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Frontispiece: the calligraphy in Nôm (old Vietnamese) characters by Ven. Thích Huyền-Vi reads:

*"[The Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara] saw that in their true nature the five skandhas are empty [and thus] transcended all suffering."*

The seals engraved by Ven. Bhikkhu Dhammavīro, Thailand, convey the same meaning as the calligraphy.

## UDĀNAVARGA

## Chapter XI

## ŚRAMANAVARGA - The Ascetic

1. Stem the stream with vigour; dispel desires, O Brāhmaṇa; the wise man who does not discard desires does not achieve oneness.
2. Do what you should do; put all your energy into it. A monk without zeal does no more than accumulate faults (lit. stain).
3. An action accomplished without zeal, imperfect asceticism, religious conduct which is not perfectly pure, do not yield great fruits.
4. Just as a reed which is wrongly grasped cuts the hand, wrongly practised asceticism leads to hell.
5. Just as a reed which is correctly grasped does not cut the hand, so correctly practised asceticism is very near to Nirvāṇa.
6. For a weak-minded man, asceticism is difficult to practise and difficult to maintain. Wherever obstacles are numerous, the foolish man despairs.
7. How can asceticism be practised without controlling the mind? At every step one despairs and falls under the power of fancies.
8. Taking up the homeless life wrongly is joyless; [living the household life is painful;] living in society is suffering and a series of existences is also suffering.
9. Many men garbed in the yellow robe up to their throats are depraved and uncurbed; a depraved man is led by his faults in this world into a bad destiny.
10. He whose immortality is limitless resembles a sāla [Sal tree] covered in māluvā [-creeper]; he makes of himself what his enemy wishes him to be.

11. One is not an 'Elder' just because one has grey hair. Ripe in years you may well be, 'aged in delusion' you are called.
12. He who, having placed himself beyond right or wrong, practises religious conduct; he who walks apart from others (?) is said to be an 'Elder'.
13. A shaven head does not make a Śramaṇa of a man who fails in his word and who lies. Given over to gratification and covetousness, how could he be a Śramaṇa?
14. A shaven head does not make a Śramaṇa out of a man who fails in his word and who lies; he who puts an end to faults, great and small, without exception, the end of faults causes it to be said of him: 'he is a Śramaṇa.'
15. [He who has dispelled all wrong is called *Brahmana*]; he who lives [in calmness] is called *Śramaṇa*; he who has dispelled blemishes is then called *Pravrajita*.

(Translated by Sara Boin-Webb from the French of N.P. Chakravarti)

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF PURIFICATION AND INSIGHT\*

Phra Acharn Thawee Baladhammo

The subject of mind purification and meditative insight is very profound as it is connected with experiences arising from the practice of meditation. People who do not meditate are not likely to come across these experiences, while for the practitioners there often arises a difficulty in clearly understanding a short exposition of the course of practice unless they have previously studied the Sutta or Abhidhamma texts and so are familiar with the Buddhist way of thinking. To preclude doubts or misunderstandings, an effort will be made to explain the true import of the concepts of mental development found in the Buddha's teaching.

The aim of this teaching, as explained in the Four Noble Truths, is the perfect understanding of what is suffering and how to put an end to suffering. In the context of Buddhism, the term 'suffering' is not restricted to just painful or depressing experience. It denotes all phenomena which are liable to change and do not remain as they are. If you consider this statement for another moment, you will agree that in fact there is nothing in the whole universe which does not come under this definition of suffering, since everything is dependent on conditions for its existence, and nothing can be found in the world which does not change in the course of time. Even what we call happiness is also a form of this suffering. We can enjoy happy states and pleasurable things as long as they last, but there will always be the problem of safeguarding the conditions for our happiness, and when they finally change we are left with the feeling of privation and unsatisfied desire calling for renewed action. Conditioned things are not able to give lasting satisfaction and therefore they are called suffering.

The cause of suffering is said to be the attachment to these ever changing conditioned phenomena, taking them as happy and lasting. Falsely, we perceive the promise of happiness in certain objects and thus craving arises leading to attachment and action to obtain what we desire. At the fulfilment of the action, desire temporarily vanishes. This is what we call happiness, but it

is just the absence of desire. As the focus of attention is only on the object and not on the mind itself, we get the impression that happiness is a quality residing in the object, so that the only way to feel happy seems to be through desired objects. In this way, attachment itself is held to be a good thing as it enables us to enjoy happiness more intensely. All we are really trying to do is get rid of desire because then we feel happy. However, we are just not aware of the fact that it is impossible to extinguish desire as long as it is directed towards impermanent objects.

It is through ignorance of the true nature of conditioned phenomena that we come to identify attachment with happiness and thus continue to cause more suffering to arise. In order to destroy the cause of suffering, i.e. to abandon attachment, it is necessary to pierce through the veil of ignorance to reach a correct perception of the phenomenal world.

This cannot be achieved through intellectual studies or a moral way of living alone. It is necessary to apply the correct method of mental development leading to the arising of supramundane wisdom.

For this purpose, the Buddha has taught the practice of insight meditation through the Eightfold Path, consisting of a threefold training in the fields of morality, concentration and wisdom. Right speech, right action and right livelihood are the morality group; right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration constitute the concentration group; the wisdom group consists of right understanding and right thought. It is the function of the Eightfold Path to lead to the cessation of suffering. When morality, concentration and wisdom are gradually developed through the practice of insight meditation, the mind becomes more and more purified, which means that the original delusion disappears by stages, giving way to a clear vision of things as they really are.

There are seven stages of purification ending with a state of mind which is able to realise the true nature of existence without any preconceived ideas. The first stage is purification of conduct concerning morality. The second stage is purification of the mind through concentration. The third is purification

of view, while the fourth is purification by overcoming doubt. The fifth is purification by knowledge and vision of what is and what is not the path. The sixth stage is purification by knowledge and vision of the course of practice. The seventh stage is purification by knowledge and vision, showing the full development of wisdom.

The Eightfold Path is related to the seven purifications through the three groups of morality, concentration and wisdom. From the third to the sixth purifications, the wisdom group is developed on the mundane level until it has gained the strength to realise the supramundane. At the same time, concentration is getting deeper and morality more stable, so that with the seventh purification the whole of the Eightfold Path is fully developed and is thus called the supramundane or Noble Path.

There is yet another approach to the development of wisdom, and that is through the sixteen steps of insight. The stages of purification describe the state of mind as it changes in accordance with the development of the Eightfold Path, whereas the steps of insight give us a more detailed impression of what the meditator experiences during the course of practice beginning from the third purification. The initial three steps of insight correspond to the third, fourth and fifth purification respectively. On the basis of the sixth purification, there are eight steps of insight leading successively onwards to the accomplishment of the seventh purification. The remaining five steps of insight belong to that stage. Out of the sixteen steps, only the fourteenth and fifteenth constitute supramundane wisdom; all the others are mundane wisdom.

In fact, the whole process of purification is a gradual development of wisdom through correcting wrong views. When one step of insight first appears, the corresponding degree of wisdom is quite weak and can be lost again easily. As the meditator strives on, his insight becomes more firm and mature. Only then can it be said that the mind is purified in the respective stage of purification. The purification belonging to the sixth stage is most important, and is the main part of the practice after the meditator has come to know the correct method of development. Then eight steps of insight arise before the sixth purification

is fulfilled. The seventh purification actually takes place only with the fourteenth step of insight. However, since the twelfth and thirteenth steps are inseparably involved in the process of the arising of the Noble Path, they are also counted as belonging to that stage.

The aim of the Buddha's teaching is the direct experience of ultimate reality. Through the practice of insight meditation, wisdom is developed which has the power to cut through ignorance. This kind of wisdom is different from the knowledge that we acquire through studying books or through thinking about experience. The condition for the arising of insight wisdom is the application of mindfulness regarding the present experience. Reality must be experienced when it exists; it cannot be found in the past or in the future. Only that which presents itself now is real in the ultimate sense. When the focus of mindfulness is directed to the present object, it will be possible to realise the true characteristics of conditioned phenomena and to free oneself of attachment.

Right mindfulness is the leading factor of the Eightfold Path because it is the origin of wisdom which has to be developed. When mindfulness is practised, all the other factors of the Path are directed towards the one aim of liberation and, in the course of time, the seven purities and sixteen insights will become manifest in the mind.

When starting the practice, however, mindfulness, concentration and the other factors of the Path are still weak. Therefore, the quality of energy plays a crucial part in the beginning: it is the decision to make an effort in the practice and to continue until mindfulness has been established and insight wisdom begins to appear.

Now we shall proceed to explain the purifications and insights in more detail.

#### I. Purification of Conduct

The beginner is not able to control the mind so that it can be used for the task of analysing reality. He is disturbed by wandering thoughts, by agitation and anxieties, while concentration and wisdom are lacking. His actions are often motivated by defile-

ments which in turn cause more disturbance in the mind so that there is no peace. Therefore, mindfulness should be directed towards the purification of action through body and speech, controlling them by taking five, eight or ten precepts, in the case of lay-people, or the two hundred and twenty-seven rules for bhikkhus. By observing these injunctions, one's conduct becomes good and the mind settles down just enough to put the meditator in a position to continue his efforts and attain the degree of concentration which is required for further progress. Purification of conduct is the practice of the morality group of the Eightfold Path.

#### II. Purification of Mind

When the doors of body and speech are guarded by mindfulness concerning the precepts, the next step is the subduing of distracting and disturbing thoughts which are caused by unwise attention to the five mental hindrances, namely sense desire, ill-will, indolence, restlessness and sceptical doubt. This is to be achieved through the practice of concentration.

There are two ways of training, producing different kinds of concentration. The traditional technique at the Buddha's time, which is still practised today, produces concentration by fixing the mind on a single object, such as a coloured disc, the flame of a candle or a mantra word. When, through repeated effort, the object stands firmly in the mind at all times, the hindrances do not arise but sense perceptions other than the object still take place. This is called access concentration. Purification of mind is achieved when access concentration arises. Continuing to concentrate on the object to the exclusion of everything else will eventually cause the mind to drop into a state of calmness and tranquillity. At this stage, there is no sense perception, so all the hindrances are temporarily subdued, while the mind is immovably fixed on a purely mental image derived from the original object. This is called absorption concentration. In a state of absorption it is not possible to develop insight, because one cannot contemplate the workings of the six senses. The attainment of absorption in tranquillity practice does not lead beyond the second stage of purification but only increases the firmness of the mind.

Now, the kind of concentration which has to be developed for insight is momentary concentration: this will be explained.

In the practice of insight, mindfulness is directed to whatever sense-impression contacts one of the six senses - the well-known five plus the mind as the sixth, cognising mental objects such as emotions, thoughts, memories etc. The meditator soon realises the difficulty in following the successive impressions, and is not able to separate one event from the next. This is because we have been in the habit of ignoring reality for so long. We take the world and our own body for granted, believing them to be self-existing and always ready there at our disposal. Attention is focused on the ideas and concepts we have created on the basis of complex patterns of different sense-impressions. Thus, we perceive the world through a looking-glass of wrong views.

For the purpose of insight meditation, it is necessary to direct the attention inwards and to observe how this sense organism works to produce experience. The meditator should ignore ideas related to past experience or future probabilities, and should endeavour to notice the actual happening of sense-impressions, such as seeing, hearing, thinking, touching etc. Since it is impossible to jump straight into mid-stream, he must begin by noticing constantly one simple event; usually the main object is the rising and falling of the abdomen in the process of breathing. Whenever attention slips away and the mind is distracted, wandering or engaged in thinking, this must be noted, and then mindfulness should be re-established on the main object. This is the practice of momentary concentration, focusing on that which is happening in the present moment. Practising in this way, mindfulness and concentration increase until the meditator can notice the hindrances as soon as they arise. He will note them and immediately return to his main object. Purification of mind, in insight practice, is gained when momentary concentration arises in unbroken succession, because then it has reached the strength of access concentration. It is not engaged in one single object, but is open to fall on whatever arises. From here on, the meditator will develop the sixteen steps of insight by simply watching the flow of successive events as they become manifest in his consciousness. In the course of development,

the three characteristics (impermanence, suffering and non-self) will be more and more distinctly perceived in every object that is noted, and momentary concentration is further strengthened by trying to notice any one event more quickly and to let it go so as to be free for the next moment.

Regarding the use of the term 'access concentration' as compared with 'momentary concentration' in the foregoing paragraphs, one should bear in mind the difference between tranquillity and insight.

In tranquillity practice, access concentration is reached when one's object of concentration is mentally well-apprehended and the hindrances are temporarily subdued. In the practice of insight, however, the object is the impermanence, etc., of all objects. The insight meditator, on reaching the stage of purification of mind, gains the ability to focus on the specific characteristics of all individual objects that contact his senses and he sees that they are truly impermanent. Thus his object is well-apprehended. The five hindrances are seen as impermanent objects which contact the mind and so, instead of being suppressed, are turned into objects of contemplation. Momentary concentration, according to its function, has then gained the strength equivalent to access concentration in tranquillity practice. When insight becomes fully mature in focusing on the three general characteristics, momentary concentration will become access concentration leading up to the attainment of the Noble Path, which is different from access in tranquillity practice. Although there is only one faculty of concentration, there is a difference in the function it takes whether one practises tranquillity or insight meditation.

Naturally, the mind (*nāma*) has the tendency to incline (*namati*) towards an object. For the purpose of tranquillity, this is made use of by increasing one-pointedness in order to steady the mind and fix it on one object. Access concentration in this process means that the hindrances are discarded and the mind is trying to reach perfection of the five absorptive factors - initial and sustained conception, rapture, happiness, one-pointedness. When they come together, the mind enters absorption. It must be noted that here the tendency of mind to incline towards

worldly objects is strengthened and stabilised until it is hitched on a mental object, perceiving only its conceptual content.

In the practice of insight, it is the opposite. The training is done in order to make the mind break away from all objects, to detach itself from everything. This can be done by supramundane wisdom which fully understands the reality of conditioned phenomena and at the same time lets go of them, renounces and relinquishes them. This is supramundane absorption having Nibbāna as its object. Access concentration, here reached with the twelfth step of insight, means supramundane access or access to the supramundane. Just as in mundane access the mind focuses on the acquired image to develop the accomplished or conceptualised image, so in the process of realisation of the Path, the mind makes an examination of origination and cessation, back and forth, at each act of noticing, in order to gain full understanding of the Four Noble Truths. This is supramundane access concentration. The power of concentration cannot fulfil this function unless the other Path-factors have reached the necessary perfection.

In the beginning of meditation it is like this: at first, energy is the leader until momentary concentration is established. Then concentration takes the lead after purification of mind, while mindfulness has to be exercised to keep concentration momentary; but although the practitioner strives very hard to be aware of each single event, he cannot yet control the inclination of mind towards the object. At that stage it often happens that concentration changes from momentary to (mundane) access concentration. That is why mental images appear and the absorption factors become very prominent. With some people it happens that they actually enter absorption, and experience a sudden cessation of sense-perception and believe that they have attained the Path. This shows that in the early stages momentary and access concentration are very similar. However, when the fourth step of insight becomes mature, mindfulness gets so sharp and strong that it can prevent lapses from momentary concentration. Then the mind trains to retreat, to **stay away**, to let go of phenomena as soon as contact is realised. At the outset, mindfulness and concentration are merely **latent faculties** of control (*indriya*)

which have to be developed; through continued practice they grow into invincible powers (*bala*), constituents of enlightenment (*bojjhaṅga*) and finally into Path-factors (*maggāṅga*).

So it is important to understand that momentary concentration in the beginning resembles mundane access concentration and it can easily switch over. From the fourth knowledge onwards it is momentary concentration proper, under the rule of mindfulness. Development then proceeds towards the fulfilment of supramundane access and absorption. This is difficult to achieve because it is most unusual for the mind to visualise Nibbāna; it takes a comparatively long time to reach the correct access concentration, although the equivalent of mundane access concentration is already achieved at this stage of purification of mind.

### III. Purification of View

With the purification of view, the first step of insight wisdom appears, the 'analytical knowledge of mind and matter'. Concentration arises from moment to moment in uninterrupted succession and mindfulness is keen. The meditator now pays less attention to the concepts superseding the process of perception as he gradually becomes aware of the underlying reality. In the process of the rising and falling of the abdomen, he can see the difference between mind and body. At each moment he sees a material process and a mental state knowing this process. In addition, he can separate different material processes. He knows the rising to be different from the falling: they are not the same body but just different material events. It is the same thing with all other experiences, such as seeing, hearing, walking, etc. The mind is fixed on the presently arising reality of mind and matter and it becomes obvious to the meditator that there is nothing in the nature of an independent self. The idea of self is a wrong concept projected onto the experience. In the process of mental and material phenomena it cannot be found. Through the analytical knowledge of body and mind, wrong views are for the first time becoming clear and are sorted out. This is the purification of view.

### IV. Purification by Overcoming Doubt

By persistently carrying on the exercise of noticing, the medita-

tor soon comes to know the causes of the presently arising phenomena. He notices the intention to move and afterwards the material process of moving. Thus he knows matter to be caused by mind. Again, he notices the action of moving and then he notices the mind which knows this action. He becomes aware of the fact that consciousness arises only when there is an object, whether material or mental. In this way he gains the second step of insight, the 'knowledge by penetrating conditionality'. By understanding through direct experience that every event noticed depends on causes, one comprehends that it has been the same in the past and will be like this in the future too. Whenever conditions come together, the resulting phenomena cannot be prevented from occurring. In the absence of proper conditions, on the other hand, they cannot be made to exist. This is the purification by overcoming doubt through the knowledge of conditionality.

#### V. Purification by Knowledge and Vision of What is and What is not the Path

Investigating the process of conditioning as well as the course of conditioned phenomena, one's focus now centres on the three characteristics. The meditator finds that one event completely vanishes or breaks up before the next one arises. Even in the case of the continuous arising of the same objects, one clearly perceives that they are generated only to vanish that same moment:

- They are impermanent: when they disappear nothing remains of them.
- The constant appearance of such things breaking up again is felt to be dissatisfying; it is suffering.
- They do not obey our wishes, but change according to conditions; they do not exist by themselves, nor can they be someone's property.

This is the third step of insight wisdom, the 'knowledge of comprehension'. At this stage, many phenomena arise which are caused by mind. The appearance of light, feelings of rapture and happiness, tranquillity and energy in the practice indicate this knowledge. There is a strong tendency to regard these phenomena as decisive results of successful practice, to take them

as something desirable and to become attached to them. The meditator is satisfied with what he experiences and is reluctant to apply mindfulness to those 'corruptions of insight'. This should be avoided. When they are simply noted like all other events, it will be understood that they are just arising and passing away like everything else. Then the meditator will not be attached to these phenomena, and when he continues to apply mindfulness they will gradually subside, making their appearance only occasionally.

The meditator now understands that there is no private space in the whole of his being to be excluded from the process of change. He is determined to carry on the practice comprehensively, watching whatever happens without holding on to and identifying himself with it. At this stage the mind is purified by knowledge and vision of what is and what is not the Path.

#### VI. Purification by Knowledge and Vision of the Course of Practice

Before moving on, let us review what has been said so far: when taking up insight meditation, the practitioner has a hard time to break away from the habitual perception of concepts and imaginations and to focus his attention on the present object. When his conduct is pure and concentration is developed to the degree of purification of mind, he then simply tries to keep pace with the flow of events. Then insight wisdom begins to appear. At first he realises the constant arising of new impressions replacing the preceding ones. He knows what is rising to be just mind and matter. At the second step, emphasis is on the static stage: first there is one thing, then the next. In this way the conditionality of intertwining mind and matter is unravelled. With knowledge of comprehension, focus is on the last phase of the process. It is clearly perceived that one process ceases before the next one starts.

Up to this point, the presently existing reality has been investigated in its aspects of arising, existing and ceasing. Thereby the meditator has found conditioned phenomena, the objects of noticing, to be impermanent, unsatisfactory and insubstantial. On the basis of this clear perception of the three characteristics, he now works his way to deliverance, diving deeper and deeper



into the nature of reality, gradually perfecting the powers of mindfulness, concentration and wisdom.

The following steps of insight show successive changes in the mode of experience of that reality while the mind, step by step getting free of attachment and ignorance, turns away from conditioned existence to realise the supramundane.

For the time being, however, concepts still intrude upon the mind, and the hindrances as well as some phenomena occasionally arise, but they cannot distract concentration and are easily checked by mindful noticing. Then one will be able to follow the process of arising and vanishing with great ease. Mindfulness proceeds smoothly, yet keen and sharp, without deliberate effort. All successive events will be clear in their phases of appearing and disappearing, showing the three characteristics. This is the 'knowledge of arising and passing away', the fourth step of insight wisdom, accomplished.

Now the acts of noticing become intensified, realising tiny split-fractions of a process. Thereby conventional terms and concepts do not appear any more. Rising and falling get quicker, so that all one can see is 'ceasing, ceasing'. Faith, energy, mindfulness and concentration are now beginning to get balanced, spurring the development of wisdom. The meditator clearly sees that even the acts of noticing are nothing but conditioned phenomena, following the objects and ceasing immediately. This is the fifth insight, the 'knowledge of dissolution'.

The sixth insight is 'knowledge of fearfulness'. Being established on the dissolution of material and mental events, one realises that nothing in the world is reliable. There is no refuge and no security. Life is burning itself away, dying each moment.

This is followed by the seventh insight, 'knowledge of misery'. To the practitioner, everything has lost the 'warmth of life'. Any object and all states of consciousness appear like the skin shed by a snake which is already gone. There is nothing truly existing as one thought before. It is just a process of conditioned phenomena rolling on, displaying only oppression.

The eighth insight is 'knowledge of disgust'. One is thoroughly disenchanted with the five aggregates of existence, knowing

that there is no happiness whatever to be found in them. One feels weary on account of that realisation, but there is no alternative. In the face of the continuous change and dissolution of successive phenomena one becomes convinced that only their complete cessation alone is happiness.

Gradually, therefore, a longing arises to be free of this process of crumbling away and to reach cessation. Though meditation is carried on, the mind wishes to escape from conditioned existence. This is the 'knowledge of desire for deliverance', the ninth insight.

In consequence of the desire for deliverance, the meditator makes a new effort at contemplation; he knows that if he carries on the practice of noticing wholeheartedly, he will eventually escape from the condition of suffering. This is the 'knowledge of re-observation', the tenth step of insight. There is now great effort and determination to press forward on the path. Meditation becomes continuous and balanced, focusing on the three characteristics even more.

The eleventh step of insight, the last one belonging to the sixth purification, is the 'knowledge of equanimity about formations'. Meditation is now going on as if by itself. The practitioner feels completely detached from the five aggregates. He can sit a very long time without moving. There is no preference, no fear, no delight. One knows that if the five aggregates are grasped, it brings only suffering. The mind remains unattached, knowing any one event with great clarity. This is the accomplishment of purification by progress on the path or through the course of practice.

#### VII. Purification by Knowledge and Vision

During the course of practice, concentration has been continuously increasing and by now has gained the strength of absorption, although it is still directed to various sense-perceptions and mental objects as they present themselves. But the mind is firmly fixed on the present moment itself without ever slipping away. The meditator contemplates the dissolution of the five aggregates moment to moment, thus realising the three characteristics.

The following steps of insight arise in very rapid succession,

one after the other without a break. Just as in switching on a lamp, moving the switch, the flow of current, the lighting up of the bulb, perception of light and the knowledge of that perception are all happening without any delay, so it is in the case of the arising of supramundane wisdom.

When the knowledge of equanimity about formations becomes strong, it reaches the summit of insight knowledge: 'Insight leading to Emergence'. In the course of noticing, one out of the three characteristics becomes predominant. When insight leading to emergence arises, this single mark will be acknowledged repeatedly with great clarity brushing aside all specific characteristics of the object.

#### 12. Knowledge of Adaptation-Correspondence to the Four Noble Truths

This is the beginning of the cognitive process of the Path. Up to this point it is still mundane wisdom in that the mind takes for its objects of noticing the constantly occurring phenomena. Through the vivid perception of the three characteristics, it now gains the power to turn away from the arising and vanishing occurrences to realise the utter cessation of them. Knowledge of adaptation is the correct access concentration in insight meditation; it knows according to the Four Noble Truths. This means, it sums up the whole course of practice and gathers the accumulated force of the contemplation produced by the previous eight knowledges which constitute the preparatory path. The mind is prepared to cast away some of the fetters binding it to conditioned existence.

#### 13. Maturity Knowledge - The Change of Lineage

This knowledge also belongs to the cognitive process of the Path, and it arises in immediate succession to adaptation knowledge. It has the function of bringing the seed of enlightenment to Nibbāna which is the utter cessation of all formations. Nibbāna is the mind-object and absorption concentration is developed. Maturity knowledge marks the change from the mundane mind to the supramundane mind. As regards the individual, it is the change from the worldly to the Noble One.

#### 14. Path Knowledge

This is the moment when supramundane wisdom arises. The mind is absorbed in the non-occurrence of formations, thus realising through direct experience the unconditioned, unborn reality of Nibbāna. The joint power of the eight Path-factors, being fully developed, cuts the fetter of wrong views about self, the fetter of doubt about the truth and the fetter of believing in rituals and ceremonies as a means of securing purity, wisdom and liberation. No defilements due to these fetters can arise again in the mind ever after. Therefore, that person has become a Noble One; he has entered the stream of final deliverance. The moment of Path-consciousness, lasting only a fraction of a second, is called 'the single thought-moment of the Noble Path'.

#### 15. Fruition Knowledge

For a few moments the supramundane mind abides in the cessation of all phenomena, absorbed in the object Nibbāna.

#### 16. Knowledge of Reviewing

For the practitioner, the steps of insight from twelve to fifteen appear as just one act of noticing. When the mind returns to the mundane level, the meditator will review what has happened. He will recall that he perceived one of the three characteristics with all-encompassing clarity in a rapid sequence of noticing, then all impressions completely broke off for a moment. The thought, 'What was that?', is the knowledge of reviewing.

#### Conclusion

Mental development as taught by the Buddha concerns nothing but the practice of insight meditation. Through constantly focusing on the present moment with a view to knowing it clearly, the mind becomes purified of wrong views and attachments to worldly conditions. The enumeration of the eight factors of the Path each time adds the classification 'right'. For the purposes of insight, this means that they should be directed to the present object. Right speech is the practice of mental notes acknowledging each object as it occurs. Right action is the turning of the mind towards the present. Right livelihood is the healthy nourishment of the mind through discarding the hindrances, not

holding them whenever they arise. Right effort is engaged in freeing oneself of attachment, striving to loosen the grip of grasping. Right mindfulness considers the present object in its aspects of rising and vanishing. Right concentration is momentary concentration, fixing the mind on the flow of successive events. Right thought is the appreciation of the three characteristics, which can only be realised through the present object. Right understanding is the correct knowledge of conditioned phenomena as they are, leading to the realisation of the Four Noble Truths. When the Eightfold Path is fully developed, one experiences for oneself that everything which arises is bound to cease and that it is nothing but suffering that is ceasing. The cessation of suffering indeed is true and lasting happiness.

In the course of practice some steps of wisdom, such as the knowledge of fearfulness, misery or disgust, appear which may deter people who hear about it without having experience in meditation. Here, one should know that this kind of fear or misery is different from the ordinary emotions. In insight meditation they are not caused by attachment to the body or by craving for pleasures which we are missing. On the contrary, instead of delusion and attachment, the cause of these experiences is the vivid perception of reality through wisdom. The powers of concentration and mindfulness have reached an exalted level at that time. Therefore, though there is fear or the perception of misery, the meditator does not take them to be his self. It is the realisation of the three characteristics displaying the fearfulness or misery in the five aggregates. The meditator knows his discovery to be true under all circumstances past, present and future. He has overcome doubt, knows the right path and has strong faith in the Buddha; therefore, he will strive on confidently and gain the determination to empty his cup.

The development of purification and insight through the application of mindfulness is the path to deliverance which has been discovered by all Buddhas and has been followed by innumerable disciples who became Noble Ones and finally put an end to suffering. This can still be done in our times. The nature of reality is there present all the time to be realised by one with his mind purified.

Therefore, the meditators who want to gain the stages of purification and develop wisdom should make use of every opportunity to practise insight meditation by developing the four foundations of mindfulness. They should gain the advice of experienced meditators for instructions about the details of the practice so that they may soon achieve concrete results. They should join their friends in discussion and in the practice of meditation to support each other in their efforts, so that the Buddhadhamma, the teaching of the truth, becomes widespread in our times as it has been in the past for many centuries.

\* An expanded version of the lecture given at the London Buddhist Vihāra on 26 June 1983.

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*Please see overleaf for relevant chart.*

PURIFICATION

- I ... OF CONDUCT
- II ... OF MIND
- III ... OF VIEW
- IV ... BY OVERCOMING DOUBT
- V ... BY KNOWLEDGE AND VISION OF WHAT IS AND IS NOT THE PATH

VI ... BY KNOWLEDGE AND VISION OF THE COURSE OF PRACTICE

mundane mind up to :  
change from mundane mind to supramundane

VII ... BY KNOWLEDGE AND VISION

supramundane mind

mundane mind

KNOWLEDGE

- Beginning of meditation
- Mindfulness gaining strength
- 1\* ... OF DISCRIMINATING MIND AND MATTER
- 2\* ... BY PENETRATING CONDITIONALITY
- 3\* ... OF COMPREHENSION
- The ten corruptions of insight
- 4\* ... OF ARISING AND VANISHING
- 5\* ... OF DISSOLUTION
- 6\* ... OF FEARFULNESS
- 7\* ... OF MISERY
- 8\* ... OF DISGUST
- 9\* ... OF DESIRE FOR DELIVERANCE
- 10\* ... OF RE-OBSERVATION
- 11\* ... OF EQUANIMITY ABOUT FORMATION
- Insight leading to Emergence - the three characteristics in focus
- OF ADAPTATION - Correspondence to the Four Noble Truths
- 12\* ... OF CHANGE OF LINEAGE
- Maturity Knowledge
- 13\* ... OF CHANGE OF LINEAGE
- 14\* ... PATH KNOWLEDGE
- The single consciousness-moment belonging to Path of Stream-entry
- 15\* ... FRUITION KNOWLEDGE
- Consciousness belonging to the Fruit of Stream-entry
- 16\* ... OF REVIEWING

Access

Absorption

Momentary

SAMATHA MEDITATION IN THE AVADA BUDDHISM  
(according to the Pali texts)

Mahesh Tiwari

Mind, according to the Buddhist tradition, is the forerunner of all activities. All physical, vocal and mental actions are led by it. If one undertakes something with a defiled mind, suffering follows one as the wheels of a chariot follow the hoof of the ox. On the other hand, activities performed with the mind trained and purified bring happiness which follows one like a shadow<sup>1</sup>. A man with a defiled mind is defiled and one with a purified mind is pure. A spiritually trained mind is the source of happiness<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, to make the mind free from defilements (*kilesa*), to gain right understanding and tranquillity, followed by lasting bliss, there is the necessity of training the mind which is only possible through meditation.

Meditation, in this context, is an English rendering of the term *samādhi*. It is the second step in the threefold path of training, a subdivision of the Eightfold Path prescribed by the Buddha. *Sīla*, being the first, prepares the ground for *samādhi* by curtailing various physical and vocal misdeeds. *Samādhi* proceeds to 'mental culture' by helping foster the growth of factors congenial to serenity and culminates in bringing complete absorption saturated with peace and tranquillity. This practice is called *samatha*.

The term *samādhi* has three component parts, namely, *sam* + *a* + *dha*. The first two are suffixes which respectively indicate the senses of 'properly' and 'completely'; *dha* stands for holding. Thus holding properly and completely is the literal meaning of the term. Its technical meaning is the holding of wholesome consciousness together with its mental states properly and perfectly on a prescribed object. Therefore, *samādhi* is briefly described as one-pointedness of wholesome consciousness: *kusala-cittekaggatā samādhi*<sup>3</sup>.

It is evident from the text that mind is pure (luminous)

by its nature but obscured by incoming defiling elements<sup>4</sup>. These envelop the mind which loses its own natural state. It becomes fickle, restless and unsteady<sup>5</sup>, it wanders here and there and forms attachments to various types of sense data and indulges in sensual pleasure. The stronger the amount of attachment, the greater is the degree of suffering<sup>6</sup>. Therefore, with the aim of removing the envelopment and bringing the mind back to its natural state, one proceeds to the practice of meditation.

First, one should know the cause of the fickleness of the mind. It is said in this connection that there are five hindrances which make the mind restless. Called *nīvaraṇas*, they put obstacles in the way and do not allow the mind to concentrate on an object. They are *kāmacchanda*, *vyāpāda*, *thīnamiddha*, *uddhaccakakkuccha* and *vicikicchā*<sup>7</sup>. *Kāmacchanda* is the strong urge for sensual pleasure. *Vyāpāda* is ill-will or antipathy. It is a kind of desire for doing harm to others; for example, it appears while thinking about someone one has harmed in the past, is harming in the present and may harm in the future; or one has harmed that person's relatives or friends in the past, is harming them in the present and may harm them in the future; or one has helped that person's enemies in the past, is helping them in the present and may help them in the future. Harboring in this way a sense of antipathy, one plans harm to others. *Thīnamiddha* means sloth and torpor. Strictly speaking, the laziness connected with mental states is *thīna*, whilst the same connected with consciousness is *middha*. *Uddhaccakakkuccha* stands for restlessness and worry. In other words, it is the bewildering of the mind and brooding over what is done and what is not done. *Vicikicchā* is the term for sceptical doubt. In the ordinary sense, it is a state of mind full of perplexity, whereas in the technical sense, it is doubting the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha<sup>8</sup>. So long as these hindrances are in force, it will be very difficult to obtain concentration of mind.

The disciple or aspirant to enlightenment, technically known as *yogāvacara*, endeavours to eradicate these hindrances. While their definitive eradication can only be achieved through the insight (*vipassanā*) of Right Understanding, their initial suppression is made possible with the arising of the *jhānāṅgas*, the con-

stituents of *jhāna*-factors<sup>9</sup>. They are five in number, namely: *vitakka*, *vicāra*, *pīti*, *sukha* and *ekaggatā*<sup>10</sup>. *Vitakka* means initial application of the mind to the object. It entails lifting the consciousness and its concomitants and turning them towards an object<sup>11</sup>. *Vicāra* is the sustaining of the mind on the object. Therefore, it is generally rendered as sustained application of mind<sup>12</sup>. The two *jhāna*-factors may be distinguished and better understood with the help of some similes<sup>13</sup>. Like the alighting of a bee on a lotus is *vitakka* whilst *vicāra* is like humming around it. *Vitakka* is like the flapping of a bird before it flies whilst *vicāra* is like its gliding through the air. *Vitakka* is like the beating of a drum whilst *vicāra* is like its reverberation.

*Pīti* means a thrill of pleasant sensation. It is a type of joy or pleasurable interest and is of five kinds<sup>14</sup>, namely, *khuddikā pīti*, *khanikā pīti*, *okkantikā pīti*, *ubbegā pīti* and *pharaṇā pīti*. *Khuddikā pīti* is likened to the thrill of pleasant sensation which makes the flesh tingle. *Khanikā pīti* is instantaneous joy which appears like a flash of lightning. *Okkantikā pīti* is a flood of joy comparable to breakers on a seashore. *Ubbegā pīti* is the name of transporting joy which conveys a feeling of floating on air. *Pharaṇā pīti* indicates suffusing joy which pervades one as flood-water overflows a small pond.

*Sukha* is the term for happiness. Since it constitutes a pleasant feeling connected with the mind<sup>15</sup>, it is known as *somanassa* or pleasant mental feeling. It may be understood that *pīti* creates an interest in the object whilst *sukha* helps one to enjoy it. *Pīti* is the name of a joy one experiences in the hope of realisation of the object whereas *sukha* arises when realisation is achieved<sup>16</sup>.

*Ekaggatā* means one-pointedness. It directs the mind firmly to the object. In other words, it is the focusing of the mind on the object<sup>17</sup>. It has been compared to a steady flame in a windless place or to a firmly fixed pillar which is never shaken by a strong wind. Thus, with each *jhāna*-factor having a definite function to fulfil, the hindrances are suppressed.

The five hindrances are not the only impediments to concentration. Others, called *palibodhas*<sup>18</sup>, function as impediments by creating attachment to various objects as well as by developing

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sluggishness in meditational effort. They should be recognised as such and overcome before proceeding in meditation. The relevant text enumerates ten major and five minor impediments in the life of a bhikkhu. The major ones are the home, lit. 'dwelling place' (*avasa*), family (*kula*), possessions, lit. gain (*tabha*), company, lit. group of followers (*gana*), construction work (*kamma*), travel (*addhana*) relatives (*ñāti*), illness (*ābādha*), books, lit. learning (in the academic sense) (*gantha*) and (the use of) supernatural powers (*iddhi*). The minor impediments are long hair, body hair, nails, torn robes, stained bowl, unclean bed, etc. One should remedy these impediments accordingly (e.g. long head and body hair, nails, etc., should be cut, old robes patched and dyed where necessary, the stained bowl and unclean bed, etc., should be cleaned). In this way, being free from them, one should approach the *kalyāṇamitta* to obtain a suitable object for meditation technically known as a *kammaṭṭhāna*.

A *kalyāṇamitta*<sup>19</sup> is a person who is wholly solicitous of one's welfare and helpful in one's spiritual progress. He is actually the most revered and dearly loved teacher, perfect in the theory and practice of meditation as well as in understanding the temperament of the persons concerned. In this way, according to tradition, the Buddha is the best *kalyāṇamitta*. He should be approached for a suitable object of meditation, if he is alive. In his absence, his capable disciple, well versed in theory and practice, should be approached. If such a person is not available in the place where one lives, one should go to where a teacher resides and, after performing the customary duties towards him, await a suitable time for placing one's request before him. One should not be in a hurry in expressing one's desire but create a favourable situation for asking for a *kammaṭṭhāna*. The teacher has a great responsibility in selecting the suitable *kammaṭṭhāna*. It should be fit for the temperament of the person concerned and helpful in his spiritual pursuit. Therefore the study of temperament is the first step in selecting a suitable *kammaṭṭhāna*. It is, moreover, determined by a thorough examination of the aspirant's posture, movements, general appearance and other mental and physical states occurring during this time<sup>20</sup>.

For this purpose, potential meditators are allocated into six categories insofar as their temperament is concerned. They

are persons having a strong feeling of attachment (*rāgacarita*), a strong feeling of antipathy (*dosacarita*), having confusion and delusion (*mohacarita*), having unwavering confidence (*saddhācarita*), possessing a rationalistic nature (*buddhacarita*) and having a discursive nature (*vitakkacarita*). This is a broad psychological analysis of the basic mental leanings which has been made to include all types of persons under these six headings<sup>21</sup>. Based on this background the *kalyāṇamitta* ascertains the temperament of the person concerned and prescribes a *kammaṭṭhāna*.

The word *kammaṭṭhāna* is a technical term for the object of meditation. It literally means the place of action. Here, action is restricted in the sense of jhānic actions. Therefore, the *kammaṭṭhāna* is the same of the place where jhānic action is performed. A meditation teacher does not choose just anything as a *kammaṭṭhāna* but selects one of the forty *kammaṭṭhānas* already prescribed by the Buddha for the purpose. They are the ten circles (*kasīṇa*), ten stages of a dead body (*asubha*), ten objects of contemplation (*anussati*), four illimitables (*appamañña*), four formless objects (*ārūpa*), one perception (*saññā*) and one analysis (*vavatthāna*).

A circle (*kasīṇa*) refers to a *kammaṭṭhāna* which is round in shape. It may be just like a ball. They are ten in number, namely the *kasīṇas* made of earth, water, fire, air, coloured blue yellow, red or white, a space and light<sup>22</sup>. The ten *asubhas* refer to the stages of a dead body thrown into the charnel ground in the open and undergoing destruction and decay due to natural and other forces. They denote the loathsomeness of the forms of a corpse, from its bloated state to its dissolution into a skeleton<sup>23</sup>.

The ten types of contemplation are those on the Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha, morality, generosity, deities, peaceful calm, death, unclean things of our body, and respiration<sup>24</sup>. The four illimitables are so named because the range of their practice is not limited; they can be extended over an infinite number of beings in all directions. They are lovingkindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity<sup>25</sup>. The one perception (*saññā*) is that of the unpleasantness and loathsomeness of food<sup>26</sup>. The analysis (*vavatthāna*) is contemplating and analysing the four basic materi-

al elements of which our body is composed<sup>27</sup>. The four formless objects (*ārūpa*) are infinite space, infinite consciousness, nothingness, and the state of the subtlest perceptions (viz. neither perception nor non-perception)<sup>28</sup>.

These are the forty types of *kammaṭṭhāna* prescribed by the Buddha for developing concentration of mind. The *kalyāṇamitta* selects one of them as being suitable to the temperament of the person concerned and advises him to practise. It must be emphasised that not all *kammaṭṭhānas* are suitable for all types of person. They are given as stated above according to temperament<sup>29</sup> and on a psychological basis. It is said in this context that the ten stages of a dead body and the unclean things in a body are the eleven objects which are suitable to a person having a strong feeling of attachment, technically known as *rāgacarita*. Any one of them is prescribed for such a person and is designed to inculcate in him a sense of detachment towards the foulness of the body. Further, the four illimitables and the four circles coloured blue, yellow, red and white are objects suitable to persons who have a strong feeling of antipathy (*dosacarita*). The contemplation of breathing is suitable to such persons who are of a confused temperament (*mohacarita*). Again, the contemplation of the greatness of the Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha, the merits of *sīla*, benevolence and the gods are the six contemplations which are suitable to persons of a confident or devotional temperament (*saddhācarita*). The contemplations of death, peaceful calm, perception and analysis are suitable to persons of a rationalistic nature (*buddhacarita*). The ten remaining objects - circles of earth, water, fire, air, space, light and the four colours, as well as the four formless objects - are suitable to persons of all temperaments. Therefore, beginners can start practising meditation on any of these last. However, there is one psychological factor to consider in this process: a larger sized object is suitable to a person of confused temperament and an object of smaller size is suitable to someone with a discursive temperament<sup>30</sup>.

In this way, taking the object of meditation, one is advised to select a place for practice. First of all, one should ensure that one gets the opportunity to live in the same monastery (or meditation centre) as one's teacher. If one does not have such

an opportunity, one should select another monastery (or centre) at a suitable distance. Living therein, if one experiences some difficulties, one should approach one's teacher in lay time, preferably after returning from the alms-round. One may even stay overnight with him and return to one's own place next day. However, one's main concern is the development of concentration and for that a suitable place is the most essential factor. Therefore, one should avoid those places which are unfavourable and select one which is congenial to the purpose.

According to tradition, there are eighteen types of place which are regarded as unsuitable. They are a monastery which is: large, under construction, dilapidated, situated on a highway, situated at the edge of a lake, surrounded by creepers or small trees having edible leaves, having flowers of beautiful colours, full of trees having delicious fruit, famous, situated near a city, situated near a timber plantation, amidst arable fields, where incompatible persons are present, situated near a port, or near frontier lands, situated on the border of a kingdom, where there are unsuitable objects, or where there is a lack of *kalyāṇamittas*. These are the eighteen types of monastery which are unfavourable to the development of concentration. One is advised to avoid such places and select one which is suitable for concentration<sup>31</sup>.

As the *yogavacara* should be careful in avoiding an unsuitable place, similarly he should be alert in selecting a place which is conducive to the harmonious practice of meditation. Suitable places for this purpose are a deserted dwelling, a forest, the foot of a tree, a mountain, an open field and a pile of straw. The *Visuddhimagga* further mentions the five qualities of a suitable place: neither too far from a village nor too near; little frequented by day and having no sound at night; the absence of disturbances from mosquitoes, wind, the sun, and snakes, etc.; inhabited by bhikkhus well-versed in the theory and practice of the Dhamma<sup>32</sup>. These five qualities have been enumerated in accord with the Middle Path. However, one should always be mindful of the core of the teachings of the Buddha to the effect that there should be no attachment to whichever place one chooses. Preference for the outdoor life of monks is borne out by the Buddha's remark: 'Here are the foot of trees, and there are empty

places, meditate, be not slothful and remorseful later on'<sup>33</sup>.

After the selection of a suitable place for meditation, there should be the preparation of the mind for the purpose. A congenial atmosphere should be engendered by developing the fourfold endeavour of not allowing unwholesome states which have not arisen to arise, of the destruction of unwholesome states which have already arisen of allowing the arising of wholesome states which have not arisen, and of fostering the growth of wholesome states which already exist. This mental process enables the mind to pursue the practice of mindfulness.

The *yogāvacara*, after obtaining the *kammatthāna* suitable to his temperament either by himself or with the help of a teacher, should retire into solitude and develop concentration. He should keep the *kammatthāna* before him at a reasonable distance, withdraw his mind from different distractions and fix it on the object. It is natural for the fickle mind not to remain on the object and it slips away again and again. The *yogāvacara* should not be disturbed by this but remain mindful and alert in arresting it and fixing it on the object.

After due practice, the five hindrances are suppressed and become functionless. Following which, there arise the five constituents of *jhāna*, technically called *jhānāṅgas*. It should be understood that all the *jhāna*-factors do not suppress all the hindrances: one pointedness (*ekaggatā*) suppresses sensual pleasure; pleasant sensation (*pīti*) weakens ill-will; the application of mind (*vitakka*) makes sloth and torpor dormant; composure (*sukha*) suppresses restlessness and worry (*uddhaccakukucca*); and sustained application of mind (*vicāra*) curtails the activities of sceptical doubt. In this manner the hindrances are suppressed and the *jhāna*-factors begin to function.

Against this background, the meditator endeavours to attain concentration. At the beginning, all of the five constituents of *jhāna* are at work. *Vitakka* develops a leaning of the mind towards the object; *vicāra* holds it and keeps it sustained; *pīti* generates internal pleasant sensation and creates a joyful atmosphere for the attainment of the goal; *sukha* brings composure in both mind and body; *ekaggatā* functions by developing one-pointedness of mind on the object. In this way, with the help

of the *jhāna*-factors, the first state of *rūpajhāna* is attained - this is technically called *pathama-rūpajhāna*. It is the first substantial achievement of the *yogāvacara* in his meditative endeavours and generates confidence and hope in him for higher realisation of his spiritual life.

However, the meditator is advised not to be overhasty in attempting to reach the higher mental states. He should, rather, strengthen the first stage of *rūpajhāna* with five ways of mastering known as *āvajjana-vasī*, *samāpajjana-vasī*, *adhittāna-vasī*, *uttāna-vasī* and *paccavekkhaṇa-vasī*. *Āvajjana-vasī* is mastery in diverting the mind. The *yogāvacara* adverts to the first stage of *rūpajhāna* wherever, whenever and as long as he wishes. *Samāpajjana-vasī* is the name of the mastery of entering into the *jhāna* quickly. He can enter it within the length of time it takes to snap one's fingers or blink one's eyes. *Adhittāna-vasī* is the mastery of remaining in the *jhāna* for a period determined before entering it. *Uttāna-vasī* indicates mastery of the emergence from the *jhāna*, emerging exactly at a predetermined moment. *Paccavekkhaṇa-vasī* means mastery in reviewing the *jhāna*, reflecting on one's previous *jhānic* proficiency and understanding it as having been mastered. The *yogāvacara* makes a survey of his *jhānic* achievements from the moment of starting to the moment of perfection and also from the moment of perfection to the moment of its starting in ascending and descending order. In this way, he masters the first stage of *rūpajhāna* and makes it perfect.

After mastering the first stage of *rūpajhāna* in five ways and having the *jhānic* experience in him, he endeavours to attain the next level, known as the second level of *rūpajhāna* (*dutiya rūpajhāna*). In making such efforts, his mind is gradually trained and it is no longer necessary for him consciously to advert towards the object; it is so trained that it naturally leans towards the object. Therefore, in the second stage of *rūpajhāna*, the first *jhāna*-factor, *vitakka*, becomes absent. There remain only four *jhāna*-factors and with their co-operation the second stage of *rūpajhāna* is attained<sup>34</sup>. Here also the *yogāvacara* does not hurriedly proceed to the attainment of higher stages but applies the same five ways of mastery. There then comes a moment when he has complete control of his mind and thereby concentration on the object.



Gaining proficiency is obtaining the second stage of *rūpajhāna*, the meditator makes further efforts towards the third stage. Here he finds that the mind is so trained that there is neither the need for applying nor sustaining it. Therefore, at this stage, *vicāra* becomes absent. There remain only three *jhāna*-factors, namely, *pīti*, *sukha* and *ekaggatā*. Thus he attains and dwells in the third stage of *rūpajhāna* associated with these factors<sup>35</sup>. Reaching this stage, the wandering tendency of the mind is curtailed to an even greater extent.

In proceeding towards the attainment of the fourth stage of *rūpajhāna*, the function of *pīti* becomes inessential. There is no need to generate joy in the hope of realisation of the desired object, because by that time it has been realised naturally. Thus *pīti* becomes absent at the fourth stage. There remain only two *jhāna*-factors, composure and one-pointedness, and with their co-operation the fourth stage of *rūpajhāna* is attained<sup>36</sup>.

With the attainment of the fourth stage, a sound background is prepared for meditational achievement. Here there is one point for consideration by the *yogāvacara*. With the presence of composure as a *jhāna*-factor, both mind and body are suffused with pleasant feeling. Since there is the possibility of developing craving for this joyful and pleasant state, the aspirant becomes alert and replaces composure with another *jhāna*-factor, namely, equanimity (*upekkhā*). Thus with the aid of the latter together with one-pointedness, he attains the fifth stage of *rūpajhāna*<sup>37</sup> and perfects concentration on the object. However, there is no affinity with it and he ensures the prevalence of equanimity which provides the strength in concentration. Acquiring such proficiency in developing concentration is regarded as the highest achievement in the pursuit of *samatha* meditation. This is a landmark in the *jhānic* efforts of the *yogāvacara*. The mind becomes composed, clear, free from defilements, pliant and fit for higher spiritual activities<sup>38</sup>. There remains no disturbance at all and peace, tranquillity, serenity and calm prevail. With such a mind, it is advised to enter the stage of *vipassanā*.

In this context it should also be noted that all five stages of *rūpajhāna* are attained on the same object with the *jhāna*-

factors disappearing in ascending order in proportion to the proficiency achieved. It should also be known that the Sutta Piṭaka mentions only four stages of *rūpajhāna*: all five *jhāna*-factors remain present with the first stage of *rūpajhāna*; the first two, *vitakka* and *vicāra*, become absent at the second stage and only three *jhāna*-factors remain; with them, the second stage is attained; at the third stage *pīti* also becomes absent along with *vitakka* and *vicāra*; only two factors, *sukha* and *ekaggatā*, remain there; with their co-operation, one attains the third stage; *sukha* is absent at the fourth stage and is replaced by equanimity - thus the fourth stage of *rūpajhāna* is attained with two factors, equanimity and one-pointedness. In this manner, the five stages of *rūpajhāna* as mentioned in the Abhidhamma are reduced to four in the Suttas<sup>39</sup>.

After practising the different stages of *rūpajhāna*, the *yogāvacara* achieves mental proficiency, gaining concentration on any object associated with form. Despite this, even more subtle stages are to be realised. Therefore, he endeavours to develop concentration on the *arūpa* objects. Here the word *arūpa* refers to an object which has neither colour nor form, and concentration developed on such an object is called *arūpajhāna*. It has four gradual stages of achievement. There is the method of entering into *arūpajhāna* from the *rūpajhāna*. At the fifth stage of *rūpajhāna*, there is an object before the *yogāvacara* which he develops so as to be thoroughly impregnated by it at all times and in all places. With the intention of advancing to higher states, and armed with his meditational power, he pulls back from the mental states like a curtain. Just as when a curtain is pulled back, empty space is revealed, similarly with the withdrawal from the all-pervading object associated with form, infinite space appears before him. He takes this as an object and develops concentration on it. In the course of his practice there comes a moment when his mind becomes completely absorbed with such an object. This achievement is the first stage of *arūpajhāna*, technically called *ākāsānañcāyatana*<sup>40</sup>.

After mastering the first stage, the aspirant's mind becomes suitable for progressing upwards. He mentally contemplates the object before him and understands that it is his consciousness (*viññāna*) which embraces infinite space and thereby considers

it reality. Upon realising this, he relinquishes infinite space and takes infinite consciousness (*ananta viññāna*) as an object of concentration. He finds it more peaceful and calm than the previous stage and exerts and fixes his mind on it and develops concentration. After continual practice and effort, he gains one-pointedness on it. This is the second achievement known as *dutiya arūpajhāna* or *viññāṇāñcāyatana*<sup>41</sup>.

This gradual proficiency in jhānic pursuit encourages him to go further. After a thorough consideration of the nature of consciousness, he understands that it is void, empty and without reality; there is nothing of substance about it. Upon realising this, he gives up infinite consciousness and takes up the nothingness of consciousness as an object. It follows that infinite consciousness no longer remains as an object but is replaced by a recognition of its empty nature. He starts by realising that it is insubstantial and continues until his mind becomes concentrated on the perception of nothingness. This constitutes a replacement of his previous experience concerning the infinity of consciousness and the arising of a new realisation of insubstantiality. He exerts the effort to obtain one-pointedness on it and there comes a moment when he gains perfect concentration. This is the third achievement known as the third stage of *arūpajhāna* or *ākīñcaññāyatana*<sup>42</sup>.

Obtaining mastery over the third stage of *arūpajhāna*, the *yogāvacara* continually reflects on it. In doing so, he detects danger insofar as the perception is concerned. Neither perception nor non-perception appears to him peaceful and sublime. Thus he takes this as an object and proceeds to develop concentration on it. This is the fourth and final achievement in his jhānic pursuit, known as the fourth stage of *arūpajhāna* or *neva-saññānāsaññāyatana*<sup>43</sup>.

In this connection it should be noted that with all four stages of *arūpajhāna*, there constantly remain two jhāna-factors: equanimity and one-pointedness. The object at each stage is different: because of the association of these factors at all four stages, they are regarded as similar to those of the fifth stage of *rūpajhāna*. In the *Sāmaññaphala* Sutta there is mention of the four stages of *rūpajhāna* as a preliminary to entering

*vipassanā*. The *Poṭṭhapāda* Sutta, on the other hand, presents the description of *rūpajhāna* in ascending order. Since similar descriptions are found in the *Abhidhamma* also, it would appear that both traditions were current in the early period of Buddhism.

The practice of *samadhi* has a definite aim and that is the preparation of the mind for realisation of right understanding (*paññā*). As the practice of *sīla* is to develop *samādhi*, similarly, the practice of *samādhi* is to produce *paññā* which, in turn, culminates in the realisation of *Nibbāna*. Besides, there are some mundane achievements too, one of which is intuitional knowledge (*abhiññā*). The fifth stage of *rūpajhāna* is regarded as a prerequisite for the application of *abhiññā* which is of five types: supernormal power (*iddhividhā*), 'divine ear' (*dibbasota*), 'divine eye' (*dibbacakkhu*), penetration into the minds of others (*cetopariyañāna*) and the knowledge of previous existences (*pubbenivāsānussati*). Through supernormal power one becomes capable of performing various types of supernormal activities, such as: being one he becomes many, and being many he becomes one; he becomes visible and invisible at will; he passes through walls and mountains, etc.; dives into and emerges from the earth as if it were water; walks on water as though it were earth, and so on<sup>44</sup>. 'Divine ear' is the attainment of a proficiency through which he hears sounds near and far, both worldly and other-worldly<sup>45</sup>. 'Divine eye' refers to a skill in having vision devoid of any spatio-temporal barrier; he can see things near and far as he wishes and also sees beings coming into existence and passing away on different planes of existence according to their wholesome and unwholesome activities<sup>46</sup>. By penetrating others' minds he understands the thoughts of others; the state of minds affected by greed or non-greed, delusion or non-delusion, exalted or unexalted, are clearly known to him<sup>47</sup>. Possessing the knowledge of previous existences, he knows in minute detail the planes of being on which he was born on the basis of his wholesome or unwholesome actions. He remembers numerous births, even up to many cycles of evolution and dissolution of the universe<sup>48</sup>.

In this way one acquires five types of superknowledge following mastery of *abhiññā*. However, it has been clearly stated by the Buddha that these are mundane achievements and thereby constitute an impediment to spiritual progress. It is advisable

for the *yogāvacara* to disregard such attainments and pursue the quest for insight.

*Vipassanā* or insight is really another term for right understanding which, in itself, may be regarded as the fruit of perfect concentration. There is a similar process of gradual development as in the foregoing process of *samatha* meditation. With the dawn of right understanding, the nature of reality becomes crystal clear to the aspirant. He understands that all conditioned things are impermanent, subject to suffering and without substance. Recognising them as such, he becomes detached from them<sup>49</sup>. In the course of time there is the total elimination of attachment and the mind reaches a desireless state. It is the stage of complete freedom and eternal bliss known as *Nibbana*<sup>50</sup>. Therefore it has been said:

*N'atthi jhānaṃ apaññassa, paññā n'atthi ajhāyato,  
yaṃhi jhānaṃ ca paññā ca, sa ve nibbāna-santike*<sup>51</sup>.

#### Notes

References are to the Pali Text Society's editions. Abbreviations: A = *Āṅguttara-nikāya*; As = *Atthasālinī*; D = *Dīghanikāya*; Dh = *Dhammapada*; Dhs = *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*; Mil = *Milindapañha*; Ud = *Udana*; Vism = *Visuddhimagga*.

<sup>1</sup> Dhp 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Cittam dantaṃ sukhāvahaṃ* - Dhp 35; *Dantaṃ guttaṃ rakkhitaṃ samvutaṃ mahato atthāya samvattati* - A I 7.

<sup>3</sup> Vism 84.

<sup>4</sup> A I 10.

<sup>5</sup> Dhp 33.

<sup>6</sup> *Yesam satam piyāni, satam tesam dukkhāni... yesam ekam piyam ekam tesam dukkham* - Ud 92.

<sup>7</sup> Dhs 204-5.

<sup>8</sup> Dhs 204-5.

<sup>9</sup> *Yathā iṇaṃ, yathā rogaṃ, yathā bandhanāgāraṃ, yathā dāsabyaṃ, yathā kantāradhānamaggam; evam ime pañca nīvaraṇe appahīne attani samanupassati. Yathā ānanyaṃ, yathā ārogyaṃ, yathā bandhanā mokkham, yathā khemantabhūmiṃ, evam eva, ime pañca nīvaraṇe pahīne attani samanupassati* - D I 73.

<sup>10</sup> Dhs 35-37.

<sup>11</sup> *Appanālakkaṇo vitakko* - Mil 61; *Āramaṇe cittassa abhiniropanalakkaṇo* - As 114.

<sup>12</sup> *Anumajjanalakkaṇo vicāro* - Mil 62; *Āramaṇānumajjanalakkaṇo* - As 114.

<sup>13</sup> Mil 62; As 114.

<sup>14</sup> As 115.

<sup>15</sup> *Somanassa-vedanāy' etaṃ nāma* - As 117.

<sup>16</sup> *Kantārakhiṇṇissa vanantodakadassanasavanesu viya pīti, vanacchāyāpavesauda-kaparibhogesu viya sukhaṃ* - As 117.

<sup>17</sup> *Pāmokkhalakkaṇo ca samādhi* - As 118.

<sup>18</sup> Vism 90.

<sup>19</sup> *Piyo garu bhāvanīyo, vattā ca vacanakkhamo. gambhīraṃ ca kathaṃ kattā no c'atthane niyojaye* - Vism 98.

<sup>20</sup> *Iriyāpathato kiccā bhojanā dassanādito / Dhammapavattito c'eva cariyāyo vibhāvaye ti //* - Vism 104.

<sup>21</sup> Vism 102.

<sup>22</sup> Vism 110.

<sup>23</sup> Vism 110.

<sup>24</sup> Vism 110.

<sup>25</sup> *Mettā<sup>\*</sup> karuṇā muditā upekkhā ti ime cattāro brahmavihārā* - Vism 111.

<sup>26</sup> *Āhare paṭikūlasaññā ekā saññā* - Vism 111.

<sup>27</sup> *Catudhātu-vavatthānaṃ ekam vavatthānaṃ* - Vism 111.

- 28 Vism 111.
- 29 *Sabbam c'etam ujuvipaccanīkavasena ca atisappāyavasena ca vuttam* - Vism 114.
- 30 Vism 114.
- 31 *Mahāvāsam navāvāsam, jarāvāsam ca panthanim / Sondim paññañ ca puppham ca, phalam patthitam eva ca // Nagaram dārunā khetam, visabhāgena pattanam / Paccantasīmāsappāyam, yattha mitto na labhati //* - Vism 121-22.
- 32 Vism 122.
- 33 *Etāni, Cunda, rukkhamūlāni, etāni suññāgārāni, jhāyatha, Cunda, mā pamādattha, mā pacchāvippaṭṭisārino ahivattha* - M I 46.
- 34 Dhs 33.
- 35 Dhs 34.
- 36 Dhs 35.
- 37 Dhs 35.
- 38 *So evam samāhite citte parisuddhe pariyodāte anaṅgane vigatūpakkilese mudubhūte, kammaniye thite āneñjapatte ñānadassanāya cittam, abhinīharati abhininnāmeti* - D I 76.
- 39 D I 73-75.
- 40 Dhs 58; D I 183; Vism 328.
- 41 Dhs 58; D I 184; Vism 332.
- 42 Dhs 59; D I 184; Vism 334.
- 43 Dhs 59; D II 112; Vism 335.
- 44 D I 78.
- 45 D I 79.
- 46 D I 82.
- 47 D I 79.
- 48 D I 81.

- 49 *Sabbe saṅkhārā aniccā ti, yadā paññāya passati / Atha nibbindate dukkhe, esa maggo visuddhiyā // Sabbe saṅkhārā dukkhā ti, yadā paññāya passate / Atha nibbindati dukkhe, esa maggo visuddhiyā // Sabbe saṅkhārā anattā ti, yadā paññāya passati / Attha nibbindati dukkhe esa maggo visuddhiyā //* - Dhp 277-79.
- 50 *Yato yato mano nivāraye / na dukkham eti nam tato tato // Sa sabbato mano nivāraye / Sa sabbate dukkhā pamuccati //* - S I 14; *Akiñcanam anādānam, etam dīpam anāparam / Nibbānam iti nam brūmi, jarāmaccuparikkhayam //* - Sn 1094.
- 51 Dhp 372.

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## MY MIND TO ME A KINGDOM IS

My mind to me a kingdom is.  
 Such present joys therein I find,  
 That it excels all other bliss  
 That Earth affords or grows by kind;  
 Though much I want which most would have  
 Yet still my mind forbids to crave.

I see how plenty surfeits oft,  
 And hasty climbers soon doth fall;  
 I see that those that are aloft  
 Mishap doth threaten most of all;  
 They get with toil, they keep with fear:  
 Such cares my mind could never bear.

Content to live, this is my stay;  
 I seek no more that may suffice;  
 I press to bear no haughty sway;  
 Look, what I lack my mind supplies;  
 Lo, thus I triumph like a King;  
 Content with that my mind doth bring.

Some have too much, yet still do crave,  
 I little have, and seek no more.  
 They are but poor, though much they have,  
 And I am rich with little store:  
 They poor, I rich; they beg, I give;  
 They lack, I leave; they pine, I live.

I laugh not at another's loss;  
 I grudge not at another's gain;  
 No worldly waves my mind can toss;  
 My state at one doth still remain:  
 I fear no foe, I fawn no friend;  
 I loathe no life, nor dread my end.

Some weigh their pleasures by their lust,  
 Their wisdom by their rage of will;  
 Their treasure is their only trust;  
 A crooked craft their store of skill;  
 But all pleasure that I find  
 Is to maintain a quiet mind.

My wealth is health and perfect ease;  
 My conscience clear my chief defence.  
 I neither seek by bribes to please,  
 Nor by deceit to breed offence:  
 Thus do I live, thus will I die;  
 Would all did so as well as I.

*Sir Edward Dyer (1543-1607)*

*English poet and diplomat at  
 the court of Elizabeth I.*

## CATURĀRAKKHĀ : The Fourfold Protection\*

Translated by Hammalava Saddhātissa

Buddhānussati mettā ca asubham maraṇassati,  
iti imā caturārakkhā bhikkhu bhāveyya sīlavā.

*Buddhānussati*

1. Anantavitthāraguṇaṃ guṇato 'nussaraṃ muniṃ,  
bhāveyya buddhimā bhikkhu buddhānussatim ādito.
2. Savāsane kilese so eko sabbe nighātiya,  
ahū susuddhasantāno pūjānañ ca sadāraho.
3. Sabbakālagate dhamme sabbe sammā sayam muniṃ,  
sabbākārena bujjhitvā eko sabbaññutam gato.
4. Vipassanādivijjāhi sīlādicaraṇehi ca  
susamiddhehi sampanno gaganābhehi nāyako.
5. Sammā gato subham thānaṃ amoghavacano ca so,  
tividhassāpi lokassa nātā niravasesato.
6. Anekehi guṇoghehi sabbasattuttamo ahū,  
anekehi upāyehi naradamme dāmesi ca.
7. Eko sabbassa lokassa sabba-atthānusāsako,  
bhāgyaissariyādīnaṃ guṇānaṃ paramo nidhi.
8. Paññāssa sabbadhammesu karuṇāsabbajantusu,  
attatthānaṃ paratthānaṃ sādhikā guṇajetthikā.
9. Dayāya pāramī citvā paññāy' attānam uddhari,  
uddharī sabbadhamme ca dayāy' aññe ca uddhari.
10. Dissamāno pi tāv'assa rūpakāyo acintiyō,

Translation

The virtuous monk should meditate on these four protections: Recollections of the Buddha, of Lovingkindness, of Impurities of the Body and the Recollection of Death.

*The Recollection of the Buddha*

1. The intelligent monk should at the outset meditate on the Buddha, endowed with infinite and pervasive qualities, reflecting on these qualities.
2. The Buddha alone has destroyed all the defilements together with their habits and, with an extremely pure mind, is always worthy of offerings.
3. The Buddha has rightly realised by himself, in every way, all matters pertaining to all times and has attained omniscience alone.
4. The Lord is endowed with insight, knowledge, as well as virtue and pure conduct as widespread as the sky.
5. The Buddha has rightly gone to the blissful place. He is endowed with treasured speech. He has known the three worlds in their entirety.
6. The Buddha has become supreme among all beings by his manifold qualities. He has subdued by various means those who should be subdued.
7. The Buddha alone is a teacher to the entire world in all matters. He is a repository of such qualities as fortune and prosperity.
8. The Buddha's wisdom is directed towards all matters and his compassion over all beings. He is beneficial for himself and others. He is supreme in all qualities.
9. That Buddha elevated himself by the wisdom gained through the perfection so attained by preaching the Doctrine in all its aspects; and elevated others through compassion.
10. The body of form of that Buddha which is visible in itself

asadhāraṇāñāṇaddhe dhammakāye kathā va kā ti.

*Mettānussati*

1. Attūpamāya sabbesaṃ sattānaṃ sukhakāmatam,  
passitvā kamato mettam sabbasattesu bhāvaye.
2. Sukhī bhaveyyaṃ niddukkho ahaṃ niccaṃ ahaṃ viya,  
hitā ca me sukhī hontu majjhata c'atha verino.
3. Imamhi gāmakkhettamhi sattā hontu sukhī sadā,  
tato paraṇ ca rajjesu cakkavālesu jantuno.
4. Samantā cakkavālesu satta 'nantesu pāṇino,  
sukhino puggalā bhūtā attabhāvagatā siyūṃ.
5. Tathā itthipumā c'eva ariyā anariyā pi ca,  
devā narā apāyaṭṭhā tathā dasadisāsu cā ti.

*Asubhānussati*

1. Aviññāna 'subhanibhaṃ saviññāna 'subhaṃ imaṃ,  
kāyaṃ asubhato passam asubhaṃ bhāvaye yati.
2. Vannaṣanṭhānagandhehi āsayokāsato tathā,  
patikkulāni kāye me kuṇapāni dvisolasa.
3. Patitamhā pi kuṇapā jegucchaṃ kāyanissitam,  
ādhāro hi sucī tassa kāyo tu kuṇape thitam.
4. Mīlhe kimi va kāyo 'yaṃ asucimhi samuṭṭhito,  
anto asucisampunno punnavaccakuṭī viya.
5. Asucī sandate niccaṃ yathā medakathālikā,  
nānākimikulāvāso pakkacandanikā viya.
6. Gaṇḍabhūto rogabhūto vaṇabhūto samussayo,  
atekiccho 'tijeguccho pabhinnakuṇapūpamo ti.

cannot be conceptualised. How much more would it be with regard to his body of Doctrine endowed with unique wisdom.

*The Recollection of Lovingkindness*

1. Having compared oneself with others, one should practise lovingkindness towards all beings realising that everyone desires happiness.
2. May I be free from sorrow and always be happy: may those who desire my welfare, those who are indifferent towards me and those who hate me, also be happy!
3. May all beings who live in other regions in this world-system be happy!
4. May all beings living in every world-system and each element of life within each system be happy having achieved the highest bliss!
5. Likewise women, men, the noble and ignoble ones, gods, and those in woeful states and those living in the ten directions - may all these beings be happy!

*The Recollection of the Impurities of the Body*

1. The monk, perceiving this body as repugnant as a conscious and non-conscious entity, should meditate on its repugnance.
2. The thirty-two impurities of my body are abhorrent in respect of colour, form, associated elements and space.
3. The impurities within the body are more abhorrent than those that fall from the body since in the case of the latter, that upon which they fall is pure, while the body itself incorporates impurities.
4. Like a worm born in excreta, this body is also born in excreta. Like a cesspit that is full up, this body is full of impurity.
5. Just as fat pours overflowing from a pot full of fat, even so impure matter flows out of this body. Like a cesspit, this body is an abode of the hosts of bacilli.
6. This body is like a boil, a disease, a wound, it is incurable. It is extremely abhorrent. It is comparable to a decomposed corpse.

*Maranānussati*

1. Pavātadīpatulyāya sāyusantatiyākkhayam,  
parūpamāya sampassam bhāvaye maraṇassatiṃ.
2. Mahāsampattisampattā yathā sattā matā idha,  
tathā aham marissāmi maraṇam mama hessati.
3. Uppattiyā sahevedam maraṇam āgataṃ sadā,  
maraṇatthāya okāsam vadhako viya esati.
4. Īsakam anivattantam satatam gamanussukam  
jīvitam udayā attham suriyo viya dhāvati.
5. Vijjububbulaussā va jalarājīparikkhayam,  
ghātako va ripū tassa sabbatthā pi avāriyo.
6. Suyasatthāmapuññiddhi-buddhivuddhi jinadvayam,  
ghātesī maraṇam khippam kā tu mādisake kathā.
7. Paccayānañ ca vekalyā bāhirajjattupaddavā,  
marāmoraṃ nimesā pi maramāno anukkhanan ti.

*Atthasamvegavatthu*

1. Bhāvetvā caturārakkhā āvajjeyya anantaram,  
mahāsamvegavatthūni attha atthita vīriyo.
2. Jātijarāvyādhicutī-apāyā  
atīta-appattakavattadukkham,  
idāni āhāragavettidukkham  
samvegavatthūni imāni attha.
3. Pāto ca sāyam api c'eva imam vidhiñño  
āsevate satatam attahitābhilāsī,  
pappoti so 'tivipulam hatapāripantho  
settham sukham munivisitthamatam sukkena.

*The Recollection of Death*

1. Seeing, with wisdom, the end of life in others, comparable to a lamp kept in a draughty place, one should meditate on death.
2. Just as in this world, beings who once enjoyed great prosperity will die, even so will I, too, die. Death will indeed come to me.
3. This death has come along with birth. Therefore, like an executioner, death always seeks an opportunity.
4. Life, without halting for a moment, and ever keen on continuing, moves like the sun that hastens to set after rising.
5. This life come to an end like a streak of lightning, a bubble of water, a dew drop on a leaf or a line drawn on water. Like an enemy intent on killing, death can never be avoided.
6. If death came instantly to the Buddha, the teacher of the one and only way, endowed with great glory, prowess, merit, supernormal powers and wisdom, what could be said of me?
7. Dying every moment, I shall die within the twinkling of an eye, either without food or through internal ailments or external injuries.

*The Recollection of the Eight Sorrowful Stages of Life*

1. Having practised this fourfold protective meditation, the monk who has put forth effort should reflect on the eightfold sorrowful stages of life.
2. The sorrow pertaining to birth, old age, disease, death, the spirit world, the past cycles of births and the future cycle of birth and sorrow, difficulty experienced in the search for food in the present life - these are the eight sorrowful stages of life.
3. A person who, desirous of his own welfare and knowing the types of meditation, practises this regularly in the morning and evening, will, having destroyed the impediments, happily attain the supreme state of Nibbāna, extolled as the highest bliss by the Buddha.



Ed.\* These stanzas are recited twice every day in the vihāras of Sri Lanka where they were originally composed. They constitute devotional meditation in that the first recollection strengthens one's confidence in the Buddha as supreme teacher and guide; the second counters illwill and promotes feelings of compassion; the third weakens bodily attachment and restrains sensual desire; and the fourth emphasises awareness and exertion to utilise the advantages of human birth.

See *Caturarakkha Bhavana*. The four protective meditations. Pāli text and translation by Bhikkhu Bodhi; commentary (by Pelene Siri Vajirañāṇa) translated by F.M. Rajakaruna. Bhikkhu Training Centre, Mahārāgama 1984.

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## EKOTTARĀGAMA (VII)

Traduit de la version chinoise par

Thich Huyēn-Vi

Fascicule quatrième

Partie 9

L'Enfant unique<sup>1</sup>

1. 'Ainsi ai-je entendu. Lorsque le Bouddha, le Bienheureux, résidait dans le parc d'Anāthapiṇḍada à Śrāvastī, il disait à ses bhikṣu: Ô bhikṣu! Une mère ayant un enfant unique, sa pré-occupation principale est de réfléchir sur la manière d'éduquer son fils pour qu'il devienne un jour un homme utile pour la société. Les bhikṣu demandaient alors: Nous vous prions, Ô Bienheureux, de bien vouloir nous expliquer votre pensée pour que nous puissions bénéficier de votre précieux enseignement.

Le Bienheureux répondait: Je vais accéder à votre demande. Alors écoutez-moi bien et réfléchissez bien. Quant aux upāsaka, on doit suivre l'exemple de Citra Grhapati<sup>2</sup> et de Gaja Kumāra. Ces deux personnes sont des laïcs qui ont mis leur foi dans le Dharma et ont suivi avec application les enseignements. Si l'on veut entrer en religion et porter les trois habits de religieux (*kāśāya*)<sup>3</sup>, on doit prendre exemple sur Śāriputra et Mahā-Maudgalyāyana. Pourquoi? Parce qu'ils ont étudié assidûment le Dharma, n'ont pas commis d'actes répréhensibles au Dharma ou ébauché des idées contraires à leur conscience. Si par hasard des idées erronées survenaient dans leur réflexion, ils seraient condamnés à retourner dans les trois mauvaises voies<sup>4</sup>.

Si vous vous appliquez à faire du bien, vous récolterez les bonnes conséquences dans un proche avenir. C'est pourquoi les offrandes pèsent très lourdes car elles peuvent empêcher les bhikṣu d'atteindre le but visé. Alors, vous ne devez pas aimer recevoir les offrandes, si vous y éprouvez déjà du plaisir, détruisez ce sentiment le plus vite possible. Ayant entendu ces paroles du Bouddha, les bhikṣu étaient heureux et les mettaient respectueusement en pratique.

2. 'Ainsi ai-je entendu... le Bienheureux disait à ses bhikṣu: Une upāsikā a une fille à qui elle voulait donner une éducation parfaite. Alors, elle conseillait à sa fille: 'Mon enfant, si tu restes dans ton foyer, tu dois prendre exemple sur l'upāsikā Kiu tch'eu to lo (拘絀及羅), la mère de Nanda, un disciple du Tathāgata. Mais si tu veux entrer en religion, tu dois suivre l'exemple des bhikṣuṇī Kṣema et Utpalavarṇā.' En effet, la bhikṣuṇī Kṣema comme la bhikṣuṇī Utpalavarṇā aiment étudier le Dharma, ne commettent pas de mauvaises actions ou de délits. Celui qui a des pensées malhonnêtes, se verra condamné dans les trois mauvaises voies. Celui qui ne fait que du bien à autrui, les récompenses viendront tôt ou tard; s'il n'a pas encore accédé à l'éveil, il y parviendra plus tard. C'est pourquoi, Ô bhikṣu, ne prenez pas du plaisir en recevant les offrandes car elles pèsent lourdes et leur poids n'est pas facile à alléger. Hâtez-vous de détruire ce sentiment si vous en éprouvez déjà. Ayant entendu ces paroles du Bouddha, les bhikṣu étaient heureux et les mettaient respectueusement en pratique.

3. 'Ainsi ai-je entendu... le Bienheureux disait à ses bhikṣu: Je n'ai jamais vu quelque chose qui change aussi vite que les pensées. Il [semble] difficile de trouver un exemple. Elles sont comme le singe qui s'agite continuellement. Il en est de même des pensées illusoire qui s'orientent dans différentes directions sans pouvoir se stabiliser. Il faut donc trouver sans tarder un moyen pour contrôler cette agitation. C'est pourquoi, Ô bhikṣu, vous devez rendre compte que le profane (*prthagjana*) ne peut pas analyser ses pensées facilement. En ce qui vous concerne spécialement, vous devez dompter votre pensée, vos idées illusoire, pour arriver au but. Le perfectionnement doit être continu. Ayant entendu ces paroles du Bouddha, les bhikṣu étaient heureux et les mettaient respectueusement en pratique.

4. 'Ainsi ai-je entendu... le Bienheureux disait à ses bhikṣu: Toujours comparable aux comportements agités du singe, les pensées du profane sont changeantes. C'est pourquoi il est difficile d'analyser les causes, les origines, de la mentalité et des pensées. Ayant entendu ces paroles du Bouddha, les bhikṣu étaient heureux et les mettaient respectueusement en pratique.

5. 'Ainsi ai-je entendu... le Bienheureux disait à ses bhikṣu:

En examinant l'esprit des autres, je me suis rendu compte que celui dont les pensées changent à chaque seconde sera condamné à l'enfer. Pourquoi? Parce que ses mauvaises pensées vont rendre son esprit malade et le font condamner à l'enfer. Le Bienheureux récitait alors la gāthā suivante: 'Je vous conseille de réfléchir sur le fait suivant : un homme dont l'esprit est constamment occupé par la colère, à l'heure de sa mort, il ira en enfer à cause de son esprit rempli de pensées malsaines'.

Bhikṣu, vous devez vaincre vos désirs pour qu'ils ne vous poussent pas à commettre des actes regrettables. Ayant entendu les paroles du Bouddha, les bhikṣu étaient heureux et les mettaient respectueusement en pratique.

6. 'Ainsi ai-je entendu... le Bienheureux disait à ses bhikṣu: Je me suis rendu compte aussi, en observant l'esprit d'autrui, que celui dont les pensées vont aussi vite que les réflexes d'un bras, peut d'une seconde à l'autre accéder au royaume du ciel. Pourquoi? Parce qu'il n'a que des pensées nobles. Ainsi les bonnes intentions peuvent faire renaître dans le ciel. Le Bienheureux citait la gāthā suivante: 'Je vous conseille de réfléchir sur le cas suivant : Un homme qui ne pense qu'à faire de bonnes actions, à l'heure de sa mort, peut prendre le chemin des célestes'.

Bhikṣu, ne laissez pas naître vos désirs illusoire. Ayant entendu ces paroles du Bouddha, les bhikṣu étaient heureux et les mettaient respectueusement en pratique.

7. 'Ainsi ai-je entendu... le Bienheureux disait à ses bhikṣu: Dans ce bas-monde, je n'ai pas encore eu connaissance de quelque chose de parfaitement convaincante ni tout à fait incroyable : L'être humain est trompé par ses illusions qui l'empêchent de trouver la sérénité. Il est ligoté par des contraintes inextricables, et il lui est impossible de s'en défaire. Prenons le cas de l'homme, une fois succombé à la beauté d'une femme: il sombre dans la passion, sa pensée est obscurcie par cet amour. Désormais, il ne pourra plus trouver la sérénité de l'esprit. Il est dans une prison où il lui est impossible de s'en échapper. En effet, cet amour va le poursuivre d'une vie à l'autre et lui faire renaître sans cesse dans les cinq voies<sup>5</sup> du Samsāra.

Le Bienheureux récitait la gāthā suivante:

La langue de l'Inde est une langue très subtile;  
 Les paroles du Bouddha sont difficiles à comprendre.  
 Mais essayez parfois de les comprendre.  
 Rappelez-vous constamment  
 Qu'il ne faut pas entrer en relation avec une femme  
 Ou vous n'atteindriez jamais l'éveil.

Bhikṣu, combattez vos passions, ne laissez pas naître vos désirs illusoires, vous devez vous perfectionner de façon rigoureuse. Ayant entendu ces paroles du Bouddha, les bhikṣu étaient heureux et les mettaient respectueusement en pratique.

8. 'Ainsi ai-je entendu... le Bienheureux disait à ses bhikṣu: De la même manière, la femme attirée par les charmes de l'homme, en devient amoureuse. Son esprit est occupé par cette passion et ne parviendra jamais à l'ultime sérénité. Elle sera à jamais emprisonnée dans cet amour et condamnée à naître et renaître indéfiniment dans les cinq voies du Samsāra.

Le Bienheureux récitait cette gāthā:

L'amour-passion est un sentiment bouleversant et aliénant.  
 Ne le laissez pas naître et ne commettez pas ces actes  
 [profanes.

Bhikṣu, combattez vos passions, ne les laissez pas naître et entreprenez votre perfectionnement avec assiduité. Ayant entendu ces paroles du Bouddha, les bhikṣu étaient heureux et les mettaient respectueusement en pratique.

9. 'Ainsi ai-je entendu... le Bienheureux disait à ses bhikṣu: En tout chose, au début le désir passionnel n'existait pas, puis il s'éveille, dès lors il augmente ses exigences. De même, la colère n'avait pas d'existence, elle est née et accroît tout de suite son intensité. L'engourdissement ne se manifestait pas encore, puis il débute et se développe de plus en plus. De la même manière se déroulent la naissance et la croissance du raisonnement erroné, du doute, des pensées illusoires et des idées perverses. C'est pourquoi, bhikṣu, vous devez faire bien attention pour ne pas laisser naître ces pensées aliénantes et vous devez méditer sur leur vraie racine. Ayant entendu ces paroles du Bouddha, les bhikṣu étaient heureux et les mettaient

respectueusement en pratique.

10. 'Ainsi ai-je entendu... le Bienheureux disait à ses bhikṣu: Ne laissez pas naître le désir passionnel. S'il est né, vous devez essayer de l'éteindre à tout prix. Adoptez cette ferme attitude envers la colère, le raisonnement erroné, le doute, etc... Bhikṣu, vous devez méditer assidûment sur les pensées impures.

Ayant entendu ces précieux conseils du Tathāgata, les bhikṣu étaient heureux et les mettaient respectueusement en pratique.'

#### Fascicule quatrième

#### Partie 10

#### La protection de la pensée (*cittānurakṣā*)

1. 'Ainsi ai-je entendu. Lorsque le Bouddha, le Bienheureux, résidait dans le parc d'Anāthapiṇḍada à Śrāvastī, il conseillait à ses bhikṣu: Ô bhikṣu! En quoi consiste la diligence (*apramāda*)? C'est la protection de la pensée<sup>6</sup>. A tout instant, vous devez être conscients des influences mauvaises (*āsrava*) qui vous animent et des passions qui vous aliènent encore. Vous devez pratiquer sans vous laisser aller, sans négligence. Selon vos propres capacités, vous devez poursuivre cette ligne de conduite avec persévérance. Quand vous aurez pu vous opposer aux influences mauvaises, à vos passions, vous atteindrez le merveilleux éveil, vous obtiendrez la parfaite concentration.

Bhikṣu, si vous réussissiez à empêcher le soif des plaisirs des sens (*kāmāsrava*), le désir de l'existence (*bhāvāsrava*) et la mauvaise influence de l'ignorance (*avidyāsrava*)<sup>7</sup> non encore nés de naître, et à éliminer tous, le soif, le désir, la mauvaise influence - déjà nés avec application en connaissant vos propres possibilités, vous vous délivreriez de tous ces maux et vous obtiendriez la connaissance suprême, la pureté et la fin du cycle de renaissance dans un corps impur.

Le Bienheureux récitait la gāthā suivante:

La diligence est le chemin de l'immortalité,  
 L'insouciance est le chemin de la mort.  
 Les gens diligents ne meurent pas;

Les gens insouciants ressemblent à la mort<sup>8</sup>.

Bhikṣu, vous devez réfléchir au devenir de votre pratique du Dharma et ne vous laissez pas être tentés par la paresse. Ayant entendu ces paroles du Bouddha, les bhikṣu étaient heureux et les mettaient respectueusement en pratique.

2. 'Ainsi ai-je entendu... le Bienheureux disait à ses bhikṣu: Que veut dire se perfectionner avec diligence? Cela consiste à ne pas troubler tous les êtres sensibles, ni à leur nuire, à observer les bonnes conduites, c'est à dire l'engagement dans le noble chemin à huit branches qui comporte les huit catégories suivantes:

1. la vue correcte (*samyakdr̥sti*);
2. la conception correcte (*samyaksamkalpa*);
3. la parole correcte (*samyagvāk*);
4. l'action correcte (*samyakkarmānta*);
5. la manière de vivre correcte (*samyagājīva*);
6. l'effort correct (*samyagvyāyāma*);
7. l'attention correcte (*samyaksmṛti*);
8. la concentration correcte (*samyaksamādhi*).

Le Bienheureux récitait alors la gāthā suivante:

La distribution de l'argent à tous les êtres sensibles  
N'équivaut pas la propagation du Dharma qui délivra  
L'esprit de tous soucis et qui apporte le bonheur éternel  
Celui qui connaît de façon pénétrante le Dharma est  
définitivement délivré de sa souffrance.

Bhikṣu, vous devez appliquer les bonnes conduites du noble chemin à huit branches. Ayant entendu ces paroles du Bouddha, les bhikṣu étaient heureux et les mettaient respectueusement en pratique.

3. 'Ainsi ai-je entendu... le Bienheureux posait ensuite cette question à ses disciples: Quelle est votre attitude envers les généreux donateurs (*dānapati*)?

Les bhikṣu répondaient: Ô Bienheureux, c'est là le point capital. Nous vous prions de bien vouloir nous l'expliquer pour que nous puissions le pratiquer par la suite.

Le Bienheureux disait alors: Ecoutez-moi bien et réfléchis-

sez bien sur ce que je vais vous expliquer. Vous devez à vos généreux donateurs un profond respect comparable à celui d'un fils pour ses parents. Vous devez vous occuper d'eux de telle sorte qu'ils tirent profit de leurs cinq agrégats (*skandha*)<sup>9</sup> en ce bas monde; qu'ils deviennent des personnes cultivées, sages et lucides. Cette conduite vous sera bénéfique au sein des Trois Joyaux. Ces bienfaiteurs vous ont offert des vêtements, de la nourriture, des médicaments, de la literie, etc. C'est pourquoi vous leur devez de la reconnaissance aussi bien pour les petites que les importantes offrandes. Vous dépenserez toutes vos forces pour leur inculquer, sans relâche, le Dharma pour qu'ils obtiennent la sérénité de l'esprit, la pureté du corps, de la parole et de la pensée; pour qu'ils puissent agir, parler et penser dans un esprit de compassion. Grâce à cela les offrandes de ces bienfaiteurs ne seront pas perdues et se transformeront en félicité, en bonheur, en immortalité (*amṛta*) qui vont se répandre dans le monde entier. Bhikṣu, c'est ainsi que vous devez vous comporter.

Le Bienheureux résumait son enseignement dans cette gāthā:

De cette manière ces offrandes deviendront des richesses inestimables qu'aucun roi ni aucun bandit peut dérober. Ces offrandes permettent aux bienfaiteurs d'accéder au trône du Roi universel, celui qui propage le Dharma, celui qui possède les sept joyaux.

Elles leur permettent d'accéder au ciel, de porter des couronnes serties de pierres précieuses, de se divertir au son de la musique divine.

Elles leur offrent la possibilité de devenir le puissant roi des célestes tant admiré.

Elles leur donnent les trente-deux beaux marques physiques d'un propagateur du Dharma.

Tous ces bonheurs sont dûs aux offrandes.

Ayant entendu ces paroles du Bouddha, les bhikṣu étaient heureux et les mettaient respectueusement en pratique.

4. 'Ainsi ai-je entendu... le Bienheureux demandait aux bhikṣu: Comment les généreux bienfaiteurs doivent-ils faire leurs offrandes et comment doivent-ils s'y prendre pour progresser dans la formation spirituelle?

Les bhikṣu répondaient: C'est un des ces points importants que nous vous prions de bien vouloir nous éclairer.

Le Bienheureux expliquait: Les bienfaiteurs font des offrandes aux prédicateurs, aux bhikṣu, à ceux qui ont trouvé la lumière dans le Dharma. Ils offrent la nourriture à ceux qui en ont besoin, la quiétude à ceux qui sont dans l'anxiété. la joie à ceux qui ont du chagrin, un abri aux sans-logis, la lumière aux aveugles, des médicaments aux malades. Ils sont comparables aux agriculteurs qui font des travaux d'assainissement pour améliorer leurs terres. Bhikṣu, c'est ainsi que l'on doit se perfectionner pour surmonter les cinq aggrégats afin d'accéder au Nirvāna.

Le notable Anāthapiṇḍada qui se trouvait dans l'assemblée s'adressait au Bienheureux: Ô Bienheureux, comme vous l'avez expliqué, celui qui fait des offrandes et celui qui les reçoit sont comparables à une vase qui ne contient que de bonnes choses. Ceux qui reçoivent les dons sont comparables aux parents qui encouragent les bonnes actions de leurs enfants. Ils sont aussi de bons amis dans les vies postérieures. Celui qui donne comme celui qui reçoit sont des bouddhistes pratiquants. - Le Bienheureux répondait: C'est exactement cela. - Le notable Anāthapiṇḍada continuait: A partir de maintenant, nous devons subvenir aux besoins des bhikṣu, des bhikṣuṇī, des upāsaka et des upāsikā. Nous vous prions, le Bienheureux et les bhikṣu, d'accepter nos propositions.

Le Bienheureux acquiesçait: Nous les acceptons de bon coeur. Le Notable se prosternait alors, puis se levait pour marcher trois fois autour du Bouddha pour manifester son respect et revenait ensuite à sa place.

Un jour, ce dernier préparait un fastueux repas, arrangea les places et invita respectueusement le Bienheureux à venir chez lui. Le Bienheureux, entouré de tous ses disciples correctement vêtus, tous munis de leur bol aux aumônes, se rendaient chez le Notable dans la ville de Śrāvastī. Chacun prit place selon son rang. Une fois le Bouddha et ses disciples bien installés, Anāthapiṇḍada venait personnellement leur servir les plats. Le repas terminé, les accessoires rangés, Anāthapiṇḍada s'asseyait derrière les bhikṣu et pria le Bienheureux: Tathāgata,

permettez-moi, ainsi que ma famille, d'offrir à vous et aux bhikṣu les trois vêtements des religieux, le bol aux aumônes, les accessoires pour s'asseoir et toutes les autres choses dont vous avez besoin quotidiennement.

Le Bienheureux s'adressait alors aux bhikṣu: Je vous permets d'accepter les choses qui vous manquent, mais ne laissez pas naître vos envies.

Pour remercier le notable Anāthapiṇḍada, le Bienheureux donnait un enseignement sur le Dharma avant de se retirer avec ses disciples.

Anāthapiṇḍada se rendit ensuite aux quatre portes de la ville, au marché, pour combler les besoins des nécessiteux. Il en faisait de même pour ceux qui se rendaient chez lui. Il donnait ce qu'on lui réclamait: de la nourriture, des médicaments, des véhicules, de l'encens, des perles, etc.

Ayant entendu parler de cela, le Bienheureux dit à ses disciples: De tous mes upāsaka, le premier de ceux qui aiment pratiquer la libéralité est le notable Anāthapiṇḍada. Ayant entendu ces paroles du Bouddha, les bhikṣu étaient heureux et les mettaient respectueusement en pratique.

5. 'Ainsi ai-je entendu... le Notable rendait visite au Bienheureux, le saluait respectueusement et s'asseyait à ses pieds.

Le Bienheureux lui disait: Ainsi vous avez distribué des vivres aux pauvres?

Anāthapiṇḍada répondait: Oui, Ô Bienheureux, j'aide souvent les pauvres aux quatre portes de la ville et à mon domicile. Souvent je souhaite pouvoir aider tous les êtres vivants sans penser qu'il faut donner plus ici et moins là-bas. Je pense aussi que tous les êtres vivants ont besoin de manger pour vivre. S'ils n'ont rien à manger, ils mouriront.

Le Bienheureux répondait: C'est très bien, c'est très généreux de votre part. Vous pratiquez la libéralité dans le même esprit que les bodhisattva<sup>10</sup>. Vous recevrez de très grands mérites pour vos actes. Votre nom sera connu et immortalisé dans les dix directions de ce monde. Pourquoi? Parce que les bodhisattva viennent en aide aux autres dans un esprit d'équité. Ils subviennent aux besoins de tous les êtres sensibles pour

ne pas les laisser mourir de faim.

Le Bienheureux récitait la gāthā suivante:

Quand on vient en aide à tout le monde  
Sans le moindre regret dans le coeur,  
On rencontrera de bons amis  
Qui vous aideront à atteindre l'autre rive.

Noble Anāthapindada, vous devez toujours avoir cet esprit d'équité dans votre pratique de la libéralité. Ayant entendu ces paroles du Bouddha, le Notable était heureux et les mettait respectueusement en pratique.

6. 'Ainsi ai-je entendu... le Bienheureux se retournait vers les bhikṣu en disant: Moi qui connais les causes et la raison de la venue de l'homme en ce bas monde, je sais aussi les bonnes conséquences d'un acte de libéralité, le plus petit qu'il soit, par exemple: une poignée de riz qu'on s'abstient de manger pour l'offrir à une autre personne qui en a plus besoin que soi.

Si l'on pratiquait la libéralité dans cet esprit d'équité les résultats seraient parfaits. Mais malheureusement, la plupart de temps, la cupidité et la jalousie obscurcissent l'esprit humain et rendent inefficace l'acte de libéralité.

Le Bienheureux résumait son enseignement dans cette gāthā:

L'enseignement du Tathāgata encourage la pratique équitable de la libéralité étendue à tous les êtres vivants. Cette action va apporter beaucoup de récompenses, de bonheur et pourra conduire ensuite son auteur vers le Nirvāna.

L'acte de libéralité ouvre l'esprit et le coeur.

A l'heure de la mort, la renaissance au monde céleste sera certaine.

Dans ce monde merveilleux où rien ne manque, la paix et la sérénité de l'esprit y sont acquises.

Tous ces bonheurs sont obtenus grâce à la pratique d'une libéralité équitable.

Ayant entendu ces paroles du Bouddha, les bhikṣu étaient heureux et les mettaient respectueusement en pratique.

7. 'Ainsi ai-je entendu... le Bienheureux disait à ses bhikṣu:

Bhikṣu, n'ayez pas peur de recevoir en retour les récompenses dues aux bonnes actions. Elles se présentent sous la forme d'un état de paix et de sérénité intérieure. Vous devez plutôt craindre de ne pas obtenir cette félicité car les souffrances, l'inquiétude, l'anxiété sont innombrables. Celui qui n'a pas obtenu ces récompenses n'aura pas cette paix intérieure.

Je me rappelle une fois, j'avais mis en application l'esprit de la compassion durant sept ans. Comme récompense, je ne suis plus retourné en ce bas monde pendant sept périodes cosmiques (kalpa) et j'ai vécu sept autres périodes cosmiques dans le monde des dieux Ābhāsvara, dans les sept périodes cosmiques suivantes dans le monde du Mahā-Brahmā et je dirigeais des milliers d'autres mondes. J'avais repris trente-six fois la forme du roi des deva et, dans une multitude de mondes, j'étais un roi universel (cakravartin) où je régnais au service de la propagation du Dharma. C'est pourquoi, bhikṣu, vous devez faire du bien sans relâche et n'ayez pas peur de recevoir les mérites qui en résulteront. N'oubliez surtout pas que les racines de la souffrance sont multiples et sont à l'origine de la perte de la sérénité intérieure.

Le Bienheureux résumait son enseignement dans cette gāthā:

La félicité est très précieuse,  
Si vous voulez, vous pouvez l'obtenir.  
En atteignant le stade de Nirodhasamāpatti<sup>11</sup>,  
Vous parviendrez à l'état du Non-agir, et  
Durant neuf cent milles périodes, les devaputra  
Māra<sup>11</sup> ne pourront pas vous perturber grâce à vos mérites.  
Si vous souhaitez de toutes vos forces parvenir à la sagesse en détruisant toutes formes de souffrances, vous n'auriez plus d'inquiétude dans l'avenir.

Bhikṣu, vous devez faire de bonnes actions sans relâche et vous appliquer à la pratique. Ayant entendu ces paroles du Bouddha, les bhikṣu étaient heureux et les mettaient respectueusement en pratique.

8. 'Ainsi ai-je entendu... le Bienheureux disait à ses bhikṣu: Je me rappelle l'époque où j'étais assis sous l'arbre de l'Eveil avec les bodhisattva<sup>10</sup>. A cette occasion les Māra<sup>12</sup> ont rassemblé leurs troupes par milliers constituées d'êtres ayant différents aspects, par exemple: des individus ayant une tête d'animale

et un corps humain, des dragons, des génies, des esprits, des serpents-génies (*mahoraga*), des Asura, des oiseaux-génies (*garuḍa*) etc. Les Māra sont venus me dire ceci: 'Ascète, vous allez être vaincu'. J'ai dû employer toute la force de mes mérites pour vaincre mes fantômes, mes passions, pour me délivrer des contraintes afin de parvenir à la parfaite connaissance de la vérité. Bhikṣu, vous devez réfléchir à ce fait. Si vous possédiez de grands mérites, les Māra ne pourraient pas détruire vos efforts. Ecoutez cette gāthā:

Si vous possédiez des mérites (*puṇya*) vous vivrez dans la félicité.

Si vous n'en aviez pas vous seriez malheureux.

Dans cette vie et dans les prochaines vies,

Tâchez de faire du bien pour pouvoir recueillir du bonheur.

Bhikṣu, progressez toujours dans cette voie du Bien. Ayant entendu ces paroles du Bouddha, les bhikṣu étaient heureux et les mettaient respectueusement en pratique.

9. 'Ainsi ai-je entendu... le Bienheureux disait à ses bhikṣu: Que signifie persévérer dans la voie du Bien? Ceci désigne la volonté de poursuivre le même objectif avec foi et confiance jusqu'à l'ultime but: la réalisation de l'attention correcte. C'est ainsi que vous parviendrez au Nirvāṇa. Réfléchissez bien à cela et cherchez à découvrir les racines du Bien. Ayant entendu ces paroles du Bouddha, les bhikṣu étaient heureux et les mettaient respectueusement en pratique.

10. 'Ainsi ai-je entendu... le Bienheureux disait à ses bhikṣu: Si vous voyez en ce bas monde quelqu'un qui a vécu longtemps, qui a rendu de grands services à l'humanité, qui possède un beau physique, de lui se dégagent une grande énergie, une forte personnalité, qui a la parole douce et gentille ainsi qu'une grande félicité, il est sûrement le Tathāgata ayant découvert l'ultime vérité et l'Eveil parfait.

Bhikṣu, vous devez vous orienter résolument vers la commémoration du Bouddha (*buddhānusrīti*) et persévérez pour atteindre le but final.

Ayant entendu ces paroles du Bouddha, les bhikṣu étaient heureux et les mettaient respectueusement en pratique.'

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Voir T2, 562a10 et suiv.

<sup>2</sup> Voir BSR IV, 1, p.58, notes 13, 14. Quant à Gaja Kumāra (象童子, T'ong-tseu), on ne trouve aucune indication de son identité.

<sup>3</sup> Voir BSR II, 1-2, p.46, n.22.

<sup>4</sup> Les trois mauvaises voies: voie de l'enfer, celle des démons et celle des animaux.

<sup>5</sup> Cinq voies de la renaissance: voie du ciel, de l'humain, des démons (ou *preta*), des animaux et de l'enfer.

<sup>6</sup> Voir T2 563c15-16. Cf. la citation de l'EĀ dans l'original sanskrit dans l'*Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, éd. Pradhan, Patna 1967, 1975, pp.55, 8: [*apramadaśī cetasa āraṅkṣeti*]. Cf. aussi La Vallée Poussin, *L'Abhidharmakośa*, Chapitre II, p.157, note 3. Cette citation de l'EĀ se trouve également dans *L'Abhidharmakośavyākhyā* (éd. Wogihara), 128, 26.

<sup>7</sup> Ici il n'y a référence qu'à trois āsrava, qui correspondent aux āsava du *pāli* (cf. Nyanatiloka, *Buddhist Dictionary*, p.23) sauf *dr̥ṣṭyāsrava*, la mauvaise influence des vues.

<sup>8</sup> En fait, cette stance correspond à Dhṛp 1.

<sup>9</sup> La référence ici indique les avantages tirés de la naissance parmi les êtres humains (la meilleure de toutes les formes d'existence).

<sup>10</sup> Il s'agit probablement d'une interpolation mahāyāniste.

<sup>11</sup> Le Nirodhasamāpatti ou 'recueillement s'appelant l'arrêt de la sensation et de la notion'. Voir La Vallée Poussin, *L'Abhidharmakośa*, II, 213.

<sup>12</sup> Māra: des mauvais esprits du monde du désir (*kāmadhātu*) qui sont destinés à contrecarrer les efforts de perfectionnement des sages.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

The three articles relating to suicide in the last issue of BSR may well seem more than enough on the matter for the time being. However, as my question to Dr Harvey about his earlier piece was fortuitously answered by two other contributions as well as his own specific reply in a way which complicates the issue considerably, it may be of value to offer some reactions to all of them.

The first question is whether the third *pārājika* can be taken as an indictment to all intentional homicides, i.e. of both murder and suicide, not just the former. Lamotte's article conveniently quotes the text of the rule, and the absence of the word 'another' in the opening reference to 'taking with his own hands the life of a human being' might be so viewed. However, the *pārājikas* are explicitly about punishable offences so that the word is in fact redundant. Just as tellingly there is no reference to attempted suicide which obviously could be punished. On the other hand, and by the same token, the reference to aggravated suicide focuses on the aggravation with no clear inference about the act itself. In a broader context the association of such aggravation with murder makes total sense, since the more sinister examples might represent an identity of motivation, e.g. as alternative ways of ridding oneself of a burdensome relative.

Now, the obverse of encouraging an act may be the attempt physically to prevent it, and it is a welcome feature of all the cases discussed that this unpleasant factor is not present. Thus Sāriputta seeks to dissuade Channa from 'taking the knife to himself' but appears to accept the outcome after he fails to do so. Likewise, Gotama's intercession with Vakkali merely results in the postponement of his suicide, and it evokes no condemnation when it occurs. It may well be, therefore, that Nāgārjuna's statement (as cited by Lamotte) that morality is about 'a wrong done to others or the good done to others' represents a genuine consensus. If so, it follows that suicide was not seen as wrong in the precise sense that one has a right to commit it, i.e. arguments centre on its wisdom not on its admis-

sibility. (There are seeming parallels here with its decriminalization in English law.) So the separation of the spheres of morality and wisdom is of crucial significance. In the former constraint and punishment may be allowable, in the latter only debate.

If then we confine ourselves to asking whether suicide is unwise as opposed to immoral, the obvious conclusion from the three articles is that the view taken is an ambivalent one. This seems to be the view arrived at by Arvind Sharma in his final paragraph, the difference being that he is apparently uneasy with such an outcome whereas I find it entirely satisfactory. Gotama could not be expected to countenance an epidemic of suicides, hence the injunction on the third *pārājika*, but when he encounters isolated examples of the intention to commit it his response is pragmatic and *ad hominem*, which is exactly what I would hope. In relation to anything so traumatic, varied and complex, wisdom should wait upon the event.

The categorizations offered by various contributors seem anyway to be of very limited value from the standpoint of modern secularly orientated Buddhism. The distinctions between the suicides of Arahants and of others involves an unverifiable and unquantifiable distinction. As to Lamotte's third group, i.e. those who committed it 'to pay homage to the Buddha and his doctrine', this looks like an aberration even in traditionalist terms and is hardly likely to attract contemporary recruits. Those who are politically motivated are a good deal more interesting and have understandably generated considerable differences of opinion amongst Buddhists, but they are a tiny proportion of the total number. One must conclude therefore that the more meaningful criteria for attempting any sort of judgement have to do with age, health, presence or absence of dependents, and whether the deed is a precipitate reaction to events or a calculated decision.

Finally there is the relationship of all this to the rebirth question. I entirely agree with Peter Harvey that the monumental studies of Ian Stevenson provide a *prima facie* case for rebirth, and that there is a good deal of other modern research which is worth our attention. There are, however, many anomalies to



be resolved and acceptance of the paranormal is compatible with a variety of theories about its basis. In any case, the real objection is not to any particular stance on rebirth as such, but to the use of the idea as a vehicle for moral dogmatism. It is this latter aspect which is relevant to a discussion of suicide (or any other dimension of the present life that one may have strong feelings about). The scientific evidence certainly cannot be invoked in support of arguments of such a type, and those of us who wish to see the Buddhist Dhamma as consistently empirical will therefore continue to reject them.

Yours sincerely

David Evans

## BOOK REVIEWS

Tranquillity and Insight. An Introduction to the Oldest Form of Buddhist Meditation. Amadeo Solé-Leris. Century Hutchinson, London, and Shambhala, Boston 1986. 176 pp. £6.95 / \$7.95.

In the last two or three decades books on meditation covering the main Buddhist traditions have been appearing regularly. Scarcer, however, are publications about meditation that give an almost complete account of meditational techniques from the historical perspective. Indeed - and now speaking of the Theravāda tradition - this reviewer knows of only two books written in English in the last decade on this subject<sup>1</sup>, but these are not suitable for beginners. Fortunately, the book under review has several features which will appeal to beginners and non-beginners alike, and will meet the need for a more readable publication in this complex field of spiritual activity called meditation. The author will not be unfamiliar to readers of BSR, as he has contributed some reviews to the journal, and his translations have been reviewed there<sup>2</sup>. He is proficient in Pāli and conducts courses in meditation of whose technique he is highly knowledgeable, especially *vipassanā*.

In the Preface the author declares his aim to be twofold: '... to sketch an outline of Buddhist meditation according to the oldest tradition and as a living practice in our time...' (Ch.1, 2, 3, 7, and 8) and '... to offer a survey of the meditational techniques involved' (Ch.4, 5, 6 and 9). The organization, the methodical exposition and interpretation of the material reflects one of the trends of thought on meditational matters which, as will be seen, leads to some interesting questions worth commenting upon.

The book opens with an introductory chapter on the scope and nature of meditation, whilst the second chapter presents a brief exposition of the Buddha's teaching by means of the 'Four Noble Truths'. However, the main theme of the book is tackled in Chapter 3 - on the nature and difference between the two distinct types of technique known as *samatha* (tranquillity) and *vipassanā* (insight), Chapters 4 and 5 on Concentration, and 6

on *vipassanā* as practised today. Generally, the presentation is made via a selection from the Sutta Piṭaka (SP); often, it is accompanied by a commentary from the Visuddhimagga complemented by further explanations and interpretations by the author to clarify the matter better. Though succinct, all the subjects are described in a lucid style and in clear and understandable language - which is a feat in itself considering the complexity of the subject-matter. What will not be clear to some readers - as this is not part of the scope of the book and is not explained - is the role played by and the position that these meditational techniques occupy within the general training scheme of the Buddha.

The chapters on concentration cover, essentially, the material found in the SP. They comprise sections on the levels of concentration and on the traditional forty meditation subjects as systematized in the Visuddhimagga. The nine stages of concentration (the *jhānas*) receive more extensive coverage.

The chapter on *vipassanā* is dedicated mainly to an exposition and interpretation of the famous Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta, which the author states is the Buddha's prime manual of instruction to his disciples for the practice of *vipassanā*, and is one of the best short accounts of this sutta known to this reviewer. Whereas in the case of concentration the author draws heavily on the Commentaries, in the present section his interpretation of some of the contemplation exercises is thoroughly dictated by the outlook specific to the followers of the 'Burmese' *vipassanā* method which, according to the author, has as its source the empirical tradition as preserved in Burma (- by inference, is the 'textual' tradition predominant only in Sri Lanka and Thailand?). Other forms of meditation techniques to be found in the SP are not mentioned in the book; this is in line with the outlook just mentioned and will be better clarified as we proceed further on.

The next chapter (7) is on Nibbāna, with excellent remarks on its nature and some misconceptions about it, briefly presented. Next (8) comes an amplified exposition of the practices of loving-kindness and equanimity which were already succinctly described in Chapter 4. The last chapter (9), on the practice of *vipassanā*

today, gives an account of the two main contemporary streams of *vipassanā* meditation: a short and incomplete description of Mahāsi Sayadaw's technique, and a fuller account - the bulk of the chapter - of the U Ba Khin *vipassanā* method of meditation, with which the author seems to be more familiar and of which he is a practitioner.

Because of the personal outlook of the author on these matters, a potential quandary which exists here, and may involve some readers - especially newcomers - is: having in mind the stated objective at the beginning of the book, and after having read Chapters 7 and 9, they may be led to believe that (a) Burma is the only country with an empirical tradition; and (b) the *vipassanā* technique of meditation is the sole original form of meditation still extant.

Let us now review, briefly, an important historical issue worth commenting upon, for the benefit of those readers not familiar with such issues and to help them establish a correct historical perspective on these matters. The word *vipassanā* occurs about twenty times in the SP; in all but one case, in conjunction with *samatha*. Generally, both denote special mental and spiritual states resulting from meditational practices and capable of inducing higher wisdom. Sometimes they are called 'wholesome things/states/elements' (*kusalā dhammā*) (A II 92-5; V 99). On other occasions they are included in generic recommendations on things/states (*dhammā*) to be developed for the benefit of the disciple (D III 213, 273; M I 494; S IV 360; A I 95; etc); they should also be developed through full comprehension which, itself, is to be developed through cultivating the Noble Eightfold Path (S V 52), etc. A close examination of the Nikāyas discloses the key-word related to the highest spiritual stages to be *paññā* (wisdom or understanding) (and *dassana*, vision) to be met often in the SP. It is only in post-SP literature that we come across such technical terms as *vipassanā-bhāvanā*, as well as the identification of *vipassanā* with *dassana* 'vision'), *ñāna* (knowledge) and some forms of *paññā* (wisdom)<sup>3</sup>.

To round off this digression, let us put a question: Did the Buddha have a system of training to which the diverse meditation techniques could be related? A sound question, which was put to the Master on various occasions. His answer to this query

has been recorded, among others, in two famous dialogues (M 107 and 39), in which he gives a minute account of his gradual training method (*anupubbāsikkhā*) - so-called because it was made up of successive, progressive stages. There is ample evidence that the gradual path was his central and general method of training, the importance of which may be seen from the fact that more than two dozen suttas, of varying length, have been dedicated specifically to this method<sup>4</sup>. The method was flexible enough to admit of amendments if the mental capacity of the meditator so warranted. Most of the meditation techniques, described in hundreds of suttas in the SP, were related and corresponded to one or more of the stages on the gradual path. Based on its contents, the method became known, later, as the threefold training (*ti* or *tividha-sikkhā*): Morality (*sīla*), Concentration (*samādhi*) and Wisdom (*paññā*), and it is under this guise that the 'textual' literature popularized it. Two other methods of training are also mentioned in the SP: the thirty-seven Constituents of Enlightenment (*bodhipakkhiyā bhāvanā*) and the famous *satipaṭṭhāna* - which is also one of the constituents of the former method and covered in the present book.

With the passing of time, the application of the gradual method of training declined for various reasons, and nowadays some system of training resembling it is being used in a few places. Moreover, it is rarely mentioned in Buddhist publications. Instead, some of the meditation techniques found in the SP continue to be used as independent methods of training; two of these have received special emphasis and have been constantly increasing in popularity - *ānāpānasati* and *satipaṭṭhāna*, both covered in this book. The emergence of the *vipassanā* technique of meditation, of Burmese inspiration, has been described by the author and by the literature indicated by him (p.128). The method, however, is not without its opponents who would consider it a short-cut method derived from the original *satipaṭṭhāna*. However, since our concern is with the laity, as far as this method proves beneficial - and this reviewer has been a witness to the growing interest in this type of meditation - it is certainly a valid method<sup>5</sup>. Whether it is suited to lead to the attainment of Nibbāna is a debatable question. Some teachers and writers are prone to promise such a feat, indiscriminately, to everybody

in the not too distant future. The only way this could be proved would be the presence of Arahants, recognized as such, in the world today - which is not the case as yet.

Summing up, however, this is an excellent reference book, especially for the survey on concentration and mindfulness, and for encouraging the non-initiated reader to pursue the practice of meditation. An analytical table of contents in future editions would further enhance its value as a reference work.

<sup>1</sup> Winston L. King, *Theravāda Meditation*, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1980. P. Vajirañāna, *Buddhist Meditation in Theory and Practice*, 2nd ed., Buddhist Missionary Society, Kuala Lumpur 1975.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, BSR 1, No.1, pp.62 and 67.

<sup>3</sup> For example, the seven stages of purification (*visuddhi*) expounded by Punna in a dialogue with Sāriputta (M 24) and not covered in the present book, are considered as stages in the development of *vipassanā* as the direct path to Nibbāna. The *Visuddhimagga* elaborates them in connection with the development of wisdom (*paññā-bhāvanā*) and they are mentioned in the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha* as an aspect of *vipassanā kamatthāna* (see P. Vajirañāna, *op. cit.*, pp.67 and 383). (May the expression *adhīpaññādharmavipassanāya*, higher knowledge through insight into things, A IV 360, etc., be the precursor?) In most cases, *vipassanā-bhāvanā* as understood by the 'textual' tradition is different from the one expounded in the present book which is related to the *satipaṭṭhāna* method of meditation.

<sup>4</sup> D suttas 2 to 6, 8 to 11; M 26, 27, 30, 39, etc. As it is outside the scope of this review, no further details will be given here; the interested reader may explore the English translations of the dialogues published by the Pali Text Society.

<sup>5</sup> For other traditional and empirical approaches see, for example, Bhikkhu Nānajiṅgako, 'New Approaches to Buddhism: the Hard Way', *Pali Buddhist Review*, 5, p.59; and 'The Way of Buddhist Meditation', PBR, 5, p.93, 1980; Kheminda Thera, *The Way of Buddhist Meditation*, Vajirārāma, Colombo 1980. Works by some meditation masters from Thailand (Forest Monasteries) will not be cited here as they are not easily accessible.

Nissim Cohen

*Ed.:* *Tranquillity and Insight* has appeared in Spanish (Barcelona 1986) and is scheduled to be published in Italian (Milan 1988).

Calm and Insight. A Buddhist Manual for Meditators. Bhikkhu Khantipālo. Curzon Press, London 1981. viii + 152 pp. £3.00.

The author of this book, who modestly calls himself Bhikkhu Khantipālo, is in fact one of the tiny band of British-born mahātheras. Trained in Thailand, he has his own vihāra in Australia at a place delightfully named Wiseman's Ferry. This is an intensely practical work which at every step gives evidence of the author's own experience, and is therefore invaluable for the Westerner wishing to undertake meditation, especially in the very simple form as taught in the Thai tradition he follows.

A brief introduction suggests that it is at least as necessary to 'wash the mind' as the body, which seems as good an answer as any to the question 'Why meditate?', and the basic scheme for the book is given in the terms of Dhammapada 183 (*Sabbapāpassa akaranam* etc.). The first section ('Preliminaries') gives a great deal of useful advice, much of which may seem obvious to those with some experience, but will be valuable for many beginners. The precepts and refuges are stressed as providing a secure foundation for meditation practice. The next two chapters ('And In Wholesomeness Increasing') deal with the mind: Chapter II gives a schematic analysis of the mind as understood in Buddhism, and Chapter III explains the Four Foundations of Mindfulness. The third section ('And One's Heart Well Purifying') deals with the actual practice, explaining the difference between calm and insight. This leads on to 'Good Results and Bad': the latter include the various 'traps and snares' which can result from the false evaluation of certain experiences (especially as a result of conceit!). In this section the author quotes from accounts of monks' experiences, some amusing and some frightening, in Thailand. At times his tone becomes almost brusque as when discussing mantras (p.63), or when (p.73) he rejects as 'later scholasticism' the classification of insight into stages so lovingly (and expertly) dwelt on by Matara Sri Nānārāma. In both cases he has a serious point, but in both cases, too, there is something to be said on the other side! A final chapter deals with the Fruits of Penetration, understandably drawing heavily on the Sāmaññaphala Sutta (D 2). An appendix with some questions and answers concludes the work, plus a brief glossary which includes the Thai form of certain Pāli words (here, under *paṭipatti*,

the Thai form should be *patibat*).

Maurice Walshe

The Path of Serenity and Insight (An Explanation of the Buddhist Jhānas). Henepola Gunaratana. Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi 1985. xiv, 263 pp. Rs 125.00.

This is a work which combines sound scholarship with considerable practical experience. Its venerable author, ordained in Sri Lanka in 1947, spent fifteen years in teaching and Dhammadūta work in South-East Asia (five years in India, for the Mahābodhi Society, and ten in Malaysia) before becoming Hon. General Secretary of the Buddhist Vihāra Society of Washington, D.C., in 1968. Since 1980 he has been President of the Society. During his years at the Vihāra, in addition to pursuing scholarly interests and obtaining various degrees, including a Ph.D. in Philosophy, at The American University, he has been deeply involved in Dhammadūta work, lecturing widely in the U.S.A. and Canada, conducting meditation retreats, performing religious duties and - since 1973 - occupying in addition the position of Buddhist Chaplain at The American University, which involves counselling students interested in Buddhism and Buddhist meditation. He is thus particularly well qualified - in the presentation of his chosen subject - to do justice to the claims of both study (*pariyatti*) and practice (*paṭipatti*) as essential elements in the achievement of comprehension (*paṭivedha*).

From the beginning, the author rightly insists on the strict soteriological character of the Buddha's teaching, and on the central role of meditation practice in the pursuit of the path leading to the cessation of suffering. As is well known, there are two main types of Buddhist meditation techniques which, according to their effects, are described respectively as serenity (*samatha*) and insight (*vipassanā*) meditation, and the author endeavours to cover the essential ground of both. Hence the title of the book. However (as the subtitle immediately suggests) he has a particular interest in the states of mental absorption (*jhānas*) typical of serenity meditation, and it is to their detailed discussion as 'one of the most important aspects of Buddhist meditation encountered repeatedly in the scriptural texts

of early Buddhism' (p.xi) that the work is primarily devoted.

The author's specific purpose is, accordingly, defined as 'to examine the *jhānas* in order to determine their role in the Buddhist spiritual discipline', viewing them from the perspective of Theravāda Buddhism, 'probably the oldest continuous Buddhist tradition, maintaining the most accurate record of what the Buddha himself actually taught', and considering primarily their dynamic, psychological aspects: 'Our approach is psychological and analytical, our intent to look into the inner constitution of the *jhānas*, lay bare their inner dynamics, and see how they contribute to the purification and liberation of mind which is the goal of the Buddhist discipline' (p.xi).

For this purpose, Ven. Gunaratana draws on the Sutta Piṭaka of the Pāli Canon and the relevant Commentaries and Sub-commentaries, while a number of points are elucidated by reference to the first two books of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka (Dhammasaṅgaṇi and Vibhaṅga) and their Commentaries. A mainstay of the study, however, is Buddhaghosa's monumental classic, the Visuddhimagga ('Path of Purification'), an original work which, as Ven. Gunaratana recalls, 'orders the complex field of Buddhist meditation into an organic comprehensive whole' (p.xii), and has proved indispensable to all serious students of the subject ever since it was written in the fifth century A.C.

The sources of *The Path of Serenity and Insight* are thus impeccable, and the author's approach successfully combines a time-honoured methodology with a clear and businesslike form of exposition well adapted to the present times. The interested modern reader finds here a systematic, thorough introduction to the whole field of Buddhist mental culture and the progress of insight, structured in the traditional way to take account of the three main divisions of the Noble Eightfold Path - morality, concentration and wisdom - but focussing primarily (as is natural in a book on meditation) on the latter two.

This is a book, therefore, that will prove extremely useful to the interested student. The interest, however, must be genuine and include a readiness to some earnest effort on the part of the reader. In fact, notwithstanding the author's straightforward language and his gift for lucid presentation, the subject

itself is inherently complex and, in its details, not exactly familiar even to those who, while acknowledging the vital importance of meditation for the achievement of insight, do not happen to be experienced meditators, or scholars, or both. And yet a minimum of detailed analysis, as found here, is indispensable to a deeper understanding. That is to say that this is not so much a book for beginners but rather for those who, having already some elementary knowledge of and - preferably - practice in Buddhist meditation, are sufficiently motivated to make the effort to acquire a more comprehensive knowledge as a means to further progress. For those, this book will prove a helpful, informative guide.

After these general remarks on the scope and qualities of Ven. Gunaratana's study, I should like to give closer consideration to a central point in it. This is the author's definition of the exact degree of importance of serenity, and hence of the *jhānas*, within the overall scheme of Buddhist meditation, and their relation to the development of insight.

Everyone agrees that, by themselves, the *jhānas* do not lead to the supermundane (or, as the author prefers to call them, supramundane) states of stream entry and so on and to final deliverance, and that these vital attainments are only possible through the exercise of insight. At the same time, it is generally agreed that the development of serenity (or tranquillity) through the *jhānas* is helpful to the cultivation of insight. A mind rendered, as the suttas put it, 'malleable, wieldy and steady' by *jhāna* practice is clearly better prepared to exercise the penetrating, equanimous observation necessary to achieve insight. Hence the age-old tradition of combining both types of practice, especially by monks who had sufficient time and opportunity to do so.

The question on which opinions sometimes differ is whether the *jhānas* are an indispensable element or only an adjuvant - undoubtedly very valuable, but ultimately non-essential. The issue hinges on the degree of concentration needed for successful insight practice. If, as some authors have claimed, fixed concentration (*appanā samādhi*) is required, this implies, by definition, the attainment of full jhānic absorption, at least to the level

of the first *jhāna*. If, on the other hand, access concentration (*upacāra samādhi*) - or its equivalent, momentary concentration (*khaṇika samādhi*) - suffices for insight, then the *jhānas* are, equally clearly, not essential as a means of leading up to insight.

According to Ven. Gunaratana, the latter is, in fact, the case, and he states it with admirable clarity. At this point I should perhaps declare a natural readiness on my part to agree with the venerable author because this is also my own view of the matter (based not only on canonical literature and on the statements of meditation masters, but also on the simple reasoning that, in all accounts of combined *jhāna* and insight practice, the penetrative contemplation affording insight invariably takes place 'on emerging' from a *jhāna*, i.e. when the mind ceases to be in a condition of fixed concentration). But it will be best to let the author speak for himself:

'The Theravāda tradition divides meditators into two types according to the way they arrive at the supramundane path. One is the *samathayānika*, the practitioner who makes serenity his vehicle, the other is the *vipassanāyānika*, the practitioner who makes bare insight his vehicle. The former first develops serenity to the level of one of the eight attainments [i.e. *jhānas*] or their access, then uses that serenity as his base of concentration in order to develop insight. The latter, also known as the dry insight worker (*sukkhavipassaka*) proceeds directly to insight-contemplation as a concomitant of his contemplation without initially developing serenity to the level of *jhānic* intensity' (pp.212-13).

In both cases, the concentration relevant to insight development is of the so-called momentary kind:

'Momentary concentration arises in the *samathayānika* yogin simultaneously with his post-*jhānic* attainment of insight, but for the *vipassanāyānika* it develops naturally and spontaneously in the course of his insight practice without his having to fix the mind upon a single exclusive object' (p.152)

One should not be misled by the term 'momentary' used to describe this all important form of concentration:

'Despite its name, momentary concentration does not signify a single moment of concentration amidst a current of distracted thoughts. Rather, it denotes a dynamic concentration which flows from object to object in the ever-changing flux of phenomena, retaining a constant degree of intensity and collectedness sufficient to purify the mind of the hindrances' (p.152)

If the issue is so clear, why has it been (and, in some quarters, still is) a matter for argument? Simply, says the venerable author, because of a confusion between mundane (*lokiya*) and supra-mundane (*lokuttara*) *jhānic* states:

'The key to resolving this controversy [as to whether or not the *jhānas* are needed for reaching the supra-mundane paths] we found to be the distinction, implicit in the suttas and made explicit in the Abhidhamma and commentaries, between mundane and supramundane *jhāna*. Mundane *jhāna* is the most eminent type of concentration, but its attainment is not indispensable for all meditators in order to reach the paths and fruits... For meditators of both vehicles, however, [i.e. *samathayānika* and *vipassanāyānika*] *jhāna* is attained when they reach the supramundane paths and fruits. The paths and fruits, according to the Pali texts, always occur at a level of *jhānic* absorption and thus are considered forms of *jhāna*. Since to reach deliverance all practitioners have to pass through the same paths and fruits regardless of their means of approach, *jhāna* of the supramundane kind enters into the experience of every meditator who arrives at the path... Thus the answer to the question whether *jhāna* is needed to reach *nibbana* is clear, settled by the recognition of two kinds of *jhāna*: mundane *jhāna* is helpful but not absolutely necessary, supramundane *jhāna* is essential but does not necessarily presuppose the mundane. It

results from insight either alone or in combination with mundane *jhāna*' (pp.212-13).

This conclusion, fully documented and discussed in the body of the work, makes excellent sense and is, in my view, a major contribution to the disposal of a largely unnecessary dispute. We should all be grateful to the Venerable Gunaratana for it. One word of warning: the distinction between mundane and supra-mundane *jhānas* should not be confused (as the writer of the blurb on the dustjacket flap of the book does) with the distinction between the four (or five, according to classification) fine-material *jhānas* (*rūpajhānas*) and the four immaterial ones (*ārūpapas*). All eight (or nine) *jhānas* are mundane exercises in serenity, not attainments of paths and fruits. On the other hand, whenever a meditator, through insight, attains one of the four paths and its corresponding fruit, that attainment occurs at a *jhānic* level of absorption - those are supramundane *jhānas*. May we all hopefully progress towards them, with the help of subtle yet sensible studies like the present one.

Amadeo Solé-Leris

The Way of Buddhist Meditation. Serenity and Insight according to the Pali Canon. Kheminda Thera. Lake House, Colombo 1982. xiv, 66 pp. For free distribution.

This is a learned attempt to prove from scriptural and commentarial sources that (p.62): '*jhāna* cannot be discarded from the course of training laid down by the Buddha if the proper end of that training, deliverance from suffering, is to be achieved. For the attainment of *jhāna* is a necessary condition for the development of that insight which will blossom into the supramundane wisdom of the noble path.' This is in opposition to the now widely-held view that *jhāna* is not essential for this purpose, and to the view expressed in the other books considered by this reviewer in this issue. The matter is of more than academic interest, since there are many today - some in the West - who are undertaking the bhikkhu training under teachers who do not hold Kheminda's view, and it seems very clear that some of them have made remarkable progress despite this.

\* The Buddha, it appears, nowhere stated that enlightenment

can be attained without *jhāna*. However, it is equally true that he nowhere declared *jhāna* to be essential: the key text, the Satipatthāna Sutta, certainly says no such thing, and Kheminda is hard put to it to extract any clear statement to that effect from the Commentaries. The *jhānas*, or something very like them, were known before the Buddha's enlightenment. This fact would explain why, in the context of his time, he laid so much stress on them: they were a vehicle ready to hand, as they certainly are not for most people, even in the East, today. But we may suppose that he introduced a new factor - mindfulness - into the third and fourth *jhānas*, and it is this factor, rather than *jhāna* itself, that is essential for enlightenment. What would also seem to be needed is a degree of concentration in which the well-known five hindrances are absent. This is the state called in the Commentaries *upacāra samādhi* or 'access concentration'. From here, it seems, one can go forward with or without *jhāna*, but with mindfulness, to achieve the vital breakthrough.

It is not perhaps irrelevant to mention that Ven. Kheminda is also the author of an earlier booklet, *Path Fruit and Nibbāna* (Colombo 1965), in which he sets forth some rather unconventional views on a different matter. There, he was perhaps in a minority of one - in the present case he is in a larger minority, but still a minority. However, in the final analysis, meditators will find out for themselves the correct answer. It is not impossible that some have already done so.

Maurice Walshe

The Seven Stages of Purification and the Insight Knowledges. Matara Sri Nānārāma Mahāthera. Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy 1983. xii, 82 pp. \$5.00.

This is the English translation of the gist of a series of talks given by a distinguished Sinhalese meditation master. Their basis is the sevenfold scheme of the Visuddhimagga, which goes back to the Rathavinīta Sutta (M 24). Of the author it is said in the translator's preface: 'Although he himself specialized in the Burmese Vipassanā methods and is able to speak with authority on the subject, he does not confine himself to the 'pure insight' approach.'

The contents closely follow the principal sections of the Visuddhimagga, but this is not just another rehash (as can sometimes be seen), because the exposition is informed with the infectious enthusiasm of one who has trodden the path and now delights in guiding the steps of others along it. It is not for this reviewer to speculate on what stage on that path the venerable teacher has reached, and he of course would not be allowed to tell us even if he wished. One can simply say that his pupils are certainly fortunate to have such a teacher.

His enthusiasm finds its fullest expression in Appendix 1, *The Call to the Meditative Life* (pp.71ff), from which I will just quote the beginning: 'The intrinsic value of the life of a meditative monk is beyond estimation. There are various marvellous ways of life in the world. But there can hardly be a more marvellous way of life than that of a meditative monk. When you come to think about this, you have reason to congratulate yourself on taking up this way of life.' He then lists the four stages in the life of a meditative monk:

- (1) The occasion of 'going forth' from the household life;
- (2) The preliminary stage in his meditative life when he starts turning his mind in solitude with the help of a meditation-subject;
- (3) The encountering of dangers in the course of meditation in solitude;
- (4) The stage of enjoying the results of his meditation.

Elsewhere (p.47) he quotes verse 373 of the Dhammapada: 'To that monk of serene mind who has entered an empty house and seen with right insight the Dhamma, there arises a sublime delight in transcending the human plane' - incidentally a verse that one does not often see quoted.

Finally, this would be an excellent book to place in the hands of anyone who has developed doubts in consequence of reading Ven. Kheminda's booklet reviewed above - or various other works one could think of.

Maurice Walshe

*The Twilight Language*. R.S. Bucknell and M. Stuart-Fox. Curzon Press, London 1986. xiv, 233 pp. + 8 pp. of b/w illustrations. £12.50.

This kind of book is not easy to review as it contains a wide range of subject matter dealing as the subtitle - *Explorations in Buddhist Meditation and Symbolism* - suggests, with matters of practice. The joint authors have had some experience in this, as the first of them was a Buddhist monk for some time in Thailand, while the second has studied Zen in Japan and Korea.

Their examination of Buddhist meditation has thus some basis of experience, though from the thoughts that emerge from this work one would think they had never known the blessing of working with enlightened teachers, otherwise the results would have been quite different. Their work is surely an exploration but of course in attempting to explore new territory it is quite easy to stray off, get lost or wander round in circles. To begin with, they have tried to combine, not all that successfully, an exploration of symbolism found in the Pāli Canon (where it is rather limited) with that contained in the thousand-year later jungle of the tantras. Their remarks on a meditative 'elite' among Buddhist monks and nuns, those who were able to flesh out the bare bones of the Buddha's words recorded in the suttas, by their own practice and attainment, are surely correct. It was (and still is) the Sangha that kept Buddhist practice alive, a practice which has in some obscure ways linked together earlier and later Buddhist traditions. The authors, though, have developed the idea, developed the view one might say, that there is one underlying system of practice, from the days of the Pāli Canon right up to the time of the tantras. It begins to look as though, when this work is examined closely, the 'facts' have to fit the framework which they have set up.

This brings us to examine that framework in outline, an examination that reveals more of intellectual concern for systematization than deep faith to practice. However, as the authors remark, one cannot decide what to practise if one has no idea of which direction that practice will lead. Their examination begins by taking as the norm of Buddhist practice the Tenfold - including right insight (*ñāṇa*) and right liberation - rather than the Eight-



fold Path. This seems somewhat eccentric as the Tenfold Path is mentioned very rarely in the Pāli suttas, whereas the Eightfold Path is commonly found. Then follows the identification of *sammā-ñāṇa* (right insight, according to their terminology) with the Three Knowledges (*tevijjā*).

It must be said at once, now that the train has begun to veer off its tracks, that it is incorrect to identify insight (if by this one means *vipassanā*) completely with the Three Knowledges. Though the Buddha certainly taught that his Enlightenment (looked at in one way) was of the Three Knowledges, yet we can know by comparison with its description elsewhere as the Six Direct Knowledges (*chalabhiññā*) that the first two, or five knowledges, are obtained from *samatha* (calm) practice and only the one, in both cases, arises from insight. It is therefore wrong to equate *sammā-ñāṇa* (best to call it Right Knowledge) with insight (*vipassanā*) that arises from the investigation of the three characteristics - impermanence, *dukkha* and not-self.

Apart from this particular point there is a more general one that arises in connection with this and other 'correspondences' made throughout this book. The authors do not seem to have grasped the point that the Buddha did not teach a system. His followers have surely systematized his words many times, beginning with the Abhidhamma, but his concern was not to construct a system but rather to teach the Dhamma in such a way that it led to liberation in his listeners' hearts, liberation at least from some of life's burdens, from all of them in those who were prepared. This means that correspondences and identifications have to be done most cautiously and one can only be fairly sure of the validity if one has textual support for so doing. So then, the Buddha sometimes taught a Tenfold, sometimes an Eightfold Path - but no deep meanings should be delved out of this!

We have records in the suttas of enlightened monks, arahants, some of whom possessed the various knowledges in abundance, some who had none at all. Therefore, in setting out to prove that the way to enlightenment is lost now (which is what the authors do) because there are no longer any methods to attain Recollection of Past Lives, or the knowledge of Arising and Passing (according to kamma), is right off the track. These two knowledges occur

quite naturally (and as a bypath) to some meditators, and to others they do not occur. This will depend very largely on whether one's own practice is more concerned with calm or with insight. It may be added that the 'method' of attaining the recollection of past lives in the Visuddhimagga is hardly convincing, and coming from such an authority - a scholar not a meditator may well be doubted.

This brings us to the question of authorities, for the two authors quote very widely though sometimes strangely. Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga seems accepted by them as an authority on meditation simply because it is a large and venerable treatise. It is quite correct to have doubts about this 'Path of Purification' due to its scholastic origin; on the other hand, they have not quoted from what is probably the largest corpus of meditative literature translated from Thai: the various books and talks in book form of the Forest Acharns in N.E. Thailand. Acharn Chah gets one mention but the far greater literature emanating from Acharns Mahā Boowa, Lee and Tait, all of it in the form of free books, is not mentioned at all. One may surmise that the authors had no connection with this forest tradition - a pity, for it is surely the most vital of all meditative teachings in Thailand. The only connection seems to have been with the 'Fifth Group' centre of watered-down Burmese 'vipassanā' in Wat Mahāthāt (Mahādhātu), Bangkok.

To return to the authors' attempt at finding a 'system' of meditation which, it seems, they hope will be valid for all people all the time. They do not allow for the extraordinary differences between people as, by contrast, the Buddha did by teaching the Dhamma in so many different ways. The Buddha has taught for instance that it is possible for experts in calm meditation to progress all through the *jhānas* and formless attainments, enter cessation and then on leaving it attain enlightenment, though Buddhaghosa does not emphasize this at all and insists there must be *vipassanā* before an enlightened state, but our authors are narrower still and insist (note 27 on Ch.III) that the destruction of the *āsavas* immediately after *nirodha* (cessation) represents a textual corruption'. So much for views.

These dominate the discussion of Insight Meditation in Ch.IV

where, besides some wise remarks on pp.50-1 on the dilemma faced by a meditator, the authors have thrown in rather a strange assortment of quotations to support their case with such disparate figures as Christmas Humphreys, Krishnamurti and David-Neel appearing. It is a wonder, with so many good books on Tibetan Buddhism and Zen, that the authors have not quoted from more modern works and translations. Some steps are outlined here as being of value to insight: retracing, observation of linking and awareness. The authors say that the first of these is not found in the Pāli suttas but it is mentioned very clearly in the Vitakka-sañthāna Sutta (M 20). One wonders whether, for this is not clear, they have experienced all that they talk of in this chapter or whether at least some of this material is conceptual knowledge.

Later in the book they go on to fit the five knowledges of the tantras into the stages of meditation 'discovered' by them. Again one wonders if they had taken teachings from living Tibetan masters whether the results of their 'explorations' would have been different. Rather, they would have been.

There is no room here to discuss many points raised in this book, some valid and some speculative. It only remains to say that this book is one which profits from close reading and much note-taking. There are good things to note there scattered among much other material which is termed exploratory at best and speculative at worst.

*Phra Khantipālo*

The Two Traditions of Meditation in Ancient India. Johannes Bronkhorst. (Alt- und Neu-Indische Studien 28, ed. by Seminar für Kultur und Geschichte Indiens, University of Hamburg.) Franz Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden GmbH, Stuttgart 1986. xii, 145 pp. DM 36.00.

The author is one of those young, agile scholars who suffer under the present 'recession' in academic appointments. His published research papers show a solid philological background and a wide acquaintance with primary sources and scholarly literature in the field of Indian religions. A comparable publication record would, twenty years ago, have secured without problems a permanent

became the core of the 'authentic' Buddhist meditation to which was later added the practice of mindfulness (*sati*) borrowed perhaps from outside movements (e.g. Jainism) and originally probably directed only towards the body.

(2) 'Main stream' meditation was the ascetic effort to annihilate the consequence of all one's former actions, totally suspend all new activity, bring one's mind to a complete standstill and stop all bodily processes. It was exemplified by Jainism in which it often culminated in starvation to death, whilst all its elements can also be found in some Hindu texts. Its basic idea is preserved in Patañjali's Yoga Sūtras where yoga is defined as the 'suppression of the activities of the mind'. Patañjali also preserves the 'main stream' feature of stopping bodily functions in his definition of *pranāyāma* as 'cutting off the movement of breathing out and breathing in'. There is a strong element of asceticism in 'main stream' meditation, but it also has its methods of 'pure meditation', although even these are geared to the achievement of complete motionless of the body and mind resulting in physical death.

Generally speaking, 'main stream' meditation always has an ascetic streak whilst Buddhist meditation is a happy affair, accompanied as it is by joy (*pīti*) up to the second *jhāna* and bliss (*sukha*) up to the third, to be replaced by equanimity in the fourth *jhāna*. However, there were developments. The Bhagavad-gītā advocates disinterested activity in the 'discipline of action' (*karmanyoqa*) and asserts that liberation is achieved through getting to know one's inner self, which remains unaffected by action. There is the way to liberation through the 'discipline of knowledge' (*jñānayoqa*) which stems from popular *sāṅkhya* (much in evidence in the Mahābhārata), but it has its precursor already in the Upaniṣadic salvation through the knowledge of the *ātman* which is unchangeable and uninvolved in any action. The tradition of strict asceticism did not die out, however, and continued in the trend which resulted in the elaboration of Hatha Yoga whose mastery was thought by some to be a precondition for knowledge, because knowledge could not on its own lead to the goal.

There was also mutual influence between the two traditions. Buddhist influence on the Hindu 'main stream' meditation is noti-

ceable in the Mahābhārata when it mentions a 'fourfold *dhyānayoga*' in some Yoga Upaniṣads, and particularly in Patañjali's description of stages of *samādhi* containing elements such as happiness (*ānanda*) which the author regards as contrary to the 'main stream' definition of yoga with which the Yoga Sūtra begins.

Much more space is given to the evidence of the 'main stream' influence on Buddhist meditation: Devadatta's five demands, some forceful methods of restraining the mind and particularly *arūpa* meditation practices. The *brahma vihāras* have, obviously, to be regarded as also originally non-Buddhist; the author, surprisingly, assumes for them an historical connection with the reflection on infinity in Jainism.

Other instances of 'main stream' influence on Buddhism are, according to the author, the tendency to postpone full liberation until after death, on the one hand, and the use of the idea of liberating insight on the other. The former concerns the problem of 'two Nirvāṇas'. There is a tendency to regard only the one 'without a remainder' as the true liberation, and this is 'main stream' influence because in the 'main stream' tradition ascetic practices secured liberation only after death. The influence in the context of liberating insight can be seen in the Buddhist imitation of the 'main stream' tradition by trying to give it a specifically Buddhist content: when the possibility of liberation in life was accepted in the 'main stream', it was by way of the Upaniṣadic insight into the unchanging nature of the soul (*ātman*). In Buddhism, however, liberating insight had originally not spelled out content as the Buddha would not talk about the soul. Thus the Buddhists varied the content of their concept of liberating insight according to what was at one time or another considered most essential to the teachings of the Buddha: first the Four Noble Truths, later the grasping of Dependent Origination, then again the doctrine of *puṅgala-nairātmya* or of the Three Signs applied to the *skandhas*. Originally, however, only the destruction of the *āsavas* sufficed for liberation.

In order to prove that the Buddhist *jhānic* meditation did not exist before the historical Buddha invented it, the author presents a complicated argument trying to show that the Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad (BU), or at least some relevant parts of it in

appointment for a young scholar. Under the present conditions he has had, I understand, to put up with temporary appointments and limited research grants, one of which enabled him to write the present study. For most of the time he has been attached to the Kern Institute (the Indian Studies department of Leiden University) and I see him named as Secretary of the Organizing Committee of the VIIth World Sanskrit Conference which took place in Leiden last August.

The book is written in a somewhat undisciplined style stemming apparently from a frame of mind brought about by involvement in specialised research projects with not much regard for setting them into a wider context, which is presupposed rather than spelled out. There is also a lack of basic definitions and even of sufficiently clear explanations of the author's intentions, and no attempt has been made by the author to present his results in a well arranged or systematic way. Even the Introduction is a rather bewildering mass of statements and assertions which become clearer only in retrospect, while his Conclusion is nowhere near a succinct summary of his investigations. It becomes clear only about half way through the book what the author actually means by the 'two traditions of meditation', since he never really offers a precise description. On a second reading of the book, one starts forming a picture of the author's thesis and also appreciating the value of his innumerable references and cross-references to texts and other scholars' works. However, the book would clearly benefit from a complete re-writing.

The two traditions of meditation are, in the author's terminology, (1) Buddhist meditation and (2) 'main stream' meditation.

(1) Buddhist meditation was the invention of the Buddha and he discovered it when still a bodhisatta: having unsuccessfully tried to reach liberation by various other (as we eventually discover, 'main stream') methods, he recalled a spontaneous early childhood experience of (what he later termed) the first *jhāna* and realised that this was the road to enlightenment. He was now able to enter this first *jhāna* again and continue through the second and third *jhānas* into the fourth one. From there he then succeeded in achieving the total destruction of 'intoxicants' (*āsavas*) thus gaining final freedom. This procedure then

which a form of Buddhist-type meditation is referred to, must be post-Buddhist. He further brushes aside references to previous Buddhas, and the idea of Pratyekabuddhas (who as a kind of *buddha* would have to have reached liberation through the same form of jhānic meditation as the historical Buddha) is regarded by him as an importation from the 'main stream' tradition, since they were steeped in ascetic rather than jhānic practice.

The author is of the opinion that he has presented a coherent theory of the two distinct traditions of meditation in ancient India on the basis of philological research. Further understanding of the issue would require a different approach and he indicates that he may return to the theme. He thinks that his theory explains 'the contradictions in the Buddhist canon' and suggests that the only constructive criticism of it would be to present an even better theory.

Without taking up the author's challenge to present a better theory, which would hardly be possible in a review article, there are a few points which can be raised to throw some doubt on his method and theory. First there is his concept of 'authentic' Buddhist meditation. It is difficult to accept the author's thesis that its *jhāna/dhyāna* component was the Buddha's invention since the Buddhist sources themselves do not make that claim. The sections on *dhyāna* in the BU are rather primitive or archaic and do not show any trace of the developed systematic form which the Buddha gave to jhānic meditation. If Buddhism had influenced this Upaniṣad it would have been noticeable in those sections, but the concept of *dhyāna* in them does not betray any Buddhist influence. I cannot decide at the moment whether the sentence in BU 4, 4, 23 '...having become calm, subdued, quiet, patiently enduring, concentrated, one sees the soul in oneself' - which is reminiscent of Buddhist formulations - is really a post-Buddhist interpolation, as the author tries to prove, or just early evidence of developing meditational procedures shared by various movements in which Buddhism played its part (as I am inclined to believe), but the case for regarding whole important sections of the BU as post-Buddhist is highly unconvincing and would need much more analysis than the author offers. It would further necessitate a thorough analysis of the Chāndogya Upaniṣad which has much in common with the BU and would also have to be proved

to be post-Buddhist, at least in parts.

The author quite unjustly ignores the whole development of the dhyānic trend in Vedic literature. If his method is philological he should have given some attention to the Vedic concept of *dhī*, the predecessor of the Upaniṣadic and Buddhist *dhyāna* (or at least utilised Gonda's investigations on the subject in *The Vision of the Vedic Poets*, The Hague 1963, to which he does not refer). In any event, dhyānic meditation is not an exclusively Buddhist method, and although it was probably given its systematic shape and contents by the Buddha himself, it cannot have had its origin solely with him.

Moreover, not even the second component of the author's 'authentic' Buddhist meditation, the destruction of the *āśavas*, can be construed as purely Buddhist and without any previous history. Three are usually mentioned: *kāmāsava*, *bhavāsava* and *avijjāsava* (intoxication with sensory desire, with existence and with ignorance). The destruction of desire and existence is the goal of 'main stream' asceticism even by the author's own account in the appropriate chapter in his book, and the destruction of ignorance can be seen as equivalent to winning knowledge or, in the case of the 'main stream' tradition, insight into the unchanging nature of *ātman* as again quoted by the author himself. The question of whether the concept of liberating insight itself is of Buddhist or 'main stream' origin does not seem to have been resolved by the author, but his contention that at least its content as given by the Buddha is solely his invention cannot be upheld. Again, the Buddha obviously utilised and developed in his own ingenious way the elements of śrāmanist practice and brought them to fruition.

While the 'purely Buddhist' elements of the author's idea of Buddhist meditation appear on closer scrutiny to have pre-Buddhist roots, I find his suggestion that the practice of mindfulness was borrowed by Buddhism from outside movements, possibly from Jainism, most surprising. If anything it is the *satipatthāna* method of meditation which has been hailed within the Buddhist tradition as specific to it and devised by the Buddha himself. Its suggested Jain origin seems highly improbable and it is difficult to point to any other source outside Buddhism with respect to the origin of this practice. To decide the question, a thor-

oughly researched investigation is needed instead of a passing suggestion.

The author's concept of 'main stream' meditation is also rather dubious. He draws for it heavily on Jain sources which were redacted relatively late and are not, therefore, always very reliable, but what is quite clear from the early Buddhist and even Vedic sources is that there was at large at the time a very broad and variegated śrāmanist movement with a strong element of asceticism in it. Jainism was clearly a part of it in its pre-Mahāvīra time and the Bodhisatta himself was drawn into it when he turned to severe ascetic practices and was joined by five other ascetics of a similar kind who then became his first disciples after the Enlightenment. Thus we can say that Buddhism emerged from the same background as Jainism, but it became independent of it in a much more far-reaching way than Jainism on account of the ingenuity of the Buddha.

The components of 'pure meditation' and non-ascetic practices like the *brahma vihāras* and *arūpa* states do not really fit neatly into the author's concept of the predominantly ascetic 'main stream' tradition and this concept thus loses its validity, especially in the face of later developments in the *Bhagavadgītā*, *Yoga Sūtras* and *Vedānta*. Moreover, the author has not taken into account tantric developments, some of which are of great antiquity. In short, his thesis of two traditions of meditation in ancient India appears to be a gross simplification of the developments of meditational techniques. All the main traditions, whether Buddhist, Hindu or Jain, developed their systems from a common background of diverse trends and, despite differences in emphasis, concrete procedures and terminology, there are many overlaps between them and also mutual borrowings. Rather than devising even better theories than the one presented by the author it would be much more profitable to conduct further systematic research into and the presentation of the diverse ascetic, meditational and spiritual trends and techniques in ancient India and the way in which they interacted and developed over the centuries.

This criticism should not deter the reader from studying this valuable book. It raises many interesting side issues and is quite stimulating, instructive and helpful as a reference

work on certain topics. The author's research drive is admirable, only his conclusions appear less plausible and his style and presentation also leave something to be desired. To use the book, however, one must know it well since the index is somewhat inadequate.

Karel Werner

How to Meditate: a practical guide. Kathleen McDonald. Wisdom Publications, London 1985. 221 pp. including Appendix and Glossary. £4.95.

This is an excellent introduction to Buddhist meditational practice within the Tibetan tradition. It is written 'primarily for those who want to start practising' (p.7) but also provides a useful introduction to the role of meditation in Buddhism and its rationale in terms of Buddhist psychology. The author's intention as expressed in the Preface is to explain meditational techniques 'simply and clearly, without any technical language', and she succeeds admirably in this objective. The book is refreshingly readable with its short chapters and lucid style and a clarity which is not achieved at the expense of oversimplification. There are, for example, good basic explanations of the doctrine of emptiness, Tibetan physiology, the nature of consciousness, and the difference between 'stabilizing' and 'analytical' meditation and their interaction in practice.

The author was born in California and has been a Tibetan nun since 1974. Reading through the text one feels that she has developed a mature understanding of the Tibetan teachings without sacrificing her identity as a Westerner in the process. By respecting both cultures she is able to speak directly to the needs of her audience in an idiom which is both sympathetic and attractive. At one point (p.183) she describes a simplified form of visualisation exercise for those who are short of time 'or just lazy'. She also cautions the newcomer against boring others by talking too much about meditation or making big changes in lifestyle, behaviour or appearance (p.30).

There are six parts to the book in all. The first two explain the nature of meditation and give advice on how to conduct the practice and the types of obstacles which may be encountered.

The remaining four parts are devoted to different types of meditational exercises. Part 3 consists of meditations on the nature of the mind itself, focussing on its inherent purity and its continuity through different lifetimes. Part 4 concerns 'Analytical Meditations' on subjects such as emptiness, the benefits of human life, death and impermanence etc. There is also a useful discussion on how to deal with negative mental energy such as depression. Part 5 is devoted to the technique of visualisation and Part 6 to devotional practices. Finally, the Appendix contains the phonetics of prayers in Tibetan to accompany the devotional practices.

Despite its comparative brevity the book deals with all the major types of meditational practice, and there is an abundance of material for the newcomer to meditation to ponder over and hopefully put into practice. It would also be useful for the more experienced meditator who wishes to branch out and experiment with new techniques.

A further application would be as an introduction to the general ethos of Buddhism as a path of spiritual development. It certainly succeeds in showing that 'Buddhism is practical and down-to-earth, not a dry philosophy or an exotic cult' (p.7). Highly recommended.

*Damien Keown*

A Meditator's Diary. A Western woman's unique experience in Thailand monasteries. Jane Hamilton-Merritt. Unwin Paperbacks, George Allen & Unwin, London 1986. 157 pp. £3.95.

This book, first published in 1976 by Souvenir Press, London, is now reprinted as a paperback. One is tempted to be severe, and wonder why. It is a slight work, and of very little interest to anyone seriously concerned with meditation or with Buddhism generally.

This was already pointed out in no uncertain terms in Mrs Quittner's typically outspoken review of the original edition (*Buddhist Quarterly*, Vol.9, 1, 1976), which deflated the title's claim to uniqueness and exposed the author's shaky grasp of such basic subjects as the Middle Way (p.25 of the book), and the difference between *nīvaraṇa* (hindrance) and Nirvana (p.48).

This latter confusion might charitably be glossed over as a misprint but, if this is so, it could easily have been corrected in the reprinting. Perhaps the author did not read Mrs Quittner's review. But the publishers certainly did, as evidenced by their managing to extract from it, by skilful fragmentary quotation, what reads like a wholehearted commendation, now printed on the paperback's back cover. Their technique is worth examining as an example of the blurbwriter's art.

After castigating the author's superficiality and inaccuracies, Mrs Quittner concluded her review on a milder note:

'She [the author] does, however, excel in her description of the wat itself and this is a fine and sensitive piece of writing. There are also some exquisite drawings by Sanya Wongaram, an exceedingly talented Thai artist, well on his way to world-wide fame' (my emphases).

By selecting only the emphasized words, this becomes, on the present back cover: 'fine and sensitive piece of writing ... exquisite drawings' - which suggests that the whole book was being praised as 'fine and sensitive'. Apart from rather cavalierly ignoring Mr Wongaram's authorship of the drawings - in fact, he is not given credit for them anywhere in this reprint, which certainly will not help him on his way to world-wide fame, but might give him grounds for suing the publishers.

But to return to the present review. Recalling the Buddha's injunction to avoid *pharusa vācā* - harsh or unkind speech -, I have endeavoured to read this re-issue of the book with more modest expectations.

Taken as what it really is, i.e. a factual journalistic account of a strictly limited experience, it is a pleasing enough example of what the French, with their flair for exact terminology, call 'tourisme culturel'. It is written in clear, unpretentious prose (which does, indeed, grow quite evocative in the description of the *wat*), and is thoroughly disarming in its straightforward reporting of the author's attempts at meditation practice, her setbacks and small triumphs. On the evidence, one does not feel she gained any very deep insight into the essence of meditation. There is a certain, typically Western, stress on its mentally therapeutic effects rather than on its enlighten-

ment value, an involvement with the periphery uninformed by an awareness of the centre.

At the level of anecdote, the closing chapter contains a lively illustration of the usefulness of *ānāpānasati*, mindfulness of breathing, in overcoming fear if you are stuck on a small plane caught up in a major storm (pp.141-2). It also offers some, by and large sensible, advice to would-be meditators. One would, however, take issue with some of the statements, such as that 'five to ten minutes a day [of concentration exercises] in the initial stages, that is sufficient' (p.140). This simply glosses over the difficulties and ignores the paramount importance of earnest perseverance and real effort. Those token 'five to ten minutes a day' are more likely to be a mere alibi for superficiality than a means of progress.

In case the publishers of any further reprints scan this review, too, for quotable snippets, may I beg them at the same time to correct the *nīvarana*/Nirvana howler on p.48 and, while they are about it, also the misuse of 'samma vada' for *sammā vācā* on p.152, and the consistent misspelling of *dukkha*, which is spelt 'dukka' throughout.

Amadeo Solé-Leris

The Forest Monks of Sri Lanka: An Anthropological and Historical Study. Michael Carrithers. Oxford University Press, Delhi 1983. xii, 306 pp. Rs 145, £17.00.

Like the nuns, the existence of whom many would like to wish away (!), the *vanavāsins* or Sinhalese forest-dwelling monks are barely recognised as a separate group within the indigenous Sangha and are hardly known amongst members of the Buddhist community as a whole. Indeed, a predominant section of the still-influential Order would no doubt prefer to minimise the importance of the non-village bhikkhus because of the embarrassment caused by their way of life, which directly contradicts the easy-going routine adopted by an overwhelming majority of *sāmaṇeras-cum-bhikkhus* who continue to be accepted for ordination and training well below the age of discretion.

Hitherto, only the anthropologist Nur Yalman has written professionally on the ascetic phenomenon. Otherwise, the only

relevant English-language articles seen by the reviewer are those by Ria Kloppenborg 'Ascetic Movements in the History of Theravāda Buddhism' (*The Young Buddhist 1981*, Singapore Buddha-Yana Organisation), B.P. Kirthisinghe 'Sri Lanka's Salgala Meditative Caves' (*Buddhist Quarterly II*, 4, London Buddhist Vihāra 1979) and L.G. Hewage 'Meditation Centres and Hermitages in Sri Lanka' (*World Fellowship of Buddhists Review*, Bangkok, April-June 1983).

The study under review, therefore, represents the first full-length work on the subject and thereby corrects a serious deficiency in our knowledge of Buddhist practice within the traditional framework. Yet the ascetic movement in Sri Lanka, whose *raison d'être* is based on Dhammapada 1, is little more than a century old. Following the rediscovery, revival and reform of this way of life, which gained particular impetus between Independence and Buddha Jayanti Year (1948-56), there are now 600 bhikkhus living in 150 hermitages (*aranya senāsanaya*) throughout the Island.

At the outset the author (an American lecturer in Anthropology at Durham) outlines both negative and positive motives determining eremetical renunciation. The latter are summarised in the statement, 'to become a forest monk is a heroic and laudable choice, a destiny that appeals to romance and high hopes rather than to misery and desperation to escape. Furthermore, it is a motive which is hidden, though hidden rather on the purloined-letter principle by being implicit and pervasive. Even more than the canonical literature, Sinhalese literature is completely suffused with the light of this gentle courage of renunciation, the highest possible virtue' (p.15). The keynotes to such an existence are undoubtedly simplicity, certainty, order (= 'stability' in the Benedictine sense?) and peace of mind - as opposed to what William James termed 'the discordancy and brutality of secular existence'.

Chapter 2, on 'European Monks', deals mainly with Nyanatiloka who was, incidentally, given a state funeral in 1957. His unpublished autobiographical sketch is probably unknown outside the Forest Hermitage, Kandy, and the pioneer extracts in translation are, therefore, all the more welcome, putting his adolescent monastic aspiration into proper perspective. (Two points worth noting: p.32 - *The Critique of Pure Reason* is by Kant, not Des-

cartes; p.34 note - one is surprised at the author's inability to secure a copy of Subhadra's *Buddhist Catechism* since a new edition was produced by the Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy 1970 and reprinted in 1982).

The next chapter, 'The Path of Paññā', constitutes, as its title suggests, a disquisition on the practical importance of the Visuddhimagga, centred on the three principles of *yoniso manasikāra* ('psychological pragmatism'), *visuddhi* and *viveka* ('isolation'). It is, of course, well-known that Buddhaghosa's manual has a reputation exceeded only by the Buddhavacana and is the textbook par excellence in the Theravāda world. What is not explained is the seeming lack of appeal of the Vimuttimagga: 'tainted' with being 'unorthodox' (i.e. stemming from the Abhayagirivihāra as opposed to the 'established' Mahāvihāra in mediaeval Ceylon), it is, notwithstanding, less scholastic and more practice-orientated and would be expected to have a more enthusiastic reception among the 'unorthodox' *vanavāsins*. In describing the education of a pupil of Puvakdaṇḍāvē Paññānanda (the nineteenth century founder of the oldest continually occupied hermitages - at Baṭuviṭa and Kirinda), Carrithers makes these pertinent observations: 'First, the education itself is not esoteric, handed down in secret from teacher to pupil, but is the common and relatively accessible property of anyone who cares to learn Pali. (Indeed, many laymen became scholars, being taught in the traditional way in the monastery and then acting as teachers to monks.) Second, the education of the pupil is necessarily an affair of more than one teacher: this is in keeping with the principle of consensus which requires that a monk be ordained by at least five others. A consequence of this is that what is learned is visibly tested for the pupil by the teaching and behaviour of his different teachers in different circumstances, and it is this which makes the tradition supple and living. Third, the tradition thus handed on is explicitly learned, an affair of many years and a great deal of application. This emphasis on learning constitutes one of the factors supporting a successful forest-dwelling movement. And indeed the reputation for strictness of the whole Rāmañña Nikāya, whether composed of village- or forest-dwellers, was founded on its highest educational standard' (p.83).

In Chapter 6 we come across the founder of the modern *tāpasa-yō* movement at the turn of the century, Subodhānanda, who was residing near Talaṅgama, seceded from the Siyam Nikāya in order to concentrate on the achievement of strict purity of conduct, not, be it noted, as preparatory to meditation (which, strange as it may seem, is not emphasised), but wholly as an end in itself. This was a result of a preoccupation with ritual purity (- derived from ancestral practices in pre-Buddhist India?). By Buddha Jayanti Year several temples adhering to the founder's method had been established in the Kurunegala area. Despite vociferous propagandising by a hard core of half a dozen bhikkhus, however, the movement remained insignificant and uninfluential.

A more spectacular, yet even more ephemeral, manifestation was the following of Tāpasa Himi (Chapter 7) from Vābada. This movement flourished 1952-4 and, by flaunting the *sekkhiyā* rules of deportment, was deemed anti-social by a majority of the laity. Whatever motivation was involved and whoever the sponsors (- the malicious detected Christian missionary machinations), the movement may be regarded as representing the lunatic fringe of Buddhist asceticism.

In Chapter 8 the author reverts to a description of more 'orthodox' ascetic protagonists, those 'who took their inspiration from the Jātakas perhaps, but their organization from the Vinaya and their practice from the *Visuddhimagga*' (p.139). At the 1971 Census, 600 such bhikkhus were recorded compared to 20,000 *grama-vāsins* ('village monks'). The former category took a stand on the all-important *uposatha* ceremony which was intended to ensure the personal purity of each member of the Sangha, thus 'the fundamentalist Sangha is founded on individual self-cultivation even in its organizational structure' (p.143). Attention is next focused on Asmaṇḍalē Ratanapāla who was ordained and trained in Kandy, then at the Vidyodaya Pirivena, before residing at the Sugatabimbārāmaya in his home village in 1930. He is the only Sinhalese bhikkhu to have left an autobiography, *Magē Jīvita Caritaya*, for the guidance of his pupils. In 1938 he took the decisive step of embracing the *vanavāsin* way of life under Kehelpannala Sumana and, after staying at various places, finally settled in caves near Asmaṇḍala where a well-established centre



now exists.

The history of the indigenous Sangha is then cursorily examined (Chapter 9), especially in the context of how monarchical intervention affected subsequent developments and attitudes. During the 1930s, Kuhulnāpē Dēvarakkhita (a *vihārādhipati* near Gampaha) took as his model the reformist Sangharāja Mahākassapa of Dimbulāgala who served under Parakkamabāhu the Great in the twelfth century. Although not an ascetic in the usual mould, Dēvarakkhita was instrumental in founding the Salgala hermitage (supported in this venture by the future first premier of independent Ceylon, D.S. Senanayake). The next personality to consider is a pupil of Dēvarakkhita, Vaturuvilē Nānānanda. He had fallen out with Ratanapāla over the issue of village Sangha practices and, being less inflexible, was more aware of the historical mission of the Sangha as a cultural entity. He met fellow aspirants to the forest life, although such tended to be incapable of intellectual work or were not in line to inherit a village temple (- a pernicious custom in any rural society where the extended family holds sway). He took up residence at a new ārāma near Kalugala but also settled in the hills of Madunāgala. The process culminated in the establishment of 'The Vaturuvila Hermitage Centre and Srī Nānānanda Forest-dwelling Seminary' with accomodation for sixty sāmaṇeras and, in 1968, his recognition as *nāyaka* of the 'vanavāsi nikāya'. He was thus enabled to perform ordinations without recourse to the Kandyan Siyam Nikāya establishment, although both fraternities are the exclusive preserve of the Goyigama caste.

The final section of this book investigates in depth the most serious and successful ascetic grouping - the Srī Kalyāṇi Yogāśrama Saṁsthāva - and its founder, Kaḍavadduva Jinavamsa. An infant prodigy, he was ordained in the Rāmañña Nikāya and soon displayed authority, initiative and intelligence. He preached and wrote on the need for Sangha reform and met up with Mātara Nānārāma who had cultivated his own practice in isolation (and was later to write on the 'Tradition of Insight' - *Vidarśanā Parapura*, 1961. This is the same bhikkhu whose account of *The Seven Stages of Purification and the Insight Knowledges* is reviewed above. The latter was invited to become the main meditation teacher at the Saṁsthāva which was initially based near Tissamahā-

rāma (1950-1). Within ten years the optimum number of 100 bhikkhus had been accepted for training in meditation and standardised devotional practices at the forty centres under Jinavamsa's nominal control and in concert with a new co-worker, A. Ratanapāla. The former has the 'gift... to make the forest life seem a series not of prohibitions but of opportunities for liberation...' (p.220). It is significant, in a defeatist era where ultimate release is all but dismissed as impossible (in Sri Lanka) that the sign-board at Jinavamsa's training centre bears the almost provocative legend 'Buddhism still leads to Nirvāṇa' (p.222).

The main problem, an insuperable barrier some might argue, lay in reviving the meditation tradition which had been broken by centuries of (South Indian) Chola invasion and European colonisation and Christian missionary activity. 'The word for meditation in Pali and Sinhalese is *bhāvanā*, whose meaning might best be glossed as 'cultivation' or 'self-training'. As such it does not mean - I cannot emphasize this too strongly - merely sitting in solitude and engaging in some special form of internal contemplation, although that is the image which the word, like English 'meditation', calls up in the mind of the average Sinhalese. (It is suggested by the sitting Buddha image found in almost every temple.) *Bhāvanā* is the perpetual concern of the monk, and ideally it covers his attitude - investigating, reflecting, learning - towards his every deed. In this light Jinavamsa always hoped some day to write a book about the Vinaya rules which he would call *Viṭa Hādima* ('Training the Mind'): it would show that each rule, in so far as it governs some aspect of the monk's behaviour, and in so far as every aspect of the monk's behaviour is governed by some rule, has a purpose in mental cultivation. *Bhāvanā* is, in other words, more active than our idea of meditation, and indeed in Sinhalese one 'nourishes', 'develops', or 'increases' it, *vaḍanava*. It is in this sense that the *saṁsthāva* monks speak of their 'work', *vāda*, and it does not escape them that this is etymologically related to the word for 'develop'. In this respect, therefore, the entirety of the Buddha's teaching is conceived as directions for meditation' (p.224). A very clear exposition on the purpose of meditation is subsequently provided by the author: 'Once he is settled in the realization that experience and its objects are inherently impermanent, unsatisfactory

and devoid of any compellingly real essence, he is able to renounce them. He is able, in other words, to give up desire, to discriminate between the dangerous habits and attitudes which lead to grasping, and the newly - achieved habit of relinquishment. And with relinquishment comes release, Nirvāṇa' (pp.227-8). Again, '... the propositions of doctrine are transmuted into immediate perception, here and now (*ditth' eva dhamme*), and with his disciplined and wieldy mind he is able to effect a change in his most intimate mental habits (having already disciplined himself physically by the Vinaya)' (p.220).

Ñāṇārāma investigated those meditation traditions - mainly of eighteenth century Thai origin - that had been current in Sri Lanka but had fallen into abeyance. Their resuscitation from fragmentary texts was deemed impractical and the turning point came as recently as 1958 when he practised under the visiting Burmese master, U Javana, whose method stood in complete contrast to the accepted standard discursive/analytical technique based on the Visuddhimagga. Thereafter, the so-called 'New Burmese Method' gained ground on the Island and is best represented by the Kanduboda Meditation Centre. The autonomy of the individual bhikkhu is enhanced by Vinaya prescriptions which stem from the Mahāparinibbāna Sutta. Indeed, the twin guiding principles of self-reliance and dependence on the Teaching were recommended in place of a (fallible) human guru in authority, although this republican, almost anarchic, structure has distinct drawbacks in view of invariable human weakness, not to mention the proliferation of lone bhikkhu mavericks. Moreover, historically, this situation has only obtained in Ceylon, Burma and Vietnam where Western-inspired social and political disruptions were in evidence.

The final chapter documents the embodiment of the modern hermitage movement: Tāmbugala Ānandasiri. He joined the Rāmañña Nikāya and became a pupil of Dēvarakkhita, but after a chequered career joined forces with Jinavamṣa in 1971. He advocated a radical interpretation of the spiritual Path: rather than being content with the passive rôle of arahant (surely a remarkable enough achievement in itself!), he aimed to imitate the road to Buddhahood no less. Emphasising the earliest source material

in the Pāli Canon, his keywords were 'investigate', 'discuss' and 'question'. As he put it, 'One must live a wise (*paññi at*) life, intelligently and mindfully (*sihinuvanin*), according to the old daily schedule (*dina carikāva*). One must live that way, intelligently, following the life step by step in such a way that one develops awareness (*vipassanā*)' (p.276). Ānandasiri is now settled at 'the most isolated and splendidly wild' hermitage in Sri Lanka - Kudumbigala - which is in the midst of a wildlife sanctuary. It is characterised by a rule of silence and the absence of devotional sessions, whilst casual visits are actively discouraged.

By giving exclusive attention to Sri Lanka, this study complements S.J. Tambiah's survey of *The Buddhist saint of the forest ...* (in Thailand - Cambridge University Press 1984). Moreover, at appropriate intervals the author lucidly explains salient features of Buddhist doctrine which thereby keep in perspective the ideas and practices of those described.

Written in a highly readable style, this timely survey of a hitherto unknown meditation tradition will hold an immediate appeal to the historian of religion and anthropologist, quite apart from any practising follower of the Path. A second edition should include an appendix giving the exact geographical whereabouts of the hermitages mentioned in the text (a sketch map would also prove useful) together with a list of recommended training centres geared to the needs of Western aspirants.

RBW

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