Uposatha, and is a Buddhist day of observance. A lunar calendar is available at <https://cal.forestsangha.org>. Ajahn Kumāro will perform the ceremony of giving the five precepts on the full and new moon days after the 5:30PM meditation. You may elect to keep the precepts as long as you see fit (one night, a week, a lifetime, etc).
- Meditation Workshop is held on the first Sunday of each month between 11:00AM and 1:00PM. The workshop will provide instruction and practice for sitting and walking meditation. There will also be an opportunity to ask questions and discuss the Dhamma. Please sign up on Meet-Up or send an email mittameditation@gmail.com if you are planning to participate.
- A recording of a Dhamma Talk from an experienced Thai Forest Teacher will be played on the third Sunday of each month. Sitting meditation starts at 4:30PM and the Dhamma Talk will be played afterwards. Please sign up on Meet-Up or send an email mittameditation@gmail.com if you are planning to participate.
- Every Saturday at 4:15PM the Meditation Center will be cleaned. Please join us in maintaining a clean space for practicing and discussing the Dhamma.
- There is a Library at the Meditation Center. You may browse for books to borrow at 5:00PM and check out the books for three weeks.
- Everyday at 8:40AM Ajahn Kumāro leaves for alms-round in order to give residents of Asheville the opportunity to earn merit by practicing generosity of giving food and placing it into the alms bowl. Ajahn does not accept or handle money. Ajahn usually arrives at the Whole Foods Market, 70 Merrimon Ave. just before 9:00AM and stands in front of the store for alms.
- Ajahn is available at other times during the day to meet with individuals or groups when requested.
- For more additional information please send an email to mittameditation@gmail.com. We also have a presence on Facebook and Meet-Up social media.

Request for Support

The Meditation Center is in need of support in order to accomplish its' mission and vision. The support may take various forms. You will support the Meditation Center by:

- Being present at the Meditation Center for group meditation.
- Giving alms during alms-round.
- Bringing to the Meditation Center items that are listed on the support page of the website www.mittameditation.com.
- Volunteering your skills, energy and time at the Meditation Center.
- Informing your family and friends about the Meditation Center and encouraging them to participate in the activities.
- Donating financial contributions for the Meditation Center's expenses. Kalyāṇa-Mitta Meditation Center is recognized as a tax-exempt organization by the IRS under section 501(c)(3). Donations are deductible in accordance with IRS regulations. Financial contributions may be made on the support page of the website www.mittameditation.com and additional means for making financial donations may be discussed with Elisha Buhler at (910) 922-1549. Donations are accepted through our Zelle account using our email mittameditation@gmail.com. Donations can be made through PayPal as well using mittameditation@gmail.com as the donor address.

Biography of Ajahn Kumāro Bhikkhu:



Ajahn was born on March 18, 1957 in Suffern, New York and grew up in Deer Park on Long Island, New York. While in High School, he attended a lecture given by teachers of Transcendental Meditation (TM), and soon after, started to practice TM, which had a profound and uplifting effect on his mental health. He received an Associate in Science Degree (Major in Engineering Science) from the State University of New York, Agricultural and Technical College at Farmingdale, NY in March 1977, and a Bachelor of Science Degree in Civil Engineering from the University of New Mexico at Albuquerque in December 1979. One of the reasons Ajahn went to New Mexico was to associate with Native American Indians due to a childhood interest in their culture.

He worked as a Civil Engineer specializing in the design of highways. The professional career began by working for the California Department of Transportation in San Diego, California between January 1980 and December 1983. Not content as a civil engineer, and in search of the meaning of life, he left San Diego in December 1983 for the spiritual community Shambhala Sanctuary located in the foothills of the Andes Mountains in southern Ecuador. He traveled through Mexico, Central America and parts of South America to arrive at Shambhala Sanctuary in March 1984, but he did not find any answers at Shambhala Sanctuary, only confusion and left after a short stay. After this, he returned to the United States and worked as a Professional Civil Engineer, designing highways for various companies from April 1984, and resigned from his final employer in Ohio in September 1995. While working as an

engineer, he read religious books of many traditions and investigated spiritual paths that promise freedom from experiential suffering.

Ajahn felt a calling to pursue a spiritual life, this caused him to leave Ohio at the beginning of October 1995 in a van and traveled across America, camping in State and National Parks with the intention to meditate, but found meditation difficult. He was tired of traveling and camping, and felt lost without guidance from a spiritual teacher. He read Geshe Rabten's book Treasury of Dharma and learnt that a spiritual guide is important for the training of mind along a spiritual path. Using the classified section of a Buddhist magazine, he telephoned Buddhist Centers in search of a Teacher.

He went to Tucson, Arizona at the end of October 1995 for the winter due to a felt connection with Lama Karma Tenpa Gyeltsen through telephone conversations and arrived in Tucson at the end of October 1995 to study and practice Tibetan Buddhism with Lama Tenpa at the Bodhisattva Institute, who is connected to the Karma Kagyu lineage of Tibetan Buddhism, in which the Very Venerable Kalu Rinpoche was a senior teacher. After this, he participated in the Refuge Ceremony in January 1996 with Refuge Master Yogi Kalsang Rinpoche; he took on the refuge name of Karma Tsering, which means "long life." In May 1996, he received from Lama Tenpa the five precepts: abstain from killing, lying, stealing, sexual misconduct, and intoxicants.

After this, he sold his possessions, including his van, and left Tucson, Arizona in October 1997 with Lama Tenpa and other Bodhisattva Institute members for a pilgrimage to Buddhist India and aspired to stay in India at Sonada Monastery. While there, Lama Tenpa performed the 'ordination' in November 1997 in Bodhigaya, India at the Bodhi tree and became a Tibetan Buddhist Monk in order to fit in with the other monastics at Sonada. Lama said that the vows were temporary and would not be effective upon return to the United States. Soon after, Lama Tenpa and members of the Bodhisattva Institute returned to the United States. He then traveled to Kalu Rinpoche's Samdrup Darjay Choeling Monastery in Sonada, India, to live and practice with the monks; while there, he studied the Tibetan language and taught English. At Sonada Monastery, he learned that Lama Tenpa was part of a serious scandal in Tucson, after which, Lama left the Bodhisattva Institute and disappeared.

He left India for Nepal in February 1998 in pursuit of a new Indian Visa and applied for a Student Visa in March 1998 from the Indian Embassy in Katmandu, Nepal. Officials gave assurance that the Visa would eventually be approved from Delhi, India. He left Katmandu in beginning of April 1998 while waiting for Visa approval and joined six Italian and Serpa guides for a hike across Buddhist Nepal near Mt. Everest. He left the tour group in mid April and returned to Katmandu in order to learn whether the Embassy had approved the Visa. The Indian Embassy in Katmandu expressed that approval of the Visa would require still more time, but the existing return flight airline ticket had to be used before it expired. Therefore, he left Katmandu at the end of April 1998 for San Francisco, California.

While in San Francisco, he met Venerable Lama Lodru Rinpoche at the end of April 1998. Lama Lodru is the Spiritual Director of Kagyu Drodren Kunchab (KDK) in San Francisco, the teacher of Lama Tenpa and disciple of the Very Venerable Kalu Rinpoche. Lama Lodru said that Lama Tenpa was not an authentic monk or Lama and had no authority to ordain anyone. At the invitation of Lama Lodru, he moved onto KDK Retreat Land in Laytonville, Mendocino County, California at the beginning of May 1998. He left KDK Retreat Land briefly and traveled from California to New York in order to be properly ordained in the Tibetan monastic tradition. His Eminence Tai Situ Rinpoche presided over the Novice Monastic Ceremony in the beginning of June 1998 at Karma Triyana Dharmachakra Monastery

in Woodstock, New York; there he was given the novice monastic name Karma Tsultrim Rapje, which means “accomplishment in adhering to the precepts.” At KDK Retreat Land, he was living alone and had little guidance for a new monastic, also felt spiritually stuck and lonely. Therefore, he left KDK Retreat Land in February 1999 and began to research Buddhist Centers and other Buddhist traditions.

Greatly inspired by Venerable Thay Thich Nhat Hanh’s book *Stepping into Freedom – An Introduction to Buddhist Monastic Training*, he traveled to Maple Forest Monastery in South Woodstock, Vermont at the end of April 1999 in order to live and practice with the monks. Venerable Thay was a teacher of the Zen Buddhist tradition. Maple Forest Monastery is associated with Venerable Thay’s Plum Village monastic community located in France. He left Maple Forest Monastery at the end of December 1999 and arrived at Plum Village, Upper Hamlet in January 2000. He received teachings from Venerable Thay at Maple Forest Monastery and at Plum Village. At Plum Village, he experienced the greater community. He became restless at Plum Village and discontented with the lifestyle. In hindsight, it must be acknowledged that the teachings of Venerable Thay Thich Nhat Hanh are not defective, nor were they the direct cause for leaving the community; leaving the Plum Village Community was the result of spiritual immaturity. While living at Plum Village, he studied and became inspired by Jack Kornfield’s book *Living Dharma – Teachings of Twelve Buddhist Masters*. He left Plum Village in March 2000 to explore the Theravada Buddhist tradition and started to practice vipassana meditation.

At the beginning of April 2000, he moved into a trailer in rural West Virginia, lived alone, read the suttas of the Theravada Pāli Canon, and practiced vipassana and metta meditation. Here, he meditated about four times a day for an hour and half per session, and attended retreats at the Bhāvanā Society; he left the trailer at the end of July 2003.

After this, he traveled to Thailand at the beginning of November 2003 and arrived at Wat Pah Nanachat, the International Forest Monastery, in Ubon Ratchatani, Thailand in January 2004. He was ordained as an Anagarika (postulant) in January 2004 and a Samaṇera (novice) in July 2004 at Wat Pah Nanachat. He ordained as a Bhikkhu (fully ordained monk) in July 2005, Luang Por Liem Thitadhammo was the preceptor overseeing the ordination at Wat Nong Pah Pong, Thailand. Luang Por Liem is a disciple of the Venerable Ajahn Chah (Phra Bodhinyana Thera). Venerable Ajahn Chah’s Buddhist lineage is associated with the [Thai Forest Tradition](#).

He lived in Thailand for more than thirteen years between 2003 and 2017; six months as an Anagarika (postulant), one year as a Samaṇera (novice) and twelve years as a Forest Bhikkhu (monk). He lived during the annual Rains Retreat at Wat Pah Nanachat, Wat Ratanawan, Wat Dao Dam, Dream Valley Khao Yai and Wat Boonyawad. Outside of the Rains Retreat, he lived at Wat Poo Jom Gom, Wat Marp Jan, Wat Pah Ampawan, and Wat Nong Pah Pong. The three month annual Rains Retreat is usually observed from July to October. At this time monastics remain in one place to practice and study the Dhamma, the Teachings of the Buddha. The number of years a monk has spent in monastic life is determined by counting the number of Rains since ordination.

He left Thailand in 2017 in order to celebrate mother’s 90th birthday and to experience living as a monastic in the West. He arrived at Temple Forest Monastery (TFM), New Hampshire at the beginning of April 2017. He lived with the TFM Community for five years helping with the maintenance and growth of the new monastery. He left TFM in April 2022, however, the heart remains and he is still a member of the TFM Saṅgha (Community), in order to help establish the Kalyāṇa-Mitta Meditation

Center in Asheville, North Carolina with Elisha Buhler. Ajahn arrived in Asheville on May 1, 2022.
Please note that Kalyāṇa-Mitta Meditation Center is not a monastery nor a branch of TFM.