

University Vipassanā Dhamma Talk

By

The Venerable
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(Dhamma Talk on *Vipassanā* Meditation

Given at Yangon University)

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Delivered on the Fourth Night of the Waxing Moon of Kason (May)
in the Burmese Year of 1336 (1974)

Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammāsambuddhassa

Introduction

I have been invited to the Dhamma Hall at Yangon University to give a Dhamma talk before. Because the time of the invitation happened to coincide with a time I was unable to come, therefore in the past, I have not yet given a talk in this Dhamma hall. Now is my first time giving a talk here.

The occasion of my talk now is:

“With both parents as patrons, U Kyaw Win, his wife Daw Khin Aye Kyi and their son and daughter, who live on the campus of Yangon University, at Number Two Thaton Street have respectfully invited their Dhamma friends to come together and listen to *Aggamahāpaṇḍita* Mahāsi Sayadawgyi’s *vipassanā* meditation talk, which will be held on the fourth day of the waxing moon of Kason (May) in the Burmese Year of 1336 (1974) on Wednesday evening at seven o’clock, and the *Tipiṭakadhara Dhammabhaṇḍāgārika* Ashin Vicittasārābhivamsa’s Dhamma talk, which will be held on the fifth and sixth day of the waxing moon of Kason in the Burmese Year of 1336 (1974) at seven o’clock in the evening.”

According to what has been stated in this invitation letter, because of U Kyaw Win’s invitation, now there is the occasion for giving this Dhamma talk.

On this day of scheduled talks, if the previous Dhamma lecturer and I were both to give talks for the whole evening, then the Dhamma talk I am about

to give may not be completed. Therefore, during this evening, it was arranged so that I alone would be giving a talk.

The Subject of This Dhamma Talk

What Dhamma will I teach? Because it is suitable to teach about *vipassanā*, I will give a talk about *vipassanā* meditation. It is very important to both teach and listen to a talk on *vipassanā*. The Buddha's sequence of teaching is: *dānakathā*, *sīlakathā*, *saggakathā*, and *maggakathā*. Among these—

- (1) *Dānakathā* means the Buddha's teachings related to giving, how to make donations, and what results will arise, etc. We must frequently listen to talks on this subject.
- (2) *Sīlakathā* means the Buddha's teachings related to the five precepts, how to practice moral restraint, and what results will arise, etc. We must frequently listen to talks on this subject.
- (3) *Saggakathā* means the Buddha's teachings on the wealth and happiness of *devas* that one enjoys due to the power of giving and morality.
- (4) *Maggakathā* means the Buddha's teachings on renunciation, after pointing out the faults of the wealth and happiness of *devas* and sense pleasures, the practice of *samatha* and *vipassanā* meditation, and the realization of the Noble Path (*ariya magga*) that knows the Four Noble Truths.

Among these four teachings, you may have heard talks about the first three subjects many times before. As for the first parts of the teachings on *maggakathā*, they cannot be taught in one night alone. Therefore, without separately teaching the first three subjects, I will only give a talk on *vipassanā*. There are many people during these times who teach *vipassanā*. The method of teaching, however, is not the same from one person to another. Most importantly, it is necessary for those who practice according to the teachings to experience for themselves real *vipassanā* insight knowledges that are in accordance with the texts. As for myself, I teach a program of *vipassanā* practice that can lead those who practice it to experience genuine *vipassanā* insight knowledges, and genuine path and fruition knowledges that are in

accordance with the texts. Now I will teach this program of meditation. First, I will recite a fundamental verse.

Satti Sutta (Samyutta Pāli, Vol. I, 12)

Sattiyā viya omaṭṭho, deshamānova matthake.

Kāmarāgappahānāya, sato bhikkhu paribbaje.

This was a verse recited by an unnamed *deva* to express his view to the Buddha. Although he was called a *deva*, according to the explanation in the first volume of the *Sagāthāvaggasaṃyutta*, he was actually a *brahmā* with an extremely long life that spanned many world cycles. Therefore, here we will just call him a *brahmā*.

Omaṭṭho viya - Like a person who has been pierced in the chest; *sattiyā* - with a big spear; *paribbaje* - should quickly make an effort (to pull it out). What is the most important thing to do for a person whose chest has been pierced by a spear? The most important thing is to pull out the spear and treat the wound. However important financial matters and family affairs, etc., may be, all these other things can be put aside. The most important thing is to pull out the spear and treat the wound. This is one example where one should quickly make an effort.

Another example is:

Deshamāno iva - Like a person who is being burned; *matthake* - on the head; *paribbaje* - should quickly make an effort (to put it out). What is the most important thing for a person whose hair is on fire? The most important thing is to put out the fire that is burning his or her hair. All other things besides this can be put aside. The most important thing is to put out the fire that is burning the head. This is the second example.

Therefore:

Omaṭṭho viya - Like a person who has been pierced in the chest; *sattiyā* - with a big spear; *deshamāno iva* - like a person who is being burned; *matthake* - on the head; *bhikkhu* - a monk or a person who sees the danger of *samsāra*; *sato*

- being aware, being mindful; *paribbaje* - should quickly make an effort; *kāmarāgappahānāya* - to remove sense desire with *samatha jhāna*.

Not Believing in the Truth Is Due to a Low Level of Knowledge

This is the verse that the *brahmā* recited expressing his view to the Buddha. There are some people who may not believe in *devas* and *brahmās* because they have not met them in person before. This is because they do not have the mental ability to see *devas* and *brahmās*, since their level of knowledge is low. These people, however, may say that they do not believe in these things because their level of intellectual reasoning is high. But in reality, it is similar to some people in Eastern countries disbelieving in airplanes when they were first invented in the West. In current times, this is the same as people not believing that spaceships have landed on the moon.

The Buddha has spoken about *devas* and *brahmās* after encountering and knowing about them with his personal knowledge. *Arahants* who have attained supernormal knowledges (*abhiññā*) have confirmed this to be true. The Buddha has also taught dhammas that he experienced with his own knowledge that are even more elevated and subtle than *devas* and *brahmās*. Noble *arahants* who have attained special knowledges have confirmed this through their own experience. Therefore, not believing in *devas* and *brahmās* because of not being able to see them is due to a low level of knowledge.

One Should Believe in the Dhamma Just Like Believing in Scientists' Experiments

Brahmās are free from sensual desire and attachment to sensual objects. Their life spans encompass many world cycles. Beings of the sense realms such as humans and *devas* are short-lived in comparison. They must die more frequently. During the Buddha's time, the life spans of humans were generally one hundred years long. There were people who died before reaching one hundred years. There were also people who lived past one hundred years, and lived up to one hundred forty, fifty or sixty years. It is mentioned in the texts that during times further back in the past than this, human life spans were even

longer, up to three or four hundred years. The life span in the human realm, however, is not very long. In the *deva* realms, the life spans of *devas* are far longer than that of humans. Ordinary people do not know this. We must accept what the omniscient Buddha and the noble *arahants* have taught. For example, during current times, scientific knowledge is advancing. People who are advanced in science have investigated the natural world in many ways. Although other people may not know science by themselves, they must believe the results of scientists' experiments according to how scientists have explained them. After calculating with their methods, scientists have shown the size of the sun and other planets, the size of the earth, the distance from the sun, how the planets orbit, and that other solar systems are similar. Although we may not know this by ourselves, we can believe what they have stated. Why should we believe in this way? Although we may not know personally like those scientists, we can believe that what they say must likely be true because of proper reasoning.

Similarly, it is suitable for us to believe what the Buddha taught about the *deva* and *brahmā* realms only after he discerned it for himself, and to believe according to how he taught it.

Why is this? Although one may not know personally, with proper reasoning that it is worthy of belief, one can accept that what the Buddha taught is likely true. If one wants to know through personal experience, there are methods of practice so as to be able to comprehend. If one practices with these methods in order to gain *jhānic* supernormal knowledges and becomes proficient in them, then one can see for oneself with those supernormal knowledges. Because there are methods of knowing, if without practicing these methods, one says that one doesn't believe in what the Buddha taught because one does not know it personally, then it would not be appropriate.

It Is Inappropriate to Compare Oneself With Those Who Are on a Different Level

Some people say that: "If I have not experienced it personally, then I cannot believe it." One says this because one thinks that other people are ignorant just like oneself. It is correct to compare with others only when they are on the same level as oneself. It is extremely misguided if one compares

oneself with those who are on a different level as though one is equal to them. For example, if one who has not studied mathematics before compares oneself with a Doctorate in Mathematics as equals, saying that: “This expert does not know any more than I do in calculating a sum,” then wouldn’t it be very wrong? Similarly, if one is ignorant of what someone who truly knows has taught about the world, and considers oneself to be equal to that person and disbelieves him, then it is extremely incorrect. Therefore, although one may not know through personal experience that *devas* and *brahmās* exist, according to the Buddha’s teachings, one can believe that the Buddha only taught this after knowing it for himself. There are also Dhammas that the Buddha taught as well that are even more noble than *devas* and *brahmās*. If one really wants to know, it is necessary to study so that one can personally understand what was taught. If one studies, then one will be able to comprehend. The Buddha’s Dhamma is a Dhamma that can be personally experienced and understood. Therefore, the Buddha praised it as *sandiṭṭhiko*—the noble Dhamma that can definitely be experienced for oneself through practice, and then he taught it.

The Brahma’s View

Just now, we mentioned that *devas* have a longer life than humans. Yet in the view of *brahmās*, however, these *devas* also have to frequently experience death after living for only a short time. Since humans and *devas* have to frequently die in this way, the great *brahmā* felt pity. “Because these beings have *rāga*, delight in and lust for sense objects, they are reborn in the short-lived human and *deva* realms. After being born, in a short time they have to die. If beings practice in order to be free from sense desire like us (*brahmās*), if they gain *jhāna* like us, after being reborn in the *brahmā* realms, they can have a long life span of many world-cycles just like us. Thus, without having to die frequently, beings can be free from death.” The *brahmā* thought in this way.

Therefore he stated to the Buddha:

Omaṭṭho viya - Like a person who has been pierced in the chest; *sattiyā-* with a big spear; *deshamāno iva* - like a person who is being burned; *matthake* - on the head; *bhikkhu* - a monk, or a person who sees the danger of *samsāra*; *sato* - being aware, being mindful; *paribbaje* - should quickly make an effort;

kāmarāgappahānāya - to remove sense desire which can cause one to be reborn in short-lived existences with *samatha jhāna*.

In short, this means that one should quickly make an effort to gain *jhāna*. If one attains *jhāna*, one can be free from sense desire. Due to the momentum of wholesome *jhāna*, one can be reborn in the *brahmā* realm and live a long life. This is the best, the *brahmā* said.

From the point of view of humans, one can see many beings that are short-lived. Some insects seem to live only for a day or a few days. Some insects are extremely tiny. Their lives are extremely short. It is very pitiable that these insects are born and soon die within a few days, and then are reborn again, and die again in this way. From the *brahmā*'s point of view, because of seeing humans and *devas* being reborn and dying again and again, and having to frequently die, he felt pity for them. Because of feeling pity, he reflected in this way: "If they were to attain *jhāna* like us, they would be free from sense desire. If they were free from sense desire, they would be reborn in the *brahmā* realms like us, and would live for a long time. This is the best." Having reflected in this way, he stated this view to the Buddha. He spoke in this way thinking that the Buddha would agree with it.

The Buddha's View

When the Buddha considered the *brahmā*'s statement, however, he found that the *brahmā*'s view was incomplete and incorrect. How so? One can temporarily remove sense desire with *samatha jhāna*. One can also eradicate it permanently with *anāgami* path knowledge (*anāgami magga*). Among these two ways, eradicating it with *anāgami magga* is superior. It is extremely good. The root of sense desire is cut off. One will be reborn after death only in the *brahmā* realms. After becoming an *arahant* in the *brahmā* realms, one will enter into *parinibbāna*. Therefore, it is extremely good to eradicate sense desire with *anāgami magga*.

If one removes sense desire with *samatha jhāna*, however, one does not cut off or extinguish its root. One is free from sense desire only during the attainment of this *jhāna*, and only during existence in the *brahmā* realms. After

passing away from the *brahmā* realms, one will be reborn again in the human and *deva* realms. At this time, sense desire will appear again just like with other beings. At this time, because of associating with good people, if one is able to perform wholesome deeds based on virtuous teachings, then one can be reborn in the human and *deva* realms. If one is able to practice in order to attain *jhāna*, one can be reborn again in the *brahmā* realms. Because of associating with bad people, after listening to unwholesome teachings, if one takes up wrong views and also increasingly does unwholesome actions, one can be reborn in the four lower realms. Therefore, only removing sense desire temporarily by attaining *jhāna* is extremely worthless. According to the Buddha's point of view, only attaining *jhāna* is not worthwhile. Similarly, according to the point of view of the Buddha's disciples, only attaining *jhāna* is not worthwhile. Why is this? Although one can become a *brahmā* because of wholesome *jhāna*, after passing away from the *brahmā* realm, one will be reborn in the human or other realms, and has to die frequently once again. One has to die a multitude of times, an unlimited and uncountable number of times. Death will not cease as one had hoped. Therefore, in order to fulfill this intention of escaping death, the Buddha spoke the following verse in amendment.

A Dhamma Verse that Fulfills One's Intention

*Sattiyā viya omaṭṭho, deshamaṇova matthake.
Sakkāyaditṭhippahānāya, sato bhikkhu paribbaje.*

Omaṭṭho viya - Like a person who has been pierced in the chest; *sattiyā-* with a big spear (like a person who has been pierced by a spear in the chest would quickly make an effort pull to out the spear and treat the wound); *deshamaṇo iva* - like a person who is being burned; *matthake* - on the head (like a person whose head is on fire would quickly make an effort to put the fire out); *bhikkhu* - a monk; *bhikkhu* - a person who, seeing the danger of *samsāra*, wants to practice so as to be free from it; *sato* - being aware, being mindful; *paribbaje* - should quickly make an effort; *sakkāyaditṭhippahānāya* - to eradicate the wrong view of self.

It Is Important to Eradicate *Sakkāyadiṭṭhi*

Just like the most important thing for a person whose chest has been pierced by a spear is to pull it out and treat the wound, or according to another example, just like the most important thing for a person whose head is on fire is to put it out, the most important thing is to eradicate the wrong view of self, *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*. Why is this? Although a person who is not free from *sakkāyadiṭṭhi* is reborn in the *brahmā* realm, someday, after passing away from the *brahmā* realm, he will be reborn again in the human and *deva* realms and have to die frequently. Finally, after being reborn in the four lower realms, he will have to experience suffering there. If one is free from *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*, however, one will no longer be reborn in the four lower realms. If one is reborn in the human or *deva* realms, it will not be for more than seven existences. At the most, one will be reborn only for seven existences. During the seventh existence, one will become an *arahant* and enter into *parinibbāna*. If one is reborn in the *brahmā* realm, one will become an *arahant* solely in the *brahmā* realm and enter into *parinibbāna* there. Therefore, the most important thing is to uproot *sakkāyadiṭṭhi* with the noble path knowledge (*ariya magga*). Because this is the most important thing, the Buddha taught that one “*sato* - being aware, being mindful; *paribbaje* - should quickly make an effort; *sakkāyadiṭṭhippahānāya* - to eradicate the wrong view of self.”

This means: Just like a person whose chest has been pierced by a spear should quickly make an effort to pull it out and treat the wound, one should quickly make an effort to eradicate the wrong view of self, *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*. If possible, one should even put aside pulling out the spear and treating the wound, and should first of all quickly make an effort to eradicate *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*. Thus, shouldn't people now, after putting aside this or that matter, make an effort to eradicate *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*? Furthermore, just like a person whose head is on fire should quickly make an effort to put it out, one should quickly make an effort to eradicate *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*. If possible, one should even put aside extinguishing the fire, and should first of all quickly make an effort to eradicate *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*. If we compare these two points, shouldn't people now, after putting aside other matters, make an effort to eradicate *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*? They should do so.

The *Brahma's* View and the Buddha's View

The *brahmā's* view was that it was important to remove sense desire with *jhāna* to avoid frequent death. Therefore, he said that just like a person whose chest has been pierced by a spear should quickly make an effort to pull it out and treat the wound, and just like a person whose head is on fire should quickly make an effort to put it out, one should quickly make an effort to remove sense desire with *jhāna*. Beings think that this is the best Dhamma that humans, *devas* and *brahmās* can attain and fulfill. In the past, they thought in this way. During these times, they also think in this way. After believing that this is the best Dhamma that one can gain, that one can master, and that one can have faith in, they preached it to others, and spread this belief. This is just a common belief of beings. The *brahmā* who spoke with the Buddha also believed that *jhāna* was the best and presented it thus.

Because the Buddha knew all Dhammas, he was able to discern and determine precisely what was best. Removing sense desire with *jhāna* so as to be reborn as a *brahmā* is good to a certain extent. However, this removal of sense desire is not a permanent uprooting. If one only temporarily removes (*vikkhambhanapahāna*) it, sense desire can arise again at some point even after a long time. Therefore, *jhāna* is really not the best. Becoming a *brahmā* also means that at some point, one has to pass away from that existence and die. If one is not free from *sakkāyadiṭṭhi* at the time of death, one will be reborn again in the sense realms, and will die again and again. One can also be reborn in the four lower realms. Therefore, *jhāna* is not the best practice.

Completely eradicating sense desire with *anāgami magga* is the best. For most people, however, it is not easy to practice to attain *anāgami* path knowledge. It is difficult. If one can eradicate *sakkāyadiṭṭhi* with *sotāpatti* path knowledge, one will forever be free from the four lower realms. If one is reborn in the human and *deva* realms, at the most one will be reborn and die for only seven existences. If one is reborn in the *brahmā* realms, one will become an *arahant* solely in this *brahma* realm and enter into *parinibbāna*. Then one will be totally free from death. Therefore, at the very least, the most important thing is to uproot and eradicate *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*. Human beings are able to practice so as to eradicate it. Therefore, without first instructing one to eradicate sense desire

with *anāgami* path knowledge, the Buddha taught that at the very least, the best thing is to eradicate *sakkāyadiṭṭhi* with *sotāpatti* path knowledge.

What Is *Sakkāyadiṭṭhi*?

The wrong view or belief that the mental and physical aggregates that clearly exist are self or “I” is *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*. The Pāli word *sakkāyadiṭṭhi* is a compound of three components: “*sa*,” “*kāya*,” and “*diṭṭhi*.” “*Sa*” means clearly existing; “*kāya*” means a group or aggregation; and “*diṭṭhi*” means wrong view or wrong belief. “*Sa*” and “*kāya*” put together results in the word “*sakkāya*.” It means a group or aggregation of physical and mental phenomena that clearly exist. The wrong view that these mental and physical phenomena that clearly exist are self, “I,” or a being is called *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*.

How *Sakkāyadiṭṭhi* Arises During Seeing

What is evident at the moment of seeing? One sees because there are the eyes. If there are no eyes, can one see? No, one cannot. Therefore, at the moment of seeing, the physical eye clearly exists. Then, one sees because there is a visible object. Can one see if there is no object? No, one cannot. Therefore, the visible object also exists. There is no special need to mention that seeing consciousness also exists. Therefore, at the moment of seeing, there are the physical eye, the visible object, and the seeing consciousness. These three clearly exist. Among these three, the eye and the visible object are physical phenomena, *rūpa*. They cannot know anything by themselves. When they encounter opposing conditions, they can change in some way. Therefore, the eye and visible object are called “*rūpa*.” It means that they are dhammas that can change when encountering opposing conditions such as heat or cold, etc. However, for easy understanding, they can be called *anārammaṇa* dhammas that cannot take or know objects. Seeing consciousness, however, is a mental phenomenon that is able to know objects. Therefore, at the moment of seeing, what clearly exist are the eye and the visible object called *rūpa*, and seeing consciousness called *nāma*. Only these two—mental and physical phenomena clearly exist. Ordinary people think of these as a living self or “I.” This wrong

view of mental and physical aggregates that clearly exist as a self or “I” is *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*.

The way in which wrong view arises is: the eyes as well as the entire body are thought of as “I.” Seeing consciousness is also taken as “I.” One thinks that: “I am seeing, seeing is me.” When seeing one’s body or hand, etc., one thinks that: “I see myself.” One thinks that the object of seeing is also one’s self. The eye, the seeing consciousness, and the object of seeing, all three are taken as “I.” This is *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*. When seeing others also, one thinks that one sees a person, a woman, a man, etc., a living self or being. This is also *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*. Beginning with seeing consciousness, the knowing mind as well as the whole body together are clung to as self. This is *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*. The eye, the visible object, and seeing consciousness, all three are taken as a self or a being. It is difficult to be free from this clinging to self, this clinging to *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*. In ordinary people, this clinging exists. For people who have studied the *Abhidhamma*, this clinging to self can be said to be somewhat reduced. However, they are not totally free from it yet.

One cannot be free from clinging to self only through book knowledge (*sutamayañāna*). Only through experiential knowledge (*bhāvanāmayañāna*) that continuously notes and knows every seeing, hearing, touching, thinking, with every experiential knowing of non-self, one is free from this clinging to self. However, when one is not noting and knowing, this clinging to self will arise again. One is completely free from this clinging only when the noble path (*ariya magga*) is reached. One must eradicate this clinging with *vipassanā* insight knowledge by noting and knowing until the noble path arises.

Four Kinds of Clinging to *Atta*

In India, this *atta* or self has been extensively written about and discussed in the spiritual texts. Thinking that one can accomplish things as one desires is *sāmīatta* clinging. Thinking that there is a permanent self or “I” in the body is *nivāsīatta* clinging. Thinking that it is “I” who walks, stands, sits, sleeps, sees, hears, acts, etc., is *kārakaatta* clinging. Thinking that it is “I” who experiences good or bad is *vedakaatta* clinging. According to these four types of clinging, they thought that a self really existed. The Buddha’s teaching, however, clearly

rejected the existence of this *atta* or self. This is very clear in the *Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta*. In India, most people firmly believe in the doctrine of self. In their texts, there is even the teaching that if one knows this self, then all suffering would cease. In Myanmar, there are no texts that explain the existence of this self. However, there is clinging to the idea that there is a living self. Not just in humans, in animals there is also this clinging to the idea of a self.

The physical and mental phenomena that clearly arise in one's body such as seeing, hearing, etc., are all together taken and clung to as a living self. Thinking and clinging in this way is *attadiṭṭhi*, *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*. "*Diṭṭhi* - The wrong view and wrong belief which is arising; *satikāye sakkāye* - in the body and mind that clearly exist; *sakkāyadiṭṭhi* - is called *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*." Wrongly thinking that there is a living self in the physical and mental aggregates that clearly exist is *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*. Let us recite the following three times:

“Wrongly thinking that there is a living self in the physical and mental aggregates that clearly exist is *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*.”

According to what was discussed just now, the physical and mental aggregates that clearly exist include the physical eye at the moment of seeing, the visible object that is seen, and the seeing consciousness. Every time one sees, these physical and mental phenomena clearly exist. Taking the physical and mental phenomena of the eye, the visible object, and the seeing consciousness all together and clinging to them as self or “I” is *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*.

How *Sakkāyadiṭṭhi* Arises During Hearing, Etc.

What happens at the moment of hearing is the same as during seeing. The ear clearly exists. The sound that is heard also clearly exists. The hearing consciousness also clearly exists. One clings to these aggregates of physical and mental phenomena that clearly exist as “I,” as a living being. One also clings to the person who speaks as a living being. This is *sakkāyadiṭṭhi* which wrongly thinks, views, and believes that the aggregates of physical and mental phenomena that clearly exist are self.

At the moment of smelling too, the nose clearly exists. The odor also clearly exists. The smelling (olfactory) consciousness also clearly exists. One clings to these aggregates of physical and mental phenomena as a living self or being. This is *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*.

At the moment of eating too, the tongue clearly exists. The physical taste also clearly exists. The tasting (gustatory) consciousness also clearly exists. One clings to these aggregates of physical and mental phenomena as a living self or being. This is *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*.

As for places that experience touch, they are quite extensive. The whole body can experience touch. For seeing, there are only two places where there are two eyes. For hearing, there are only two places where there are two ears. For smelling, there are only two places where there are two nostrils. For tasting, there is only one place where there is one tongue. For touching, however, there is the whole body. All the places where one is healthy are included. From head to toe, the whole body, both internally and externally, are full of tactile sensations. With every tactile contact, touching over there, touching over here, the place that experiences touch called *kāyapasāda*, the body sensitivity, clearly exists. The tactile sensation also clearly exists. The consciousness that knows touch (tactile consciousness) also clearly exists. One takes these physical and mental phenomena that clearly exist as a whole and clings to them as “I” and as a living being. This is *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*.

At the moment of imagining, reflecting, or planning too, with every act of thinking, the physical base on which it depends clearly exists. The object of thinking clearly exists. The thinking consciousness clearly exists. One clings to the physical and mental aggregates that clearly exist and thinks that: “I am imagining, I am planning, I am knowing.” This is *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*. Combining seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, thinking and viewing them as “I” or as a self is *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*.

It Is Important to Eradicate *Sakkāyadiṭṭhi*

Because of hearing the Buddha’s teaching, for the person who is able to understand that seeing, hearing, etc., are only physical and mental phenomena

that are continuously arising and passing away, this clinging to “I” and self is not very strong. It is reduced a little bit. The clinging is not too extreme. For those who have not heard the Buddha’s teaching and have no understanding, however, the clinging to “I” and self exists very strongly. These people think that a living self or “I” really exists. Some even think that a soul exists. They think that at death, the soul leaves the body. They think that when the new existence arises, the soul enters into the baby’s body. Some think that when the soul departs, it talks to another person’s soul. They even say that when the soul meets with another bad soul, it gets frightened, etc. Thinking in this way is clinging to the wrong view of self, *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*.

As long as *sakkāyadiṭṭhi* exists, for that entire time, after performing unwholesome actions, one can be reborn in the four lower realms. It can be said that the doors of the lower realms are open. Therefore, it is extremely important to eradicate *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*. If one can uproot *sakkāyadiṭṭhi* with *sotāpatti* path knowledge, one will never again be reborn in the four lower realms. One also no longer performs unwholesome actions that would lead to rebirth in the four lower realms. Unwholesome *kamma* that was done previously also cannot cause one to be reborn in the four lower realms. The doors to the lower realms will be closed. All the suffering that one would have experienced after being reborn in the lower realms will also be extinguished. This is not yet all. Even good rebirths in the human and deva realms will not occur more than seven times. All the suffering of aging, sickness, and death, etc., that would have been encountered beyond seven existences will also be extinguished. Within seven existences, after realizing *arahatta* path and fruition, one will realize *nibbāna* that extinguishes all suffering.

Therefore, the most important thing is to eradicate *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*. It is possible to eradicate *sakkāyadiṭṭhi* only during the Buddha’s dispensation (*sāsana*), which is now. Only when meeting with the Buddha’s dispensation during this current time, can one eradicate *sakkāyadiṭṭhi* with knowledge of *ariya magga* by practicing *vipassanā*. The wholesome actions of generosity (*dāna*), morality (*sīla*), and *samatha jhāna* can also be performed outside the period of the *sāsana*, and one can also gain the happiness of humans, *devas* and *brahmās* resulting from these wholesome actions of generosity and morality, etc. However, one is not forever free from rebirth in the four lower realms. These ordinary wholesome actions of generosity, etc., do not give a definite

assurance of reaching *nibbāna* that can extinguish all suffering. Only if one can eradicate *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*, will one also be forever free from the four lower realms. Being liberated from the rounds of rebirth, there is also the definite assurance of attaining *nibbāna*, and at most only seven existences in the blissful realms (*sugatibhava*) will remain. All the suffering that would have arisen after seven existences are extinguished. Therefore, eradicating *sakkāyadiṭṭhi* is the most important thing. Thus the Buddha taught its utmost importance in this way:

Bhikkhu - a person who, seeing the danger of *samsāra*, wants to practice so as to be free from it; *sato* - being mindful; *paribbaje* - should quickly make an effort; *sakkāyadiṭṭhippahānāya* - to eradicate the wrong view of self.

A person who has been pierced by a spear should not act slowly with delay. He should exert an effort to immediately pull out the spear as quickly as possible and treat the wound. A person whose head is on fire should quickly exert an effort to immediately extinguish it. Similarly, in eradicating *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*, one should immediately make an effort to quickly extinguish it. Why is this? Because one does not know for sure how long one will live, on which day or at what time one will die. Before one dies, while there is still time, one can eradicate this wrong view. Therefore, in the *Bhaddekaratta Sutta*, the Buddha taught thus:

Practice Meditation on This Very Day

*Ajjeva kiccamātappaṃ, kho jañña maraṇaṃ suve.
Na hi no saṅgamaṃ tena, mahāsenena maccunā.*

The meaning is:

Ātappaṃ - The work of *vipassanā* meditation that can burn up and clear the mental defilements, that is worthy of doing with ardent effort (*sammapaddānam*); *kiccaṃ* - should be done; *ajjeva* - on this very day, without putting it off until tomorrow or the day after. *Kasmā*- Why should it be done today, without putting it off until tomorrow or the day after? *Kho jañña* - Who can know for sure; *suve maraṇaṃ*- if one will live or die tomorrow? *Tasmā* - Because one cannot know for sure if one will live or die tomorrow; *kiccaṃ* - it should be done; *ajjeva* - on this very day, without putting it off until tomorrow

or the day after. *Kasmā*- Why is one unable to know if one will live or die tomorrow? *No* - for us; *na hi* - there is no; *saṅgaram*- making appointments, offering bribery, or gathering an army for resistance; *tena maccunā* - with this King of Death; *mahāsenena* - who has a multitude of armies such as disease, poison, weapons, etc., that can cause death. *Tasmā* - Therefore, because there is no making appointments, offering bribery, or gathering an army for resistance with the King of Death; *kho jañña* - no one can know for sure; *suve maraṇam* - if one will live or die tomorrow. *Tasmā* - Because one is not able to know; *kiccaṃ* - the work of *vipassanā* meditation should be done; *ajjeva* - on this very day, without putting it off until tomorrow or the day after.

This means that no one can know for sure if one will still be alive tomorrow. No one knows this for certain. When one is healthy, if one reckons that they will still be alive tomorrow, or will still be alive until the day after tomorrow, or will still be alive in a month, etc., then it most likely would be true. However, during those days, months, and years in which one reckons one will still be alive, one may actually die. There are many people who have now passed away who have died during a time in which they thought they would most likely still be alive. They died because of car crashes, train accidents, boat accidents, plane crashes, without thinking that they would die. Some people, after getting sick, have passed away without ever thinking that they would die. Without thinking that they ever would die suddenly from a stroke or ruptured artery, they passed away. Therefore, one's assumption that one cannot die tomorrow, the day after, etc., is only a speculation, a conjecture, since one cannot know for sure.

Therefore:

Kho jañña - Who can know for sure; *suve maraṇam* - if one will live or die tomorrow? No one can know for sure. *Tasmā* - Because one cannot know for sure; *ātappaṃ* - the work of *vipassanā* meditation to eradicate the defilements that is worthy of doing with ardent effort (*sammapaddānam*); *kiccaṃ* - should be done; *ajjeva* - on this very day, without putting it off until tomorrow or the day after.

Four Kinds of *Sammappadāna*

There are four kinds of supreme effort, *sammappadāna*.

1. Effort to prevent un-arisen unwholesome states from arising.
2. Effort to stop unwholesome states that have already arisen.
3. Effort to arouse wholesome states that have not yet arisen.
4. Effort to strengthen, develop and fulfill wholesome states that have already arisen.

These are the four supreme efforts. What are the unwholesome states that have not yet arisen? The unwholesome actions of killing others, stealing, lying, etc., that have been done by others but have not yet been done by oneself. If one sees or hears others doing these unwholesome things, one should take care to avoid doing them oneself. For example, infectious diseases can arise, such as the flu or dysentery. If one hears that this disease has infected others, one must take care that it does not infect oneself. One must take care in food and drink, daily life and exercise. Similarly, if one hears that others have done unwholesome things, one must make an effort so that these unwholesome things are not done by oneself. This is the supreme effort to prevent un-arisen unwholesome states from arising.

Furthermore, one must make an effort to prevent unwholesome states that have already arisen from arising again. According to the Pāli text that states: “*Uppanna*, it is arising,” one must make an effort to remove latent defilements, *anusaya kilesās*. This is similar to making an effort to remove *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*, as was discussed just now. These two kinds are supreme efforts to stop unwholesome states that have already arisen.

The un-arisen wholesome states are the wholesome actions of generosity, morality, and meditation that have not yet been performed by oneself. If wholesome acts of generosity such as offering alms food, robes, etc., have not yet been done, then one should make an effort to do them as much as one can. If one cannot do a lot, then one can offer a spoonful of rice, or just one piece of fruit, etc. One can offer water or flowers to the Buddha image at the pagoda. As for morality, if one does not keep the five precepts fully, one should try to keep them fully, and try to take the eight precepts at a suitable time if one is able to.

One should also practice *Buddhānussati*, etc., and other *samatha* meditation practices as much as one can. The most important thing however, is to make an effort to practice wholesome *vipassanā* meditation that has not been practiced yet, and to practice *vipassanā* meditation so that the un-arisen *ariya magga* arises. To practice *vipassanā* meditation, however, is not easy. Therefore, many people have not yet done the wholesome deed of *vipassanā* meditation. So that one can practice when conditions are favorable, we are teaching an easy method for practice. After learning this method by listening to this talk, if one meditates at home, it can be possible to practice to a certain extent. In the past, a devotee called Mātikamātā even became an *anāgami* while practicing at home.

During these times, however, people who can gain *vipassanā* insight knowledges with only a few days of practice are rare. If one is not yet fulfilled after a few days, and if the days and months for practice are up, then one should continue to practice later when conditions are favorable. There are also people with special *pārami* who have completed the practice within seven days. There are also people who have completed their practice in fifteen days, twenty days, or one month. Many people can complete their practice if they practice strenuously for a month or just over a month. There are also a few people who have completed the practice only after striving for two months or over two months. The main thing is to practice so that at least *sotāpatti magga* arises. This is the effort to arouse wholesome states that have not yet arisen. If one practices to this extent, then *sakkāyadiṭṭhi* will also have been eradicated. After this, practicing to realize *sakadāgāmi magga*, *anāgami magga*, *arahatta magga* is the supreme effort to arouse wholesome states that have not yet arisen.

Making a supreme effort to strengthen, develop and fulfill wholesome states that have already arisen means making an effort so that the wholesome actions of generosity, etc., that have been done continue to arise, become strengthened, improved and developed, and that *jhāna* and *magga phala* are gained. One should especially make an effort so that the wholesome *vipassanā* insight knowledges that have already arisen continue to arise, so that one reaches higher and higher *vipassanā* insight knowledges, and at the very least one realizes *sotāpatti magga*. If one is able, one should make an effort to reach *arahatta magga* and *phala*. The work that should be done without backsliding and with supreme effort is the work that leads to the development of *vipassanā magga*. In short, it is the work of *vipassanā* meditation.

This work of *vipassanā* meditation should be done on this very day, without putting it off until tomorrow or the day after. Why should one hurry to practice without putting it off? If one delays and puts it off until tomorrow, the day after, etc., and plans to practice in future days, months and years, no one can know for sure whether one will still be alive during those future days, months, and years. Also, before one dies, if one gets sick, it will not be easy to practice meditation. Moreover, if important matters come up, it will be difficult to practice meditation. One should practice when the conditions are favorable. Therefore, without putting it off until tomorrow or the day after, one should practice today. How should one practice?

“*Sato bhikkhu paribbaje.*” According to the teaching: “*Bhikkhu* - a person who, seeing the danger of *samsāra*, wants to practice so as to be free from the rounds of suffering; *sato* - being aware, being mindful; *paribbaje* - should quickly make an effort,” one should practice meditation, observing with *sati*. The method of practicing with *sati* is taught in the following way in the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta*.

Instructions from the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta*

Ekāyano ayam bhikkhave maggo sattānaṃ visuddhiyā soka paridevānaṃ samatikkamāya dukkha domanassānaṃ atthaṅgamāya ñāyassa adhigamāya nibbānassa saccikiriyāya, yadidaṃ cattāro satipaṭṭhānā.

Bhikkhave - Monks; *yadidaṃ cattāro satipaṭṭhānā* - there are these four foundations of awareness or mindfulness called *Satipaṭṭhānā*. *Ayam maggo* - This path of the four *Satipaṭṭhānā*; *ekāyano* - is the only way, the only path.

The four *Satipaṭṭhānā* are: *Kāyānupassanā Satipaṭṭhānā*, awareness or mindfulness of all physical phenomena and bodily actions every time they arise; *Vedanānupassanā Satipaṭṭhānā*, awareness of feelings every time they arise; *Cittānupassanā Satipaṭṭhānā*, awareness of thinking every time it arises; *Dhammānupassanā Satipaṭṭhānā*- awareness of dhamma objects every time they arise. These are the four. These four objects that one must be aware of are explained separately. However, according to the nature of awareness, they are the same. If bodily actions arise, one must recognize and be aware of them. If

feelings arise, one must recognize and be aware of them. If mental activities such as imagining and planning arise one must recognize and be aware of them. If dhamma objects such as desire, anger, seeing, hearing, etc., arise, one must recognize and be aware of them. Therefore, according to the character of awareness, it is the same thing. The Buddha also taught this as *appamāda*. It is *sati*, non-forgetting, heedfulness. This is the same meaning as “*sato* - being mindful, being aware.”

This way of awareness, *Satipaṭṭhānā*, is the only way, the only path (*ekāyano maggo*). Who walks this path? (*Sattānam visuddhiyā*) It is for beings to purify themselves from mental defilements, *kilesās*. If one is free from mental defilements, one becomes an *arahant*. If one is a Bodhisatta or Paccekabuddha-to-be, one becomes a Buddha or Paccekabuddha. Therefore, every Buddha, Paccekabuddha and *arahant*, became a Buddha, a Paccekabuddha and an *arahant* after extinguishing *kilesās* with this path of *Satipaṭṭhānā*. In order to become a Buddha after eradicating mental defilements, there is only this one path of *Satipaṭṭhānā*. To become a Paccekabuddha, or to become an *arahant*, there is only this one path of *Satipaṭṭhānā*. Therefore, the Buddha taught that it is *ekāyano* - the only way.

It Is Important to Be Free From Mental Defilements

Only when mental defilements are eradicated, can all suffering be extinguished. Therefore, it is extremely important to free oneself from mental defilements. Beings want to be free from suffering. The work program to be free from suffering and mental defilements is this path of *Satipaṭṭhānā*. What are the mental defilements? They are these ten unwholesome defilements of greed (*lobha*), aversion (*dosa*), conceit (*māna*), wrong view (*diṭṭhi*), skeptical doubt (*vicikicchā*), sloth (*thīna*), restlessness (*uddhacca*), lack of moral shame (*ahirika*), lack of moral fear (*anottapa*). *Lobha* is wanting and desire. *Dosa* is anger and aversion. *Moha* is not knowing the truth and knowing wrongly. *Moha* is taking what is wrong to be right, such as regarding impermanent things as permanent, etc. Simply put, *moha* is thinking according to traditional beliefs. The word *māna* is also used in the Myanmar language. *Māna* is thinking highly of oneself, arrogance and pride. *Diṭṭhi* is wrong view, such as *sakkāyadiṭṭhi* which we discussed just now. *Vicikicchā* is doubt about the Buddha, Dhamma

and Sangha. *Thīna* is sloth and laziness regarding doing wholesome things. *Ahirika* is lack of shame in doing unwholesome things. *Anottappa* is lack of fear in doing unwholesome things. In addition, there are the mental defilements of *issā*, jealousy of others' happiness and good fortune; *macchariya*, stinginess, not wanting others to have what one has; *kukkuccha*, remorse and regret about wrong things that one has done or said in the past.

Among these mental defilements, it is difficult to know *moha*. It is not easy to know, unlike *lobha* and *dosa*. Thinking according to traditional beliefs and seeing things as permanent, as happiness, as individuals and living beings is not knowing, *moha* and *avijjā*. Because of not being able to note at the moment of seeing and hearing, etc., not knowing that only physical and mental phenomena exist is *moha* and *avijjā*. In order to remove this *avijjā*, one must observe continuously at the moment of seeing and hearing, etc.

It is also very difficult to know *diṭṭhi*. People who have wrong views think that their own views and opinions are correct and cling to them. Therefore, people with wrong views, after preaching the views that they like, propagate their beliefs.

Six Kinds of *Sammādiṭṭhi*

It is necessary to understand *sammādiṭṭhi*, which is the opposite of wrong view and wrong belief, *micchādiṭṭhi*. In the Commentaries, six kinds of *sammādiṭṭhi* are distinguished.

1. *Kammasakatā sammādiṭṭhi*
2. *Jhāna sammādiṭṭhi*
3. *Vipassanā sammādiṭṭhi*
4. *Magga sammādiṭṭhi*
5. *Phala sammādiṭṭhi*
6. *Paccavekkhaṇā sammādiṭṭhi*

These are the six. Among these six, *paccavekkhaṇā sammādiṭṭhi* is the knowledge that reviews the path (*magga*) and fruition (*phala*) knowledges and *nibbāna* after attaining them. There is no need to especially strive for it. After

magga and *phala* arise, this reflection occurs by itself. *Phala sammādiṭṭhi* is the result of *magga*. After *magga* arises, it occurs by itself. It is a not knowledge that is attained by special effort.

As for the four *kammasakatā sammādiṭṭhi*, *jhāna sammādiṭṭhi*, *vipassanā sammādiṭṭhi*, *magga sammādiṭṭhi*, it is necessary to develop them. *Kammasakatā sammādiṭṭhi* is the knowledge that believes in *kamma* and *kamma* results. For Buddhists, this right view can arise and be complete even from a young age, when reasoning ability has been developed. From the age of ten, fourteen, fifteen, or sixteen onwards, because of hearing the Dhamma like now, because of reading Dhamma books, this *kammasakatā sammādiṭṭhi* can be firm. The knowledge that arises after believing in *kamma* and its results, however, its not the same kind as the personal experiential knowledge of *vipassanā*. According to the phrase: “*Saddhāmulikā*, knowledge preceded by faith,” it is knowing based on *saddhā*, faith.

In present times, some people say that they cannot believe in anything they have not personally experienced themselves. It is impossible to experience everything personally. Even though one has not experienced something personally, one can still believe in it. If one disbelieves something simply because one has not experienced it personally, then it cannot be determined as definite in this way. For example, there is a train that goes to Mandalay from the station in Yangon, and trains that go to Pyay and Mawlamyine. Even though one has not personally experienced it, one can believe that if one takes these trains, one can arrive in Mandalay, in Pyay, in Mawlamyine. For journeys by water, even though one has not personally experienced it, one can believe that if one takes a ship that goes to Pyapon, Patheingyi, etc., one can reach Pyapon, Patheingyi, etc. Even though one has not personally experienced it, one can believe that if one takes a plane scheduled to fly to certain cities or countries, one can arrive at those cities or countries. If because of disbelief, one doesn't take these trains, ships, and planes, then one cannot arrive at the cities and countries that one wants. After believing in what others say, if one takes these trains, ships and planes, one can arrive at the places that one wants. Similarly, the Buddha taught that unwholesome actions give bad results, and wholesome actions give good results after personally knowing it for himself. *Arahants* have also confirmed and taught this after personally knowing it for themselves. Therefore, it is worthy of belief. After believing in *kamma* and its results, which are worthy

of belief, good people who avoid and do not perform unwholesome deeds, and good people who do wholesome deeds such as giving, etc., after being freed from the suffering of the lower realms, can be fulfilled with the happiness of humans and *devas* that they desire. Finally, they can also gain the happiness of *nibbāna*.

How the Buddha Is Worthy of Belief

The Buddha did not teach just from thinking and reflecting, without knowing and experiencing personally for himself. “*Buddho so bhagavā bodhāya dhammaṃ deseti.*” *So bhagavā*- The noble Buddha who is our true refuge; *buddho* - having realized the true Dhamma of the Four Noble Truths clearly; *deseti* - taught with wisdom preceded by compassion; *dhammaṃ*- the true Dhamma of the Four Noble Truths; *bodhāya* - so that we too can realize it. According to this statement, the Buddha, only after realizing this true Dhamma for himself, taught it with compassion for all beings, with the intention for beings to realize the Dhamma as he did. In present times, it is similar to teachers imparting the knowledge that they themselves know to students in schools. The students who are learning believe in the words of their teachers. Students only have gratitude for their teachers: “They teach us so that we can become educated.” It is like this. We only have gratitude for the Buddha, believing that he taught us so that we are able to know the right way and practice it. But just having faith is not enough. It is necessary to practice the Dhamma after following the instructions. If one practices after following the instructions, then one can really gain the benefits that are worthy to be obtained.

How to Practice by Following the Instructions

When one is sick, after calling in the doctor, one can rely on him or her. Relying on the doctor means that one has faith that if one acts according to the doctor’s instructions, one’s disease will be cured and one will become healthy. After trusting the doctor, one takes the medicine prescribed. One must also avoid eating or taking the things the doctor has prohibited. One must also abide by the doctor’s instructions. If one avoids what should be avoided, and takes in suitable nutrition, after the disease disappears, one will personally experience

health and happiness. Similarly, after having faith in the Dhamma that the Buddha taught, then one can come to know what is worthy of knowing through one's personal experience. Therefore, as a first foundation, one must believe in *kamma* and its results. Believing in this way is *kammassakatā sammādiṭṭhi*. This is accomplished just with belief. There is no special effort needed.

People who are fulfilled with this right view avoid the unwholesome deeds of killing, stealing, and unlawful actions, etc. This is *sammākammanta maggaṅga*, the path factor of right action. Avoiding the unwholesome deed of telling lies, etc., is *sammāvācā maggaṅga*, right speech. Avoiding unlawful means of making a living is *sammājīva maggaṅga*, right livelihood. These three path factors are *sīla*, morality. If one is fulfilled in these three path factors, then one is fulfilled with purity of morality, *sīlavisuddhi*. These are the *sīla maggaṅga*, morality path factors based on *kammassakatā sammādiṭṭhi* that are also the foundation for concentration and wisdom.

After being fulfilled with *sīla maggaṅga*, if one is able, one should develop *jhāna sammādiṭṭhi* which arises associated with *samadhi maggaṅga*. One must practice so as to gain *jhāna* by focusing on one of the forty objects of *samatha* meditation, whether it is the earth *kasina*, or mindfulness of breathing *ānāpāna*, or meditation on the thirty-two parts (*koṭṭhāsa*) of the body such as head hair, body hair, etc. The knowledge that arises associated with this *jhāna* is *jhāna sammādiṭṭhi*. Here, wisdom is not the main thing. *Jhāna samādhi* is the main thing. Therefore, if one is fulfilled with *jhāna samādhi*, one is fulfilled with mental purity, *cittavisuddhi* after being free from mental hindrances. When this *cittavisuddhi* is fulfilled, one must then develop *vipassanā sammādiṭṭhi*. This means the *vipassanā* insight knowledge that one personally experiences after observing and knowing via the three characteristics of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*. When this *vipassanā* knowledge is complete, path knowledge arises and one realizes *nibbāna*. This is *magga sammādiṭṭhi*. If this *magga sammādiṭṭhi* arises, then one will be free from *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*. For *magga sammādiṭṭhi* to arise, one must develop *vipassanā maggaṅga*, the *vipassanā* path factors. Therefore, *vipassanā sammādiṭṭhi* can be called the forerunner path, *pubbabhāga magga* of *magga sammādiṭṭhi*. What must be developed for the forerunner path of *vipassanā sammādiṭṭhi* are the basic path factors. These are the factors of *kammassakata sammādiṭṭhi* which we discussed just now. They are *sīla maggaṅga*, the morality path factors of *sammāvācā*, *sammākammanta*,

and *sammājīva*, as well as *jhāna sammādiṭṭhi*. To remember these three levels of the basic path *mūla magga*, forerunner path *pubbabhāga magga* and noble path *ariya magga* easily, we give the following two verses—

The three levels to be developed:

1. Basic, forerunner, and noble paths are the three.
2. One rushes into *nibbāna* if one develops these.

If one wants to realize *nibbāna*, one must be fulfilled with the basic path first. One must be fulfilled with *sīlavisuddhi* based on *kammassakata sammādiṭṭhi* that believes in *kamma* and its results. This is not difficult for laypeople. Starting from a young age, they are fulfilled with *kammassakata sammādiṭṭhi* that believes in *kamma* and its results. They also take the five precepts from early on. Actually, even if they are not fulfilled with morality earlier, if they take the moral precepts before starting meditation practice, then they will be fulfilled in it. After fulfilling morality, practicing to attain *jhāna* is for the most part not that easy. Because it is not easy, one can begin by practicing *vipassanā* according to the *suddhavipassanāyānika* method. One continuously observes physical and mental phenomena that arise and are obvious starting from bodily contact. While observing in this way, wandering thoughts that go here and there may arise. One must remove these wandering thoughts by observing them every time they arise. When *vipassanā* concentration becomes strong, there will no longer be wandering thoughts that go elsewhere. Only observation of the meditation object arises continuously. This strong *vipassanā* concentration is *samādhi maggaṅga* that is the basic foundation.

After this, with every noting, *nāmarūpapariccheda ñāṇa* that knows mind and matter separately, *paccayapariggaha ñāṇa* that knows cause and effect separately, and the *vipassanā* insight knowledges that discern *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* through personal experience of the arising and passing away of phenomena arise stage by stage, developing higher and higher. After developing stage by stage, when these insight knowledges become mature and are complete, the *ariya magga*, or *ariya maggaṅga* that realizes *nibbāna* arises. The method of developing the three stages of the path in order is written as “There are three paths: basic, forerunner, and noble. If one develops these three, one rushes into *nibbāna*.” This is the brief summary of the process up to the

realization of *nibbāna* if one practices after having faith in this Dhamma that is worthy of belief. This must be elaborated on a bit more.

A Dhamma that Can Be Experienced Personally

The Buddha's Dhamma is a *sandiṭṭhika* Dhamma that can be experienced personally. It means that it is a Dhamma that can be experienced by oneself if one practices it. Just like if one takes good medicine, one will experience its benefits. Another example is, if one eats food, one will personally experience the taste. The Buddha taught that in the mind and body of beings, there are only physical and mental phenomena. When *vipassanā* concentration becomes strong according to what was discussed just now, the yogis who are continuously observing every arising object starting from bodily contact will come to understand, with their own personal knowledge, that with every noting, only two things exist— the physical phenomenon of the noted object and the mental phenomenon of the noting mind. For example, when observing the rising and falling of the abdomen, one comes to see that there are only two things— the rising and the noting of it. When observing walking, one comes to realize that only two things exist— the physical phenomena of walking and the mental phenomena of the noting mind. Because of knowing that only physical and mental phenomena exist in one's body, that there is no person or being, and that the Buddha's teachings are correct, faith (*saddhā*) becomes stronger.

Afterwards, when one comes to realize that there are only cause and effect, that one bends due to the desire to bend, one moves because of the desire to move, one speaks because of the desire to speak, etc., that only cause and effect exist, and that the Buddha's teachings are correct, then faith becomes even stronger. Then, when one sees with every noting that there are only phenomena arising and disappearing continuously, one comes to understand that everything is impermanent, unsatisfactory, and non-self, and that only impersonal phenomena exist. At this time, one knows that the Buddha's teaching is correct: "This continuously arising and disappearing is only *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*." Faith that the Buddha only taught after knowing for himself personally becomes stronger. This is: "*Dhammaṃ passanto maṃ passati*." *Passanto* - The person who sees; *Dhammaṃ* - the Dhamma; *passati* - sees; *maṃ* - me (the Buddha). According to this teaching, because of

experiencing the Dhamma, one sees the Buddha, and believes in and reveres him. This is the same as believing in and revering the Buddha as: “The Buddha taught the true Dhamma after knowing it for himself, so that we too along with all beings can similarly realize it.” This is how someone who practices the Dhamma experiences and knows it personally.

It Is Important to Have *Kammasakatā Sammādiṭṭhi*

Experiencing Dhamma in this way for oneself is because one comes to know after practicing meditation with faith, based on the foundation of *kammasakatā sammādiṭṭhi* that believes in *kamma* and its results. People who do not believe in *kamma* and its results, however, do not practice *vipassanā* meditation. They also do not listen to Dhamma talks carefully. For these people, this kind of personal experience and understanding cannot arise. Therefore, *sammādiṭṭhi* that believes that *kamma* and *kamma* results exist is extremely important. Let us recite the following:

“Believing that *kamma* and *kamma* results exist is *kammasakatā sammādiṭṭhi*.”

One is able to know that *kamma* and *kamma* resultants exist if one analyzes thoroughly. *Kamma* means actions that are performed. In the world, if one performs good actions, one will get good results. If one does good work in economic development, then one’s finances will prosper. If one performs bad actions, one will get bad results. It is obvious that because of criminal activities, one reaps the bad results of punishment. One may also experience these results of unwholesome deeds clearly when one is near death in the form of *gati nimittas*. After seeing these bad signs, one may become frightened. It is pitiable. As for wholesome results, one may experience them clearly after good objects or *nimittas* arise when one is near death. One may also see good dwellings and houses, and big buildings. One may feel as though *devas* and friends have come to greet one. One can also speak of what one has experienced in this way. Many people have seen these things. It is also in accordance with what has been written in the texts.

How *Sīlamaggaṅga* Arises

What I have discussed just now is a brief analysis that *kamma* and its effects exist. Understanding *kamma* and its results after believing in this way is *kammassakatā sammādiṭṭhi*. People with this right belief *sammādiṭṭhi* refrain from unwholesome deeds that can give bad results. They also refrain from telling lies *musāvāda*, slander *pisuṇāvāca*, harsh speech *pharusavācā*, and frivolous speech without essence *samphappalāpa*. This is right speech *sammāvāca* that avoids the four kinds of verbal misconduct. Furthermore, they avoid killing *pāṇātipāta*, stealing *adinnādāna*, and sexual misconduct *kāmesumicchāchāra*. These are right actions *sammākammanta* that avoid the three kinds of bodily misconduct. In addition, they refrain from making a living through unlawful means, *micchājīva*. This is right livelihood, *sammājīva*. *Sammāvāca*, *sammākammanta*, and *sammājīva* are the three *sīlamaggaṅga*, morality path factors. Every time one refrains from unwholesome actions and speech, one is developing and fulfilling these morality path factors.

How *Jhāna Samādhi* Arises

After fulfilling these *sīla maggaṅga*, if morality is pure, one can practice *samatha bhāvanā*. According to what was discussed previously, if one thoroughly observes one of the objects of *samatha*, one can gain *jhāna*. When one gains this *jhāna*, one can personally experience rapture *pīti* and extreme happiness *sukha*. When *jhāna* consciousness is arising, one feels extreme lightness and well-being in the body, it is very pleasant. The mind is also extremely blissful. If one develops wholesome meditation practice, one can immediately experience the benefits of extraordinary physical and mental happiness. However, one should not be satisfied or content only with this *jhānic* happiness. The work of *sallekha* that reduces the defilements is not yet finished with *jhāna* practice. The Buddha taught the dhammas that weaken the defilements in the *Sallekha Sutta*. There are forty-four. I have taught this *Sallekha Sutta*, and it has been published as a book. There are two volumes. If one reads these books, one will be able to understand all the work that must be done in order to lessen the defilements.

How to Practice *Vipassanā* with *Jhāna* as a Basis

The person who has attained *jhāna* can practice *vipassanā* meditation with *jhāna* as a basis. The method is: after emerging from *jhāna*, one observes that *jhāna*. One can also practice the two as a pair in this way: one practices *jhāna*, then in turn practices *vipassanā*. Another method is: after emerging from *jhāna*, and after observing that *jhāna*, one can observe whatever objects that arise, such as seeing, hearing, etc. Observing whatever objects that arise in this way is observing *pakiñṇakasankhāra*, general conditioned phenomena.

How *Vipassanā Samādhi* Arises

People who have not attained *jhāna* can just observe *pakiñṇakasankhāra*, general conditioned phenomena. When *vipassanā samādhi* becomes strong by observing in this way, the hindrances are cleared away. The observing mind is pure. This is the arising of purity of mind, *cittavisuddhi* with *vipassanā* concentration. At this time, *sammāvāyāma* that makes effort to observe the object with every noting is also included. *Sammāsati* that remembers to observe is also included. *Sammāsamādhi* that sticks straight onto the noted object is also included. These are the three *samādhi maggaṅga*, concentration path factors. These *samādhi maggaṅga* are the basic foundation for *vipassanā* knowledge.

How *Paññā Maggaṅga* Arises

Therefore, when there is this basic concentration power, with every noting, one comes to understand true nature, as we mentioned just now. One also knows physical and mental phenomena separately, which are the noted object and the knowing mind. One also knows cause and effect separately. Knowing in this way is called *ñātapariññā*.

After this, with every noting, one comes to experience with one's own knowledge that both the noted object and the knowing mind disappear after arising, and again disappear after arising. By experiencing in this way, one comes to understand that the disappearance of phenomena after arising is impermanence, suffering, and non-self. Knowing in this way is genuine

vipassanā insight knowledge, called *tiraṇapariññā*. Realizing that everything is just impermanent, suffering, and non-self while observing in this way is knowing through one's own experience, and not from believing in what others have said. Nor is it knowing after memorizing scriptural texts. After experiencing personally, during meditation, that phenomena immediately disappear after newly arising, one comes to understand through one's own knowledge that everything is impermanent, suffering and non-self. This is knowing correctly the nature of impermanence, suffering and non-self. Knowing correctly is right view, *sammādiṭṭhi*.

With every knowing, *sammāsankappa maggaṅga* that directs the mind so that it knows correctly is included. *Sammādiṭṭhi* and *sammāsankappa maggaṅga* are the two wisdom path factors, *paññā maggaṅga*. If combined with the three concentration path factors *samādhi maggaṅga* of *sammāvāyāma*, *sammāsati*, and *sammāsamādhi* discussed previously, then there are the five *vipassanā maggaṅga*. These five *vipassanā* path factors are included with every instance of noting and knowing. The three morality path factors have been fulfilled earlier, starting from the time one undertook the precepts. These morality path factors are also always pure while one is practicing *vipassanā*. Therefore, if the three morality path factors are added, then there are the eight *vipassanā maggaṅga*.

How to Develop the Eight Maggaṅga

With every noting, these *vipassanā* path factors are being developed and are fulfilled. Therefore, when *vipassanā* insight knowledge is mature after advancing stage by stage, one realizes *nibbāna* and the eight *ariya maggaṅga* arise. At this time, with one single moment that arises only once, the eradication of *sakkāyadiṭṭhi* and the defilements that lead to the lower realms is complete. This *sotāpatti magga* that arises at the first level. One practices meditation so as to be able to eradicate *sakkāyadiṭṭhi* with the *ariya magga*. This is how one realizes *nibbāna* with *ariya magga* after developing *vipassanā magga* which is the forerunner path *pubbabhāga magga*, with *kammasakatā sammādiṭṭhi* and *sīla maggaṅga*, *samādhi maggaṅga* as a foundation. The way in which the three stages of the path factors arise is given in the following verse: “Basic,

forerunner, and noble paths are the three. One rushes into *nibbāna* if one develops these.” Let us recite this:

1. Basic, forerunner, and noble paths are the three.
2. One rushes into *nibbāna* if one develops these.

According to what we discussed just now, if people who believe in *kamma* and its results, with morality and *jhāna* concentration or *vipassanā* concentration as a basis, develop *vipassanā magga* called the forerunner path, after first reaching *sotāpatti magga*, can eradicate *sakkāyadiṭṭhi* and the filth of mental defilements that can lead to the lower realms. If one continues to develop *vipassanā magga*, one can realize *arahatta magga* and eradicate, be freed from, and be purified from all mental defilements. With what method should one develop *vipassanā magga*? One must develop it with the method of *Satipaṭṭhāna*. If *Satipaṭṭhāna* is not included, then *vipassanā* insight knowledge cannot arise. *Ariya magga* also cannot arise. Therefore, in the Commentaries on the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* it is written:

"*Yasmā pana kāya vedanā citta dhammesu kiñci dhammaṃ anāmasitvā bhāvanā nāma natthi. Tasmā tepi imināva maggena sokaparideve samatikkantāti veditabbā.*"

If *Satipaṭṭhāna* Is Not Included, *Vipassanā* Insight Knowledge Cannot Arise

Kāya vedanā citta dhammesu - Among the field of observation of *Satipaṭṭhāna*, which are the body, feelings, consciousness and dhamma objects; *anāmasitva* - not having investigated or observed; *kiñci dhammaṃ* - whatever phenomena; *yasmā* - because of this; *natthi* - there is no; *bhāvanā nāma* - development of *vipassanā* insight knowledge and *ariya magga* knowledge. *Tasmā* - Therefore; *veditabbā* - it should be known (that they); *tepi* - that minister Santati and Paṭācārā also, who became an *arahant* and a *sotāpanna* respectively, and were liberated from sorrow and lamentation upon hearing one verse of the Dhamma; *samatikkantā* - were liberated; *sokaparideve* - from sorrow and lamentation; *imināva maggena* - only through this path of *Satipaṭṭhāna*.

One must observe all the physical phenomena of bodily actions. What are they? They are the bodily actions of walking, standing, sitting, lying, bending, stretching, moving, etc. One must observe these actions. One must also observe good, bad and neutral feelings. One must also observe mental activity such as imagining, planning and thinking. One must also observe the dhamma objects of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, etc. *Vipassanā* insight knowledge and *magga* knowledge can arise just by observing one among these four fields of observation. If one does not observe even one among these four fields of observation, *vipassanā* insight knowledge cannot arise. *Ariya magga* knowledge also cannot arise. Therefore, we must remember that the minister Santati and Paṭācārā who became an *arahant* and *sotāpanna* respectively after hearing the Dhamma, became liberated from sorrow and lamentation after gaining special Dhamma only through the method of practicing *Satipaṭṭhāna*.

Therefore, if one knows after mindfully observing with *sammāsati*, whether they are bodily actions, feelings, consciousness, dhamma objects such as seeing, hearing, etc., *vipassanā* insight knowledge will arise. If one becomes an *arahant* after realizing *ariya magga* knowledges stage by stage with *vipassanā* insight knowledges stage by stage, one can become free from all the mental defilements. The path that must be practiced to be purified is only this path of *Satipaṭṭhāna*.

Therefore, the Buddha taught that:

“*Ayam maggo* - This path of the four *Satipaṭṭhāna*; *ekāyano* - is the only path, the only way; *visuddhiyā* - for the purification from the dirt of mental defilements; *sattānam-* of beings (who are Bodhisattas, Pacceka-Buddhas-to-be, noble disciples-to-be).”

It Is Important to Be Free From Mental Defilements

There are two kinds of impurities in the world. One is bodily filth, another is mental defilement. There are these two kinds. Among these two kinds, it is important to be free from mental defilements. However, most people only understand that they must work to be free from bodily filth. Bodily filth include things such as sweat and grime. If one's body is soiled with these kinds

of filth, one can clean oneself by taking a bath, rubbing with soap and washing. Some people even smear themselves with perfume. However, one cannot be liberated from the suffering of the lower realms, and the suffering of the rounds of rebirth such as aging, disease and death, etc., only by cleaning bodily filth. Neither can one gain the happiness of humans and *devas*. One is far from gaining the happiness of *nibbāna*. Only by purifying one's mind from the mental defilements of *lobha*, *dosa* and *moha*, can one be liberated from the suffering of the lower realms and the suffering of the rounds of rebirth. One can also gain the happiness of *nibbāna*. Therefore, it is important to make effort to be free from mental defilements. The only method of clearing the mental defilements is this path of *Satipaṭṭhāna*.

There is Only One Path of *Satipaṭṭhāna*

Therefore, according to what the Buddha taught: “*Gacchanto vā gacchāmīti pajānāti,*” etc., one must observe bodily actions every time they arise. One must continuously observe feelings every time they arise, mental activity every time it arises, dhamma objects such as seeing, hearing, etc., every time they arise. One will slowly experience purification when observing. One will come to understand in this way. The Buddha taught the method of practice for purification only after he practiced to purify himself. The disciples of the Buddha also practiced according to this method and became purified from mental defilements. If one practices a little bit, one becomes purified a little bit. If one practices a lot, one can become purified a lot. If one practices completely, then one can become totally purified. One comes to understand this for oneself. In order to be freed from defilements and liberated from the suffering of the rounds of rebirth, there is only one path that must be known after practicing. Therefore, one also comes to understand what the Buddha said: “*ekāyano* - the only path.”

Another meaning is: “*ekāyano* - the sole way.” There are no forks or deviations on this path that lead to the wrong way. If one walks straight along this path only, then finally one will reach the stage of purification from mental defilements. If one realizes *sotāpatti magga*, one will be free from one-fourth of the mental defilements. One will be free from the mental defilements of *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*, *viccikicchā*, and the *lobha*, *dosa* and *moha*, etc., that can lead one

to be reborn in the lower realms. If one realizes *sakadāgāmi magga*, one will be free from half of the mental defilements. Furthermore, one will be free from coarse sense desire *kāmarāga* and anger *byāpāda*. If one realizes *anāgāmi magga*, one will be free from three-fourths of mental defilements. One will be totally free from *kāmarāga* and *byāpāda*. If one realizes *arahatta magga*, one will be free from all the mental defilements and become an *arahant*. So, what path should one follow if one wants to be free from mental defilements? The answer is: one should follow the path of *Satipaṭṭhāna*. Let us recite together:

1. What path should one follow to be free from mental defilements? One should follow the path of *Satipaṭṭhāna* that frees one from the mental defilements.

Because the path of *Satipaṭṭhāna* frees and purifies one from the mental defilements, the Buddha taught it as “*ekāyano* - the only path, the sole way.” If one wants to be free from mental defilements, it is not possible for one to follow another path. It is very clear that one must follow only this path of *Satipaṭṭhāna*. One must pay special attention to this point.

This Is Also the Only Way to Be Free From Sorrow

In addition, “*Ayaṃ maggo* - This path of *Satipaṭṭhāna*; *ekāyano* - is the only path, the sole way; *samatikkamāya* - for the overcoming; *sokaparidevānaṃ* - of anxiety, sorrow and lamentation.” The path of *Satipaṭṭhāna* where one must be aware of and know every bodily activity, feeling, consciousness, and dhamma object every time they arise, is the only path, the sole way for the overcoming of and liberation from anxiety, sorrow and lamentation. Beings do not want anxiety or sorrow. They also do not want lamentation. Only when they cannot avoid it, they have to worry, grieve and cry. If there were medicines to cure anxiety and sorrow, it would be very good. In the world, people strongly believe in potions, amulets, mantras, and magicians. Therefore, so that anxiety and sorrow do not arise, they go to magicians to give them protective potions, amulets, and mantras. They even rush to buy books and treatises on living free from worry and read them. What can truly remove anxiety and sorrow, however, is this path of *Satipaṭṭhāna*. Some people encounter extreme anxiety and sorrow because of the death of a son, a husband or a wife. They cannot eat

or sleep and become exhausted. They cry without being able to control or restrain themselves. If these people practice respectfully according to the method of *Satipaṭṭhāna*, within a few days, they will find relief. Later, they can totally be free from and extinguish sorrow and grief. Therefore, if one wants to be free from anxiety and sorrow, if one wants to be free from lamentation, one just has to follow this path of *Satipaṭṭhāna*. Let us recite this verse:

2. What path must one follow if one wants freedom from sorrow? One must follow the path of *Satipaṭṭhāna* to be free from sorrow.

In this case, the Commentaries explain the way in which the Minister Santati extinguished sorrow with the path of *Satipaṭṭhāna*. It would be very good if we could take out that example and discuss it here. Because there is not enough time, however, we cannot talk about it here.

This Is Also the Only Way to Be Free From Lamentation

3. What path must one follow to be free from lamentation? One must follow the path of *Satipaṭṭhāna* to be free from lamentation.

In this case, the Commentaries give the example of the story of Paṭācārā. Because there is not enough time now, we cannot discuss it either.

Ayam maggo - This path of *Satipaṭṭhāna*; *ekāyano* - is the only path, the sole way; *atthaṅgamāya* - for the extinguishing; *dukkhadomanassānam*- of physical and mental suffering.

The pains and aches in the body that arise by themselves and are difficult to bear are physical suffering. There is also suffering that is difficult to bear due to beating and torture by others, and due to burning by sun and fire, etc. There is no one who wants this physical suffering. The suffering that is mentally unbearable due to the destruction of family and relatives, the destruction of property, etc., is mental suffering. There is also no one who wants this suffering. In the entire world, beings are tormented by this physical and mental suffering. If these two kinds of suffering were removed, then beings would always be happy. If one were to ask: “Do you want to be free from this

suffering?” They would answer “Yes, we want to be free.” If one wants to be free from these sufferings, one must practice according to the method of *Satipaṭṭhāna*. Other methods cannot extinguish these sufferings. Let us recite this verse.

This Is Also the Way to Extinguish Physical Suffering

4. What path should one follow to extinguish physical suffering? One must follow the path of *Satipaṭṭhāna* to be free from physical suffering.

The Commentaries give the example of the story of Ashin Tissa who was eaten by a tiger, etc. We also cannot discuss this here due to time constraints. During these times as well, by observing with the method of *Satipaṭṭhāna*, even feelings that are painful to the point of death can disappear.

Even though there is no physical suffering in the body, if there is mental suffering, then one is not at ease. If things do not go according to one’s wishes, if one is not fulfilled, then one suffers mentally with worry. Even though one originally lives happily, if one hears depressing news, one immediately becomes dejected. If one hears that one’s young son or daughter has died in a car accident or has drowned, etc., or if one’s beloved relatives have met with disaster, one will immediately experience mental suffering. This is mental suffering due to *ñātibiyasana*, loss or destruction of relatives. If one hears about or experiences the destruction or loss of one’s possessions due to bad people, floods or fire, then one experiences extreme mental suffering. This is mental suffering due to *bhogabiyasana*, loss or destruction of property. If painful feelings from illness or disease arise, one suffers mentally. The longer one experiences these feelings, the more one suffers mentally. In current times, if incurable diseases such as cancer arise, one has to suffer even more. This is suffering due to *rogabiyasana*, health destroyed due to disease.

As for suffering due to the destruction of morality (*sīlabiyasana*), for people who respectfully protect morality, especially for monks, they experience extreme mental suffering if their morality is destroyed. Then there is mental suffering due to the destruction of views (*diṭṭhibiyasana*). Fundamentally, there are *kamma* and its results according to *kammassataka sammādiṭṭhi*. Having the

right belief that there is a future existence, if one comes to accept wrong views according to others' statements that: "There are no *kamma* or *kamma* results, there is no future existence, after death there is nothing left," then one's right view is destroyed. However, if one thinks that these wrong views are correct and good, then one agrees with these views. There is no mental suffering yet. One can even propagate ideologies with wrong views to other people. When can one realize that one's views are wrong? When one encounters bad signs, *gati nimittas* at the time of death, one can realize it. Also when one is reborn in the *peta* realms or hell realms in the next existence, one will be able to realize that one's views were wrong. One realizes that disbelieving in *kamma* and its results is wrong. One realizes that disbelieving in a future existence is wrong. Why is this? It is because one personally experiences suffering due to unwholesome *kamma*, and has been reborn in the *peta* and hell realms. At this time, one experiences extreme mental suffering: "It was very wrong of me to discard right views and take up wrong views previously."

During the Buddha's time, people who behaved like dogs and cows, upon hearing the Buddha's teaching that: "Because of these practices, you can be reborn as a dog, or be reborn in hell or as an animal," experienced suffering to the point of crying because of taking up these wrong views. Then, there was a dancer who believed that because of dancing, he would be reborn in a happy *deva* realm called *pahāsa*. It was not the *deva* realm *pahāsa*, but the hell realm. When he heard the Buddha's explanation that he would be reborn in the *pahāsa* hell realm, the poor dancer experienced mental suffering to the point of tears because of wrong views. This is suffering due to the destruction of views. If one wants to extinguish these mental sufferings, one must practice according to the path of *Satipaṭṭhāna*, called *ekāyana*. Let us recite the following verse.

This Is Also the Way to Extinguish Mental Suffering

5. What path must one follow to be free from mental suffering? One must follow the path of *Satipaṭṭhāna* to be free from mental suffering.

For ending mental suffering, the Commentaries give the example of the story of Sakka the king of *devas*, and the story of the *deva* Subrahma. Because we do not have enough time at present, we cannot discuss these here.

Ayam maggo - This path of *Satipaṭṭhāna*; *ekāyano* - is the only path, the sole way; *ñāyassa adhigamāya* - for attaining the noble path; *nibbānassa sacchi kiriyāya* - for the realization of *nibbāna*. *Ñāya* means *ariya magga*. However, if one attains *magga*, one also gains *phala*, the result of *magga*. Because in the Myanmar language they are usually mentioned together, then it would be more clear if we speak of attaining *ariya magga phala* as one path. Furthermore, if one attains *magga* and *phala*, one also realizes *nibbāna*. Therefore, these two benefits of attaining *magga*, *phala* and realizing *nibbāna* are combined together to make this verse. “What path must one follow to attain *nibbāna*, *magga* and *phala*? One must follow the path of *Satipaṭṭhāna* to attain *nibbāna*, *magga* and *phala*.” Let us recite this.

This Is Also the Way to Reach *Magga*, *Phala* and *Nibbāna*

6/7. What path must one follow to attain *nibbāna*, *magga* and *phala*? One must follow the path of *Satipaṭṭhāna* to attain *nibbāna*, *magga* and *phala*.

Every time Buddhists perform wholesome deeds, they make a wish to attain *magga*, *phala* and *nibbāna*. There is wishing or praying in this way because in their minds they really want this. There is also praying as a custom by copying parents and teachers. If one prays just as a custom without any mental intention involved, then there will not be enough power for quickly gaining the benefits. The most important thing is that it is necessary to make a sincere wish to reach the goal of *nibbāna* after knowing of the faults of *samsāra* to some extent. One has to age, get sick, die, and experience various kinds of physical suffering in every existence. One also has to experience various kinds of mental suffering such as anxiety and sorrow. During times when *kammic* causes are not favorable, one has to experience extreme suffering after being reborn in the four lower realms. If one thoroughly considers these, one can see that they are really frightful sufferings. All these sufferings will cease only when one reaches *nibbāna*. Therefore, after reflecting on and comprehending the faults of these sufferings, it is suitable to sincerely wish for the goal of *nibbāna* so as to be liberated from these sufferings.

Can one immediately attain *nibbāna* by wishing in this way? One cannot gain it immediately in this present life. The wholesome *kamma* performed by praying in this way will send one to existences in which one can attain *nibbāna*, like the human existence that one is in now. In this existence, one can listen to the Dhamma of the Buddha. After listening, one can practice. After practicing, one can realize *nibbāna* with *magga* and *phala* knowledges. What path must one follow in order to reach *nibbāna*? One must practice the path of *Satipaṭṭhāna* that was discussed just now, according to the Buddha's teaching: “(*ekāyano*) the only path, the sole way for attaining *ariya magga* and *phala*, for the realization of *nibbāna*.” There is only one path. If one practices this path of *Satipaṭṭhāna*, one can reach *nibbāna* in the present existence. If one wants to reach *magga*, *phala* and *nibbāna* quickly, without being satisfied merely with praying, one must practice now.

Therefore, the verse is given: “What path must one follow to attain *nibbāna*, *magga* and *phala*? One must follow the path of *Satipaṭṭhāna* to attain *nibbāna*, *magga* and *phala*.” This means that if one really wants to reach *magga*, *phala* and *nibbāna* quickly, one should not search for or practice other methods, one should also not be content with merely praying, but practice the path of *Satipaṭṭhāna* right now. Therefore, the Buddha instructed that one: “*sato* - being mindful, being aware; *vā* - being aware of bodily activities every time they arise, feelings every time they arise, mental activity every time it arises, dhamma objects such as seeing, hearing, etc., every time they arise; *paribbaje* - should quickly make an effort; *sakkāyaditṭhippahānāya* - to eradicate the wrong view of self.”

How to Practice According the Method of *Satipaṭṭhāna*

When practicing in this way, which of the four *Satipaṭṭhāna* should one begin with and how should one practice? For one who has attained *jhāna*, after entering into *jhāna*, as soon as one emerges from that *jhāna*, one must in turn observe the *jhānic* mental states. Although they are called *jhānic* mental states, it is not just observing one single consciousness. If the associated mental states such as *vitakka*, *vicāra*, etc., are prominent, one must observe that *vitakka*, *vicāra*, etc., as well. Afterwards, one must observe the touching, hearing, seeing, etc., that arise and are obvious. In this way, observing whatever objects

that arise is observing *pakiṇṇaka sankhāra*, general conditioned phenomena. Because the *sankhāra* dhammas that must be observed are not just one kind, because various kinds are mixed, *pakiṇṇaka* means mixing. When observing whatever objects that arise in this way, if one becomes tired, one can re-enter into *jhāna*. When one gains relief, after emerging from the *jhāna* and observing that *jhāna*, one must observe whatever objects that arise. If one becomes tired again, one can re-enter into *jhāna*. In this way, after entering into *jhāna*, while practicing observing that *jhāna* and then observing whatever objects that arise, when concentration becomes mature, there will no longer be any tiredness. At this time, one can observe whatever objects that arise continuously.

How People Who Have Not Attained *Jhāna* Should Practice *Vipassanā*

For people who have not attained *jhāna*, the *Visuddhimagga* explains the method of observation starting with the four great elements. The *Sattipaṭṭhāna Sutta* explains how to observe bodily actions. (“*Gacchanto vā gacchāmītti pajānāti.* ”) This is the observation of the air element that is obvious when walking. When people are walking, the air element must arise. When standing, it must also arise. When sitting, it must also arise. When lying down, it must also arise. Among the four postures, one is staying in any one of them at a given point in time. Therefore, the Buddha instructed that one must observe the physical phenomena that are obvious via the four postures (*iriyāpathas*): “*Puna caparam bhikkhave bhikkhū gacchanto vā gacchāmītti pajānāti.*” *Bhikkhave* - Monks; *puna ca* - again; *aparam* - another method of observation (is); *bhikkhū* - a monk or a person who, seeing the danger of *samsarā*, practices so as to be liberated from it; *gacchanto vā* - when walking, at the moment of walking; *pajānāti* - knows; *gacchāmītti* - (it) as walking. If one is walking, one must observe it as “walking.” If one is standing, one must observe it as “standing.” If one is sitting, one must observe it as “sitting.” If one is lying down, one must observe it as “lying.”

The Buddha also instructed: “*Vā pana* - Another way of observation; *yathā yathā* - in whatever state; *kāyo* - the body; *pañihito hoti* - is established; *pajānāti* - one knows; *nam* - that body; *tathā tathā* - according to that particular state which is established.” This statement means: if the body is established in the state of walking, one must observe the body through the state of walking. If

the body is established in the state of standing, the state of sitting, the state of lying, one must observe them via those states. This is not yet all. These words “in whatever state, according to that particular state,” clearly indicate all the states in which the body is established. Therefore, when sitting, it is clear that the instructions are to observe the states of the body via the state of the hanging of the head, the state of lifting the head, the state of the abdomen that is moving, etc. I have written the verse: “One must know bodily actions correctly every time they arise.” Let us recite this:

1. One must know bodily actions correctly every time they arise.
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Note:

Iriyāpathapabbam̐ catusampajaññapabbam̐ dhatumanasikāra pabbanti -
The section on postures, the four types of clear comprehension, and awareness of the elements; *imāni tīṇi* - these three parts; *vuttāni* - were taught;
vipassanāsesa - as *vipassanā*, as *vipassanā kamaṭṭhāna*. (*Visuddhimagga*, Volume I, page 232)

According to this statement from the *Visuddhimagga*, “It is clear that observation bodily actions such as walking, standing, sitting, lying, bending, stretching, rising, falling, etc., are *vipassanā kamaṭṭhāna*, and that true *vipassanā* insight knowledge arises through this observation.”

According to the Pāli text of the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*,
“*Samudayadhammānupassī vā kāyasamim̐ viharati. Vaya dhammānupassī vā kāyasamim̐ viharati. Samudayavayadhammā nupassī vā kāyasamim̐ viharati. Atthi kāyoti vā passana sati paccupaṭṭhitā hoti. Yāvadeva ñāṇa pattāya paṭṭhisati mattāya. Anissatito ca viharati. Na ca kiñci loke upādiyati,*” it is evident that: “While observing bodily actions such as walking, standing, sitting, lying, bending, stretching, rising, falling, etc., the person who clearly comprehends with personal knowledge the continuous arising and disappearing of physical phenomena, etc., without clinging to or depending on anything, develops genuine *vipassanā* insight knowledge.”

The explanation of this point here is because I heard that some people who do not like or understand the teaching thoroughly are teaching and writing that the observation of walking, standing, sitting, etc., is *samādhi kamaṭṭhāna*. This explanation is so that they can understand correctly.

Suitable Preparations for Meditation

In the beginning, most meditators should practice in the sitting posture. Therefore, the Buddha instructed one to sit in a cross-legged position, “*pallaṅkam ābhūñjitva*.” There are three ways to sit with the legs crossed:

- (1) Sitting in the way that is depicted in the images of the Buddha
- (2) Sitting cross legged with the lower legs parallel to one another, or placed one on top of another
- (3) Sitting according to the custom of Myanmar women

We should note that sitting in the third way with the knees bent together and lower legs folded behind is *aḍḍhapallaṅkam*. Among these three ways of sitting, one can sit in whatever way that one likes. If females are not in front of other people, they can sit in whatever way they like. The main thing is that it is important to be able to practice while sitting for a long time. If one can meditate sitting for a long time without moving or changing postures, concentration will arise more easily. If concentration arises, then insight knowledge can also arise. If one is able, one practices *vipassanā* after gaining *jhāna* concentration, then insight knowledge will arise easily. The person who starts with *vipassanā* meditation must make a lot of effort to gain concentration. Therefore, it is important to be able to sit for a long time when practicing meditation.

The Buddha gave further instructions on how to hold the body after sitting cross-legged according to what was discussed just now. *Ujum kāyam paṇidhāya* - the upper body should be held upright. If one sits with the body bent or slouched, then bodily energy *kāyika vīriya*, will be slack and it will not be easy for concentration to arise. Therefore, the upper body must be straight. Only in this way can meditation become good. After sitting straight, the attention should be directed to the object of meditation, “*parimukham satim upatṭhapetvā*.” For one who is practicing *ānāpāna* (observation of the in and

out breath), because one should stay and observe at the nostrils, the attention should be directed to the nostrils. One should continuously observe the incoming and outgoing air that strikes the nostrils every time it comes in and goes out.

How to Practice *Kāyānupassanā*

A person who is practicing *vipassanā* can start by observing physical phenomena that is evident at any place in the whole body. According to the instruction “*Nisinno va nisinnomīti pajānāti,*” one can observe the stiffness of the physical body that is sitting as “sitting, sitting.” However, if one observes only just the one object of sitting for a long time, one’s energy (*vīriya*) may become slack because one does not have to pay much attention. Therefore, we instruct yogis to begin by observing the stiffness and movement in the abdomen. We instruct that when the abdomen rises, one must note and observe “rising,” when it falls, one must note “falling.” There are many people, more than hundreds and thousands, who have practiced according to these instructions, attained concentration in a short time, and experienced special insight knowledge and dhamma that are in accordance with the texts. Therefore, attention must be directed to the abdomen. Every time one breathes in, one will experience the abdomen expanding and rising up. This is the stiffness, tension, pushing, and vibration which is the air element that is clearly arising. Every time one breathes out, one will experience the abdomen shrinking and falling. This too is the evident manifestation of the air element that is slackening and moving. One must note and observe it as “rising” when the abdomen rises, and “falling,” when the abdomen falls. This way of using everyday language to observe is according to the method taught by the Buddha, as in “*gacchāmīti pajānāti*”—one knows it as “walking.” Here, by observing “walking” using everyday language, one knows the stiffness, tension and movement of the air element as well as the mental intention to walk.

The Commentaries explain: “*Gacchāmīti cittaṃ uppajjati, taṃ vayam janeti.*” The mental intention to walk arises first. This consciousness causes the physical air element to arise. Yogis who are practicing meditation now can come to understand according to this explanation through their own personal experience.

Therefore, when the abdomen rises, one must note it as “rising.” When the abdomen falls, one must note it as “falling.” One should not recite “rising, falling” out loud orally. One should just observe and know mentally. Reciting the labels is not the main thing. The main thing is to know the true nature of what is really arising. Therefore, when noting and observing “rising,” one should know continuously from the beginning of the rising until the very end. Also, when noting and observing “falling,” one should know continuously until the very end of the falling. When concentration becomes strong by noting in this way, one will clearly become aware of the stiffness, pushing, relaxation, and vibration automatically. When one is sitting quietly, this rising and falling of the abdomen is the most obvious. Therefore, one should just observe “rising” and “falling,” these two things. When rising ends, falling occurs; when falling ends, rising occurs. There is no time for one to rest. One must note and observe continuously.

If one lowers the head, one should note “lowering, lowering.” If one lifts the head, one should note “lifting, lifting.” If one moves or arranges the arms and legs, one must note them as “moving, arranging, bending, stretching,” etc., accordingly as they arise. If one stands up from sitting, one should note “standing.” One should observe and know continuously the lightness and upward movement. If one stands, one should note “standing, standing.” One should know the stiffness in the body which is the physical air element. If one walks after standing, one must note “walking, walking.” If not noting in this way, one should note “right step, left step.” One must observe and know continuously from the beginning of the lifting of the foot until the very end of the step. When one has become proficient in the practice, one should note three parts within each step, “Lifting, moving, placing.” When concentration has become strong, one clearly knows two separate things: lifting of the foot and the knowing of it, the moving forward of the foot and the knowing of it, the placing down of the foot and the knowing of it. This is the insight knowledge of the distinction between matter and mind.

When concentration becomes even stronger, one comes to know the intention to walk and the intention to move. One comes to know according to what has been explained previously according to the Commentaries: “*Gacchāmīti cittaṃ uppajjati, taṃ vayanā janeti.*” This is not book knowledge or intellectual learning. One comes to know from personal experience through

practice. Ordinary people are not able to know in this way. If you don't believe this, test it and see. Try to move your index finger. Do you experience the intention to move? You know that there is the intention to move. However, you don't know when or how this intention arose. Try to lower and lift your head. You know that you move because there is the intention to move. However, you don't know when or how this intention arose. The yogi who has been continuously observing, however, knows definitely that when one moves, the intention to move arises first. Therefore, one comes to experience and know with one's own knowledge that: "The intention to go arises first. Because of this intention, the stiffness and movement (the physical air element) arises." Furthermore, one also comes to know that after the physical air element spreads through the entire body, because it propels one towards the intended direction, movement forward or movement backward, etc., arise. When concentration becomes even stronger, one comes to know that these propulsions and movements disappear before they reach one place from another place. Therefore, they are only impermanent. There is no "I" or self that is able to go or walk. One also comes to realize and confirm with one's personal knowledge that because of the intention to walk or move, there are only the phenomena of separate movements arising part by part, one after another.

Before realizing this knowledge however, one thinks just like ordinary people: "I walk because I want to walk. I stand because I want to stand. I sit because I want to sit. I bend because I want to bend. I stretch because I want to stretch. The desire to walk is me, the walking is also me. The desire to stand is me, the standing is also me. The desire to sit is me, the sitting is also me. The desire to bend or stretch is me, the bending or stretching is also me. There is only one individual." One thinks that: "I exist permanently." When one reaches this insight knowledge due to continuously observing all the bodily actions that arise, by observing the mental intention to walk and the physical phenomena of walking, one comes to know clearly through one's personal experience that these mental and physical phenomena are constantly arising and passing away momentarily.

Sandiṭṭhika Dhamma

Therefore, the Buddha taught that his Dhamma was fulfilled with the quality of *sandiṭṭhika*. *Sandiṭṭhiko* means the noble Dhamma that can definitely be realized for oneself through practice. We are teaching this dhamma that can be experienced and understood by oneself if one practices it. What we teach is only the method of practice. People who have faith in this Dhamma and practice it experience and come to know with their own personal knowledge that only physical and mental phenomena exist, and that only the dhammas of impermanence, suffering and non-self exist. By knowing in this way, the quality of *sandiṭṭhiko*—the dhamma that can be experienced definitely by oneself through practice—is clearly manifested.

Sandiṭṭhiko—the noble Dhamma that can be experienced definitely by oneself through practice.

If one practices the Dhamma, one experiences it for oneself. If one does not practice, one will not experience anything. If one does not practice and does not experience anything, how can one gain anything? Only through practice can one experience the dhamma. If the yogis who come to practice in our meditation center do so properly according to the teachers' instructions, they will understand the Dhamma through their own personal experience. Although some people say that they come to the meditation center to practice, if they do not practice properly, they will not understand the true Dhamma. There are also some people who, not practicing properly and not experiencing anything special for themselves, think wrongly that others are also the same, and as a result, say things that are not appropriate. These people did not experience anything because they did not practice correctly. There is no way they could have attained the Dhamma because of not experiencing anything as a result of not practicing properly.

Even the Buddha himself taught in this way: “You should practice meditation with supreme effort (*sammappadhāna*). Buddhas can only teach the way. Those who practice meditation will be free from the bondage of the defilements and from the prison of *samsāra*.” Those who practice, after realizing the Dhamma for themselves, will be liberated from *samsāra*. For those who do not practice, however, even the Buddha himself cannot do anything so

that they can realize the Dhamma and be liberated. The discussion of the method of developing mindfulness of the body, *kāyānupassanā vipassanā*, according to the verse “One should know correctly all bodily actions every time they occur,” is quite complete. We will discuss how to observe feelings (*vedanā*) next. Now we will speak about how to observe mental activities, which are closely related to bodily actions.

How to Practice *Cittānupassanā*

When observing bodily actions such as rising and falling of the abdomen, sitting, etc., the mind that wanders elsewhere can arise. One cannot prevent this from happening. Although one is meditating after arriving inside the monastery, one’s mind may wander off to one’s neighborhood, meeting with this or that person whenever it wants. If this wandering mind arises, one must note and observe it every time it arises. If one plans, one must note it as “planning.” If the mind goes off, one must note it as “going.” If one imagines that one has arrived somewhere, one must note it as “arriving.” If one imagines meeting with someone, one must note it as “meeting.” If one desires something, one must note it as “desiring.” If one is angry, one must note it as “angry.” One must just note and observe according to the wandering mind that arises. By observing in this way, one comes to know correctly the true nature of mental activity. At the beginning of the practice, one may be unaware that the mind wanders off here and there. One can only come to know it when many wandering thoughts have already occurred. When coming to know in this way, one must note and observe these wandering thoughts. When observing, the thoughts will not continue and will stop immediately. At this time, one should go back to observing the rising and falling of the abdomen. When mindfulness and concentration have gained strength, while observing rising and falling, if the wandering mind arises, one will be able to know it immediately and observe it. Later on, when one notes the mind as soon as it is about to go off, the wandering mind no longer goes off but stops. At this time, one should go back to observing the rising and falling continuously. Observing mental activity in this way every time it arises is *cittānupassanā*, mindfulness of the mind. Therefore, the verse is given: “One must know mental activity correctly every time it arises.” Let us recite this:

2. “One must know mental activity correctly every time it arises.”

In the Pali text of the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, the Buddha taught that: “*Pajānati* - One knows; *sarāgam vā cittaṃ* - the mind that arises with (is associated with) desire; *sarāgam cittanti* - as the mind that arises with desire.” The Buddha taught distinguishing sixteen types of consciousness. One must also know the mind with desire. One must also know the mind that is free from desire. One must also know the mind with anger. One must also know the mind that is free from anger. One must also know the deluded mind. One must also know the mind that is free from delusion. One must also know the mind that has sloth and torpor. One must also know the mind that is restless. One must also know the mind that is associated with sublime (*mahaggata*) *jhāna*. One must also know the mind that is not in *jhāna*. (The method of knowing these two kinds of consciousness, just stated, is only for those who have attained *jhāna*.) One must also know inferior consciousness called *sauttara* and superior consciousness called *anuttara*. (These two kinds of consciousness also arise only in people who have attained *jhāna*.) One must also know the tranquil mind and the agitated mind. One must also know the mind that is free from defilements during meditation and the mind that is not free from defilements when one is not meditating. Now we will teach how to practice mindfulness of feelings, *vedanānupassanā*.

How to Practice *Vedanānupassanā*

After sitting down and meditating for a long time, unpleasant feelings such as stiffness and pain, etc., can arise. At this time, one must observe the feelings that are obvious. If there is stiffness, one must focus one’s attention on the place where it is stiff, and note and observe it with *satipaṭṭhāna* as “stiff, stiff.” If there is heat, one must note it as “heat, heat.” If there is pain, one must note it as “pain, pain.” In addition, if there is itchiness, etc., one must note it as “itching, itching,” etc., according to its arising. When observing like this, the stiffness, heat, etc., may become more and more intense. Then, the desire to move may arise. However, one should not change postures immediately. After noting this intention as “wanting to change,” one must forbear these unpleasant feelings and observe them. Forbearing in this way is called *khantīsamvara*. The Myanmar saying that: “If one can forbear, one can realize *nibbāna*” is very useful in relation to the practice of meditation. Only by observing with forbearance, after the arising of concentration, can insight knowledges and path

and fruition knowledges arise, and thus can *nibbāna* be reached. If one cannot forbear, and changes postures frequently, it will be difficult for concentration to arise. If concentration doesn't arise, then insight knowledge cannot arise. Thus, one cannot attain *nibbāna* with path and fruition knowledges.

Therefore, by forbearing as much as one can, one must observe the unpleasant feelings. When mindfulness and concentration have become strong, these unpleasant feelings that are difficult to bear can vanish as though they have been taken away. There are many people who have been abandoned by doctors who said: "There is no longer any treatment left, there is only death," and then recovered even from these serious diseases when they practiced meditation. Therefore, one must forbear as much as possible and observe the unpleasant feelings. When the unpleasant feelings become extreme and one can no longer bear them, one may change postures. When changing postures, after noting the intention to move, one must observe the bodily movements of changing postures thoroughly and without a break. After observing in this way, one must return to observing the rising and falling of the abdomen.

One must also observe mental suffering and anxiety, etc., in one's mind until they disappear. Then, if obvious pleasant feelings arise from pleasant physical contact in the body, one must also observe them. One must also observe pleasant feelings in the mind such as joy and happiness. When neither good nor bad, neutral feelings arise and are obvious, one must also note them. These neutral feelings, *upekkhā vedanā* rarely arise. They tend to arise only when special knowledge has become mature. One must observe these three kinds of feelings as they arise. The following verse is given: "Good, bad, neutral feelings, one must note them as they arise." Let us recite this:

3. "Good, bad, neutral feelings, one must note them as they arise."

Here, "Good" means pleasant feelings, *sukha vedanā*. "Bad" means *dukkha vedanā*. "Neutral" means *upekkhā vedanā*. These three types of feelings arise one at a time. Therefore, we say that one must observe and know them as they arise. This is enough to understand how to practice mindfulness of feelings, *vedanānupassanā*. Now we will teach how to practice mindfulness of the dhamma, *dhammānupassanā*.

How to Practice *Dhammānupassanā*

Whatever arises that is not included in bodily actions, mental activity, or feelings is called “dhamma.” What are they? They are seeing, hearing, etc. Therefore, when observing the rising and falling, if one sees something, one must note it as “seeing.” If one hears something, one must note it as “hearing.” If one smells something, one must note it as “smelling.” When eating, if one knows the taste, one must note it as “tasting.” If one touches something, one must note it as “touching.” If one plans, one must note it as “planning.” Observing in this way and coming to know are in accordance with the statement “*Cakkhuñca pajānāti, rūpe ca pajānāti,*” etc., that is explained in the Exegesis on *Āyatanadharmānupassanā*.

Then, if one wants something, one must note it as “wanting.” If one likes something, one must note it as “liking.” This is the method of observing sense desire, *kāmacchandha* in brief. If *byābāda*, anger and aversion arise, one must note them as “anger,” etc. If *thīnamiddha*, laziness arises, one must note it as “lazy,” etc. If *uddhacca*, restlessness and *kukkucca*, remorse arise, one must note them as “restless,” and “remorse.” If one doubts the Buddha and Dhamma, one must note it as “doubt.” One may even think that this doubt is reflective knowledge. Therefore, when observing rising and falling, etc., if one reflects regarding the way of practice, one must note it as “reflecting.” Observing in this way is in accordance with the statement “*Santaṃ vā ajjhataṃ kāmacchandaṃ atthi me ajjattaṃ kāmacchandoti pajānāti,*” etc., that is explained in the Exegesis on *Nivāranadharmānupassana*.

When observing the rising and falling, if dhammas such as seeing, hearing, etc., wanting and liking, etc., arise, one must observe these dhammas that arise and know them. The verse is given: “One must know the dhammas that arise separately.” Let us recite this:

4. One must know the dhammas that arise separately.

Thus, there are no longer any phenomena that are not known. One will know all the phenomena that arise in the body. What was discussed just now completes all the phenomena to be known. This means: observe bodily actions every time they arise. Observe mental activity every time it arises. Observe

feelings every time they arise. Observe dhamma objects every time they arise. This is the entire method of developing the four *Satipaṭṭhānas*. These are all things that yogis know after noting and observing.

Some people think and criticize that one must only observe two things: the rising and falling of the abdomen. This is not correct. With the rising and falling as a basis, one must observe all phenomena that arise. When one reaches insight knowledge of dissolution *bhangañāna*, we give the instruction for one to observe spreading the attention to whatever phenomena that arise and observing them all accordingly as they arise, including bodily and mental activities, feelings, dhamma objects, without using any object as a basis.

How to Distinguish Between Matter and Mind

However, at the beginning of practice, the mind goes here and there, and is not calm. This is called *nivarana citta*, mental hindrance. It means types of consciousnesses that prevent concentration from arising. One must remove them every time they arise. By removing them in this way, when *sati* and *samādhi* become strong, the mind will no longer wander off. Only the noting mind arises continuously. The preceding consciousness is the noting consciousness, the succeeding consciousness is also the noting consciousness. In this way, only the noting mind arises and is pure and clean. This is called *cittavisuddhi*, mental purity. Starting from the time the mind is pure, one knows that the noted object is one thing, and the noting mind is another thing. Previously one thought that the noted object of the body and the noting mind were one person. Now, one no longer thinks in this way. One sees them as two separate things. The physical phenomena of the noted objects of rising and falling are one thing, the mind that notes and knows rising and falling, etc., is another thing. One comes to know the two separately.

One also distinguishes each of the noted objects of bending, stretching, moving, changing postures, standing, walking, lifting, moving forward and placing, etc., which are physical phenomena to be noted, from the noting mind. It is not even possible to see them mixed together. This is the insight knowledge that distinguishes between the body and mind, *nāmarūpa-paricchedañāna*. When one knows in this way that the body is one thing, and the knowing mind

is another thing, one is free from the wrong view of self *attadiṭṭhi*, under which one believed that there is only one single person and one single body. Being free from *attadiṭṭhi* and gaining clear knowledge is called *diṭṭhivissuddhi*, purity of views.

How to Distinguish Between Cause and Effect

While observing rising, falling, sitting, etc., if stiffness, heat, pain, etc., arise, one must note them. While observing these feelings, if the desire to change postures, the desire to bend, and the desire to stretch arise, one must note them as well. After observing these intentions, one must then note the changing of postures, the bending or stretching. Because of the desire to change postures, one changes postures. Because of the desire to bend, one bends. Because of the desire to stretch, one stretches. Due to the desire to change postures, the desire to bend, and the desire to stretch, the resulting physical phenomena of changing postures, the bending and the stretching arise. There is no self or “I” who is acting. In this way, one comes to understand that there are only cause and effect.

While observing walking, lifting, moving forward and placing, the desire to walk, the desire to lift the foot up, the desire to move the foot forward, and the desire to place the foot down become obvious. One must note and know the desire to walk and the walking, the desire to lift and the lifting, etc. By observing in this way, one comes to know that one walks because of the desire to walk. After knowing that one lifts the foot because of the desire to lift, one comes to realize with one’s own knowledge that there are only cause and effect. Then, while observing seeing, hearing, etc., one comes to know that one sees because there are the eyes and the visible object, one hears because there are the ears and sound, etc., that there are only cause and effect. If one doesn’t observe, then one doesn’t know correctly. If one doesn’t know correctly, then one enjoys and takes delight in objects. Because of this attachment, one clings. Because of clinging, one acts and speaks so as to fulfill one’s desires. If one performs wholesome actions, then one enjoys pleasant results. If one performs unwholesome actions, then one suffers painful results, etc. One comes to know how cause and effect interrelate according to one’s *paramī* knowledge.

By knowing in this way, one comes to understand clearly that in the body there are only its causes and its effects, there is no one who directs or creates, there are only cause and effect. This is *paccayapariggahañana*, insight knowledge of cause and effect. When this insight knowledge becomes strong, one can determine that only cause and effect existed in previous existences as well, and only cause and effect will arise in the future too. This is *kamkhāvitaraṇavisuddhi*. One becomes purified with liberating knowledge from doubts such as “Did I exist in the past?” etc.

How Knowledge of Impermanence, Etc., Arises

When mindfulness, concentration and knowledge have become mature, while one is observing rising and falling, etc., one comes to know the beginning of the rising and the end of the rising clearly. One also comes to know the beginning of the falling and the end of the falling clearly. When bending and stretching, one also comes to know the beginning and the end of the bending, the beginning and the end of the stretching clearly. When walking, one comes to know the beginning and the end of each step clearly. While observing the lifting, moving forward and placing of the foot, etc., one comes to know the beginning and end of the lifting, the beginning and end of the moving forward, and the beginning and end of the placing. By knowing in this way, one is able to determine after examining with one’s personal knowledge that these phenomena disappear after arising, and are impermanent.

While observing pain, etc., one comes to know the beginning and the ending of the unpleasant feelings precisely. When noting and observing “pain, pain,” etc., one comes to know through one’s own experience that the pain, etc., after decreasing, stops and disappears. By knowing in this way, one is able to determine after examining with one’s personal knowledge that the unpleasant feelings disappear after arising, and are impermanent. This is only a brief discussion of the method of knowing the arising and disappearance of body and mind through continuity (*santati*) during *sammasanañana*.

After this, when *udayabbayañana* arises, one comes to see that the rising is not just one rising, and the falling is not just one falling, but three, four, five, six, etc., separate parts. Then, one sees that they disappear rapidly in succession.

At this time, the knowledge of impermanence becomes clearer and more distinct.

At this time, within one bending or stretching, one sees that many, many separate acts of bending or stretching occur in succession. When walking, within one lifting of the foot, one moving forward of the foot, and one placing down of the foot, one sees that many separate lifting, moving forward and placing down movements occur in succession. Also when noting “pain, pain,” one sees that many separate moments of pain arise and disappear, arise and disappear in succession. Also when noting “hearing, hearing,” one experiences clearly that after hearing, the sound disappears; after hearing again, the sound disappears again. One also clearly experiences that the noting mind also notes and disappears, notes again and disappears again; the noting mind itself disappears rapidly. People with keen knowledge also experience seeing rapidly disappearing in a blur. One clearly experiences that whatever is observed only rapidly disappears, and comes to understand that everything is impermanent. This is true knowledge of impermanence, *aniccanupassanañāna*. For the method of gaining this knowledge, we give the following verse: “At the moment of observation, knowing impermanence due to experiencing the disappearance of phenomena is *aniccanupassanañāna*.” Let us recite:

“At the moment of observation, knowing impermanence due to experiencing the disappearance of phenomena is *aniccanupassanañāna*.”

At the beginning of practice, when observing bodily actions such as the rising and falling, etc., one clearly perceives the form or shape of the abdomen, and the form or shape of the body, arms and legs. However, when insight knowledge becomes mature, one no longer sees the form or shape. One only experiences phenomena successively disappearing. Whether they are bodily actions such as the rising and falling of the abdomen, bending, stretching, walking, etc.; whether they are feelings; whether they are mental activities such as thinking and planning; whether they are dhamma objects such as seeing, hearing, etc.; whether it is the noting mind, when one sees that these phenomena only disappear immediately, *aniccanupassanañāna* which knows impermanence with every noting arises. By knowing impermanence in this way, one comes to realize that everything is also suffering, and that there is nothing enjoyable or reliable. One comes to realize that there are only impersonal

phenomena without a self or “I.” Coming to know in this way is an extremely joyful and satisfying thing. This is how one knows at the stage of *bhangañāna*.

However, one should not yet be satisfied with knowing just this much. One must keep on observing continuously. When one sees phenomena rapidly disappearing with every noting in this way, one may think that they are fearful. This is *bhayañāna*. After perceiving phenomena as fearful, one may come to see them only as faulty, as nothing good. This is *ādīnavañāna*. After seeing the faults, one becomes disenchanted, without enjoyment. This is *nibbidāñāna*. After disenchantment, one wants to discard the body and mind and not hold onto them. This is *mucintukamyatāñāna*. After wanting to discard the body and mind, one must once again keep on observing continuously so as to be able to discard the body and mind. This is *paṭisankhāñāna*. When one’s re-observation becomes good, without making special effort, mindfulness arises with non-declining momentum. In the beginning, one only has to make effort to observe with four, five, ten times. Afterwards, the noted objects arise by themselves. The knowing also happens by itself. It seems as though the yogi is just sitting, it is extremely pleasant. Because the noting and knowing are good in this way, attachment does not arise. Although one sees phenomena rapidly disappearing, one does not see them as fearful or faulty. Only knowing arises continuously. This is *sankhāruppekkhāñāna* which is able to observe conditioned phenomena with equanimity. When reaching *sankhāruppekkhāñāna*, one is able to note and observe for an hour, two hours, etc., for a long time continuously without losing momentum. There are no unpleasant feelings such as stiffness, numbness, pain, etc. One is quite comfortable. One may even feel that although one has been practicing for two or three hours, only a short time has passed. This is an extremely subtle and good *vipassanā* insight knowledge.

How *Nibbāna* Is Realized

While knowing in this extremely subtle way, when insight knowledge becomes mature, extremely clear and rapid knowledges arise. At this time, one also knows the disappearance of obvious phenomena. Knowing in this special way is called *vuṭṭhāgāminīvipassanā*. While swiftly knowing the continual disappearance of phenomena, one experiences the dhamma where the noted object and the knowing mind completely cease. This is the realization of

nibbāna through knowledge of the Noble Path, *ariyamaggañāna*. The way of realization is explained in the *Milindapañhā* in this way:

“For the yogi who is observing mindfully stage by stage, one noting at a time, while this yogi is observing mindfully, the yogi’s noting mind will transcend the continuous flow of physical and mental phenomena, and will experience the dhamma that is opposite of the continuous flow of physical and mental phenomena. Oh King Milinda, the person who has practiced according to the correct method and experienced the dhamma that is free from the stream of physical and mental phenomena is called a person who has realized *nibbāna*.”

The yogi who is practicing *vipassanā* must observe only the physical and mental phenomena that are arising and disappearing continuously. With every noting, he knows only the physical and mental phenomena that are arising and disappearing continuously. Finally, he realizes the dhamma that is free from the arising and disappearance of physical and mental phenomena. The dhamma that is free from the arising and disappearance of physical and mental phenomena means the dhamma where both the noted objects and the knowing minds have ceased. Therefore, the noted objects do not arise, the noting and knowing minds do not arise, thinking also does not arise; when one experiences their cessation, this is called rushing into *nibbāna*.

How to Be Free From *Sakkāyadiṭṭhi*

The realization of *nibbāna* in this way is at least *sotāpatti* path and fruition knowledge. If one realizes this *sotāpatti* path and fruition knowledge, then one will be completely free from *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*. Therefore, the person who has realized *sotāpatti* path and fruition knowledge will no longer have the wrong view and clinging that physical and mental aggregates such as seeing, hearing, etc., are self or “I.” Regarding this way of liberation from *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*, we give the following verse: “One does not have the wrong view that the aggregates of body and mind are self.” Let us recite:

“One does not have the wrong view that the aggregates of body and mind are self.”

Unenlightened people (*puthujjanas*) think wrongly that seeing is “I,” hearing is “I,” etc. They think wrongly that walking, standing, sitting, etc., are all “I.” This is *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*, which thinks that all physical and mental aggregates that exist are “I.” People who have become *sotapannas*, after realizing *sotāpatti* path and fruition knowledge however, no longer have this wrong view and belief, *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*. If one is free from *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*, one no longer performs unwholesome *kammas* that can lead one to be reborn in the four lower realms. Old unwholesome *kammas* done in the past also can no longer give the results of rebirth in the lower realms. Therefore, one will be free from the four lower realms forever. One cannot be reborn in the hell realms, nor the animal realms, nor the peta realms, nor the *asura* realms. Only rebirth in the human and *deva* realms will occur. One also will not have inferior lives in the human and *deva* realms. One will have noble and wealthy lives. At the most one will only have seven existences. Within these seven existences, one will become an *arahat* and all suffering will be extinguished. Therefore, it is extremely important to eradicate *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*. Its importance has been taught by the Buddha:

*Sattiyā viya omattho, deshāmānoya mattake.
Sakkāyadiṭṭhippahānāya, sato bhikkhu paribbaje.*

Like a person who has been pierced by a spear in the chest would quickly make an effort to pull out the spear and treat the wound, like a person whose head is on fire would quickly make an effort to put the fire out, a monk or a person who, seeing the danger of *samsārā*, wants to practice so as to be free from it, being mindful, should quickly make an effort to eradicate the wrong view of self, *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*.

How to Develop the *Vipassanā* Path Through Personal Experience

This dhamma talk based on this one verse is now quite complete. The time has been over an hour and a half already. Therefore, we will stop the discourse for now so that we can actually practice the Buddha’s teaching. Change your posture to relieve any stiffness or heat. Because it is not necessary to see anything, close your eyes. Send your attention to your abdomen. When the abdomen expands and rises upwards, note and observe it as “rising.” When

the abdomen slackens and falls, note and observe it as “falling.” The labels “rising” and “falling” are only mental labels. They are not to be recited orally. Knowing is the main thing. You must know the rising from the beginning until the end, and the falling from the beginning until the end. While observing the rising and falling in this way, if the mind wanders off elsewhere, note and observe this mind. Then, return to observing the rising and falling. If stiffness, heat, pain, etc., arise and become obvious in the body, focus on the place of stiffness, etc., and note it as “stiff,” “heat,” “pain,” etc., about three, four, or five times, and then return to observing the rising and falling. If you hear a sound, after noting and observing “hearing,” return to observing the rising and falling. For now, during this short moment, knowing this much of the method of observation is sufficient. Let us meditate now for about three minutes.

Three minutes have now passed. Within one minute, depending on the rate of respiration, thirty, forty, fifty, up to sixty notings can be made. Within each noting, the Eightfold Path is included. Making effort to be mindful is *sammāvāyāma*. Being mindful is *sammāsati*. Going straight to the object of observation and sticking onto it is *vipassanākhanikasamādhi*, *vipassanā* momentary concentration. These three are the concentration path factors, *samādhimaggaṅga*. Knowing the objects of observation correctly is *sammādiṭṭhi*. At the beginning of practice, when concentration is not strong yet, knowing correctly is not very clear yet. However, one comes to know the characteristic, function and manifestation of the physical and mental phenomena to a certain extent. When concentration has become strong, according to what has been mentioned before, one comes to know physical and mental phenomena separately. One also comes to know cause and effect separately. One also comes to know clearly the arising and passing away, the impermanent, suffering and non-self nature as though holding and looking at them in one’s hand. Knowing in this way is understanding correctly. Therefore, it is called *sammādiṭṭhi*, right view. Directing the mind as though putting it on the object so as to know correctly is *sammāsankappa*. These two are the wisdom path factors, *paññamaggaṅga*. If combined with the three *samādhimaggaṅga*, we get five path factors. These five factors are named as *kāraṃmaggaṅga* in the commentaries. They are “worker” path factors. These five path factors work in unity together as one group in the process of knowing.

As for the three morality path factors, *sammāvācā*, *sammākammanta*, and *sammā-ājīva*, they have been fulfilled from the time one has taken the precepts. When practicing meditation, these factors are always fulfilled. Therefore, if these three path factors are included, then with every noting, the eight path factors are being developed. These are the factors of the Noble Path. If these factors are combined, the Noble Path arises. Where does this path lead to? It leads to *nibbāna*. Therefore, when walking on the path of *Satipaṭṭhāna*, which are these eight path factors, one approaches nearer to *nibbāna* with each and every noting and observation. Just like a person who is walking gets closer to his desired destination with each step, one gets closer to *nibbāna* with each and every noting.

During the three minutes of practice just now, if fifty notings can be made within one minute, then within three minutes, one hundred and fifty notings can be made. If one can reach *nibbāna* within one thousand notings, then we can say that about another eight hundred and fifty notings are necessary. So that the necessary notings can be completed, if one fulfills them through practice, then one can reach *nibbāna*. Therefore, if one cannot go to the meditation center to practice, if one is living at home, one can note and observe during one's free time according to this method. One can note for one minute, two minutes, five minutes, ten minutes, as much as one can. With each and every noting, one gains special *paramī*, merits. One gains these without spending a single cent of money, it is very satisfying. By noting and observing in this way, later when the causes are complete, with the progression of vipassanā insight knowledges stage by stage, one will realize *nibbāna* with the noble path knowledge. If one realizes *nibbāna*, one will be totally free from *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*, and will be forever liberated from the four lower realms. Within seven existences, one will realize *arahatta* path and fruition and all suffering will be totally extinguished. Therefore, if one wants to be free from the four lower realms forever, if one wants to extinguish all suffering and be always happy, when there is a chance, one should continue to practice according to the method given just now. Now almost two hours have passed. Let us close the dhamma talk by sharing merits.

On this day, we share all the merits of generosity, morality, meditation, service, giving a dhamma talk, and listening to the dhamma, etc., that we have performed and developed with our grandparents and parents. We share these

merits with our relatives. We share these merits with all the people and *devas* who have gathered here. We share these merits with all beings. Having gained these merits, may all beings be happy in body and mind. May they be happy, may they be happy, may they be happy.

We share our merits, we share our merits, we share our merits.

Sadhu, Sadhu, Sadhu!

Appendix

Stories of Practicing *Vipassanā* Meditation

1. The Story of U Ka Sin

On the tenth of Kason (May), Burmese Year 1313 (1951), a man thirty-nine years of age called U Sin or U Ka Sin from the eastern part of Wakhema City came to the Yangon meditation center to practice. His father was a Muslim Indian. His mother was a native of Myanmar. His father sent him at a young age to India to study Islamic religious texts. He studied these texts up to the level of Mosque Teacher. He had a strong desire to go to other places abroad and in the whole world without using up his money. Despite having this wish, a very close friend of his invited him saying: “U Ka Sin, there is a teacher here who can teach you according to your wish of traveling to far away places without using up your money. Come here.” Therefore, U Ka Sin came to the meditation center to practice. On that day, I taught him the method of practice according to the usual custom, just like teaching others. I thought he was also a Buddhist.

After going into the meditation hall and sitting down, when he focused his attention on the rising and falling of the abdomen, noting “rising, falling,” according to the instructions, reflections arose in his mind. He thought: “What is observing the rising and falling? If one breathes, the abdomen rises and falls. What good is there observing in this way?” However, after further reflecting that: “Oh well, I came because I wanted to reach the places I wanted to go to without using up my money. I must practice according to the teacher’s instructions,” so he continued to observe the rising and falling. These doubts and similar thoughts frequently arose. However, because he also practiced hard according to the teachings of U Visāra, who was a meditation teacher at the center (who now resides at Wakhema center) during that period, he developed special concentration in a short time. At that time, because he also experienced the special flavor of the Dhamma, faith (*saddhā*) developed. Due to the power of this faith, because of practicing thoroughly and strenuously, he could listen to the discourse on the progression of insight knowledges (*nyanzin*) within a month or so. After listening to *nyanzin*, he practiced for a few more days, and then left the center.

After going back home, the friend who originally invited him asked: “U Ka Sin, how are you? Do you still want a way to get to where you want without using up your money?” Then U Ka Sin replied: “I don’t want that anymore. It is good only observing the rising and falling. I am very satisfied only with observing in this way.” From this time onwards, whenever he was free, U Ka Sin would practice only according to the method of *Satipaṭṭhāna*. During this time, there was a fire in Wakhema City, and U Ka Sin’s house was also in the fire. Although other people experienced anxiety and mental suffering due to the fire, U Ka Sin was not worried, and many people saw that he was happy due to meditation. When they asked him about his previous religion, he answered: “Previously I had these beliefs. Now I don’t have them anymore.” When the meditation center opened in Wakhema City, he went there to practice meditation every day, as much as time allowed. He was extremely firm in his practice.

I (Mahāsi Sayadaw) previously did not know about this before. Only about seventeen years ago, I came to know about U Ka Sin because he told me about himself.

In this story, there is the question that: “Didn’t U Ka Sin’s friend, by saying that there was a teacher who would show him the way to go to where he wanted without using up his money, tell a lie?” In the Buddhist texts, methods of practice to gain *jhānic abhiñña*, psychic powers, are clearly written. Using these powers, one can travel anywhere not just in the human world, but also in the *deva* realms. If U Ka Sin was still unsatisfied with the method of *Satipaṭṭhāna vipassanā* practice where one must observe the rising and falling, etc., he could have been taught the methods of practice to gain *jhānic* powers, so I can answer firmly that the friend did not lie.

There are also many more astonishing stories related to how U Ka Sin revered the Buddha’s Dhamma. Up until the time he passed away, he practiced continuously whenever he had the chance.

2. The Story of Dr. Howe

A renowned Doctor of Psychology called Eric Graham Howe from London, England came to practice meditation at the Yangon meditation center

from the seventh day of the waning moon of Tazaungmon (November) until the seventh day of the waxing moon of Nadaw (December) in the Burmese year of 1314 (1952) according to the instructions of the Venerable Mahāsi Sayadaw. After practicing for four or five days, he asked: “Before I practiced meditation, I only knew a single person. Now I am experiencing two people. Why is this?” I replied: “The noted objects are physical phenomena, the noting minds are mental phenomena. Therefore, you are knowing as though there are two people, and knowing them as two separate things.” After a few more days, he reported only seeing disappearance every time he observed. Upon asking him: “Is the disappearance in this way permanent, or impermanent?” he replied: “It is impermanent.” Then, upon asking him: “Is there a self?” he replied: “There is still a self.” He said he would continue to observe as usual. After a few more days, he reported: “Every time I observe, I experience both the noted objects and the noting minds immediately disappearing.” Then, I asked him: “Do you still experience a self that permanently exists?” He replied: “I no longer experience that.” It is extremely good that he experienced with his own knowledge during meditation practice that the continual disappearance in this way is just impermanence, suffering, non-self, and mere impersonal phenomena. One must continuously observe all the objects that arise in order to know in this way. One must observe thoroughly without a break. After praising him that this was very good, I encouraged him to continue to practice.

When the time of practice was over, and it was time to leave, he stated his opinions: “This Dhamma is extremely good. If students practiced meditation after being taught this *Satipaṭṭhāna* Dhamma in schools all over the world, then world peace would be achieved.”

At a later time, Dr. Khin Maung Lat (a Mahāsi yogi) went to England to study to become a psychiatrist, and arrived at Dr. Howe’s clinic. At that time, when Dr. Khin Maung Lat saw that Dr. Howe made his patients line up and observe the rising and falling of the abdomen, he was extremely astonished and asked Dr. Howe: “Are you a Buddhist?” Dr. Howe replied: “I am not a Buddhist. However, this Dhamma is extremely good. I want my patients to gain mental happiness and peace. Therefore, I instruct them to observe in this way.” Upon being asked: “Where did you learn this method of observation?” he replied: “I learned it in Yangon, Myanmar, from the Venerable Mahāsi Sayadaw.”

3. The Story of Professor Pinneka

In 1955, *Kamaṭṭhānacariya* U Javana, along with *Nāyaka Kamaṭṭhānacariya* the Venerable Sujāta were spreading the practical teachings of *Satipaṭṭhāna vipassanā* in Sri Lanka. During that time, a professor from Columbo City College who was a Christian called Mr. Pinneka came to U Javana and asked: “Because I have a lot of stress related to my work, how can I practice so as to gain mental peace?” U Javana taught him the method of *Satipaṭṭhāna* in brief, starting with the observation of the rising and falling of the abdomen. Dr. Pinneka reported with joy that he experienced a calming of mental stress only after meditating about ten minutes according to the instructions, and went on to practice as much as he could. After about two weeks, Mr. Pinneka came with his wife, son and daughter to *Kamaṭṭhānacariya* U Javana to express his gratitude joyfully: “After I practiced *vipassanā* meditation, because I had a lot of work to do, I had a lot of things to stress about. However, regardless of what happened, if I observed all good and bad objects according to Sayadaw’s instructions, they just disappeared. After they disappeared in this way, I experienced extreme peace and happiness.”

These three stories related just now are examples which support the fact that if one really practices the *sandiṭṭhika* Dhamma that can be experienced for oneself, even though it is not the same as the religion that one believes in, one is able to have faith in the Dhamma after experiencing it for oneself, and that those who practice this Dhamma can gain the benefits that they truly want. There are also more stories similar to these. There are also some people who had fixed beliefs that *kamma* and its results do not exist, and future existences do not exist, who came to have faith in the Dhamma because of practicing *Satipaṭṭhāna vipassanā*. Having faith in the Dhamma that is worthy of belief, may you be fulfilled with the results that you desire by practicing it.