



Basic steps of Buddhist practice

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To achieve liberation from suffering in the Buddhist sense, one has to analyse life, as individual life and as existence in general, in detail and by this understanding arises. Like this wisdom arises. If one does not understand existence, it is ignorance or delusion.

Therefore, the Buddhist path of insight or liberation is only about the appropriate **practice** to achieve the goal of ultimate freedom from suffering. It is not a matter of making philosophical speculations about individual topics of life and searching intellectually in the scriptures for what the Buddha said about them. One has to see of what life is composed and the conditions of these parts directly and thereby understand them. This requires time and energy and appropriate conditions, such as seclusion and guidance from a competent person.

The following practice steps are to be practised and refined again and again.

The precious Buddha's teachings can only be uphold in this world by the correct practice of the steps as we find in many suttas and the realisation achieved through them. Intellectual study of the Dhamma can inspire to practice, but alone it cannot lead to realisation. Only if there are realised ones who know the goal in this world the Buddha's teachings can be maintained as a path to liberation. Incorrect practice does not lead to the realisation of the goal, which is Nibbāna, but to the downfall of the Buddha's teachings.

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1. Taking Refuge - Saraṇagamaṇa

Taking refuge in the Buddhist sense is not the refuge in a God or place externally of ourselves. It is the refuge into our own potential of awakening:
The Buddha himself said, near to death:

*"Therefore you should live as islands into yourselves,
being your own refuge, with no one else as your refuge,
with the Dhamma as an island,
with the Dhamma as your refuge,
with no other refuge."* Mahāparinibbāna Sutta, DN 16

We all have this potential within us to awaken from the ignorance or delusion (*moha*) that keeps entangling us in suffering circumstances. This Buddhist path of liberation is a path of analysis and understanding of our individual existence and of existence in general. We have to walk this path ourselves out of our own strength. No one else can walk this path for us.

In the Buddhist Tradition we take refuge into the 3 jewels:

Buddha,
Dhamma and
Saṅgha.

Jewels are something precious. Buddha, Dhamma, Saṅgha are so named because they are the most precious, what we can encounter in life. Not at all times in this worldsystem is the Buddhist doctrine, a doctrine of salvation, a path of liberation known. We take refuge in the Buddha, a human being who has redeveloped this path of spiritual liberation, of awakening in this worldcycle and has walked it by himself. He did not invent this path, also Buddhas before him have taught this path.

We take refuge in the Dhamma. The word Dhamma has several meanings, among other things, it means the teaching of the Buddha. But it also means law. These two meanings are not so different, because the teaching of the Buddha shows us natural laws of our existence. We can see these laws through meditation by ourselves and thereby overcome ignorance.

The Buddha called his Dhamma
well proclaimed
visible,
timeless,
welcoming ('come and see'),
stimulating or conducting (to the goal),
to be realized by the wise.

1. 'Well proclaimed' means that the teaching is noble, because it leads to wholesomeness, to liberation of all beings from suffering, and that it was experienced by the Buddha himself, and then explained in detail.
2. Visible: this aspect means that when one practices correctly one can realize the teaching by oneself and can see the path and attain it.
3. Timeless: this aspect can be viewed in two ways, on one hand that the practice of these teachings always brings good fruits immediately and in the future; on the other hand, the law or the doctrine is always valid and not bound to any time.
4. Inviting: the doctrine is so pure and clear that it invites to practice immediately.

5. Stimulating or conducting: the doctrine encourages to practice, because it leads to liberation.
6. To be realized by the wise: many beings have attained wisdom through these teachings. They attained liberation from suffering.

We take refuge in the Saṅgha. Saṅgha means community. The Buddha has called the community of those who had realized his teachings, Saṅgha. Saṅgha are those who have realized since the time of Buddha his Dhamma through practice and have attained awakening.

The Awakening in the Buddhist sense takes place in 4 steps or paths. If one has attained the first path, stream-entry, one belongs to the Saṅgha.

The Saṅgha is very important because it maintains by their realization the teachings of Buddha Gotama after his death. If the teachings are not realized after a Buddha's lifetime, the doctrine would disappear, because no one would know the goal.

The Buddha himself said:

"Cunda, that one who is himself sinking in the mud should pull out another who is sinking in the mud is impossible; that one who is not himself sinking in the mud should pull out another who is sinking in the mud is possible. That one who is himself untamed, undisciplined, [with defilements] unextinguished, should tame another, discipline him, and help extinguish [his defilements] is impossible; that one who is himself tamed, disciplined, [with defilements] extinguished, should tame another, discipline him, and help extinguish [his defilements] is possible."

MN 8 Sallekha Sutta

By taking refuge we express our desire to explore our existence, to understand our lives and realize the truth. We wish through ethical behaviour, concentration and development of wisdom, to gain insight into the nature of existence.

It makes no sense, taking refuge only as the repetition of words, but one should really reflect the fact that we all have this potential of powerful awakening.

The Buddhist refuge is not associated with any forceful compulsion. It is steadying a wish, it is the love of the truth, we affirm in ourselves. No one makes us fear or forces us to accept a belief.

The refuge also expresses our respect and homage towards people who have gone this path and have realized this noble doctrine.

The refuge one can always take for oneself or in the presence of a Buddhist teacher. When we take refuge in the presence of a person who has gone this path or in the presence of a group of people who have the same goal, it is supportive for us that our wish will become fulfilled. By taking refuge we express our desire of understanding and the goal of freedom from suffering again and again, and take it as the meaning of our lives. The more we are dealing with the Buddhist teachings, either by listening, learning or discussing or by mindfully observing our own body and mind, or by the practice of concentration, the more grows our understanding and confidence.

The refuge is a wholesome, powerful action that strengthens our confidence in the path of liberation and in the 3 jewels. It is an active action. We seek refuge in our own potential, our own spiritual abilities and not in a higher being. The protection becomes stronger by our own inner work and by listening to the teachings, because we learn what is wholesome/skilful (*kusala*) and what is unwholesome/unskilful (*akusala*). We take more and more distance from unwholesome thoughts, speech and actions, and so we protect ourselves.

According to the law of cause and effect such a seriously intentioned desire of refuge will bring powerful pleasant results in the future.

Driven only by fear,
do men go for refuge to many places
— to hills, woods, groves, trees and shrines.
Dhammapada 188

Such, indeed, is no safe refuge;
such is not the refuge supreme.
Not by resorting to such a refuge is one released from all suffering.
Dhammapada 189

He who has gone for refuge to the Buddha,
the Teaching and his Order,
penetrates with transcendental wisdom the Four Noble Truths
— suffering, the cause of suffering,
the cessation of suffering,
and the Noble Eightfold Path
leading to the cessation of suffering.
Dhammapada 190/91

This indeed is the safe refuge,
this the refuge supreme.
Having gone to such a refuge,
one is released from all suffering.

"Buddhavagga: The Buddha" (Dhp XIV),
translated from the Pāli by Acharya Buddhārakkhita.
Access to Insight (Legacy Edition), 30 November 2013,

quoted from:

<http://www.accesstoinight.org/tipitaka/kn/dhp/dhp.14.budd.html> .

Refuge:

Buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi

I take refuge in the Buddha.

Dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi

I take refuge in the Dhamma (teachings of the Buddha).

Saṅghaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi

I take refuge in the Saṅgha (community of Noble Ones).

Dutiyampi Buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi

For the second time I take refuge in the Buddha.

Dutiyampi Dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi

For the second time I take refuge in the Dhamma.

Dutiyampi Saṅghaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi

For the second time I take refuge in the Saṅgha.

Tatīyampi Buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi

For the third time I take refuge in the Buddha.

Tatīyampi Dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi

For the third time I take refuge in the Dhamma.

Tatīyampi Saṅghaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi

For the third time I take refuge in the Saṅgha.

2. Generosity - Dāna

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In Cariyapitaka (basket of conduct)¹

Buddha Gotama tells the Venerable Sāriputta about his past lives:

*"If there came a mendicant beggar,
whether by day or by night,
receiving whatever goods he wanted
he went away with his hands full.
I gave a great gift such as this as long as my life lasted.
I gave the wealth not because it was disagreeable nor did I have a hoard.
Just as an invalid in order to recover from an illness,
satisfying the doctor with some wealth,
recovers from the illness.
Even so did I realizing it,
in order to achieve complete fulfillment
and to fill the mind that was lacking in contentment
give gifts to mendicant beggars without attachment,
expecting nothing in return,
for the attainment of Self-Awakening."
Cariyapitaka*

*"Just as a servant, going to the master for the sake of wealth,
seeks for satisfaction by gesture,
speech, thought.
So will I seek in every becoming for what is produced for Awakening,
refreshing creatures with gifts;
I long for supreme Awakening.*

...

*Even so, even from what one has himself used,
what is given to others is of great fruit;
therefore what is to be given to others will become a hundredfold.
Knowing this truism I gave gifts in existence after existence.
For the attainment of Self-Awakening.
I did not draw back from giving."
Cariyapitaka*

The term *Dāna* in the Pāḷi language has not the same meaning as its translations like donation or alms. In the Buddhist tradition monks and nuns receive their livelihood only by *Dāna* (voluntary, generous giving).

The donors are grateful towards the recipients, that they have the opportunity to give. They see giving as a gift, as a pleasure.

In Christian tradition in our Western world is donation more practiced to support poor people.

In worldly circumstances donations are given nowadays to support poor people who are in need, and to support them to lead a worthy, proper life and to balance social differences.

Donations are also given, to support people in difficult periods of life, maybe individuals or groups or countries who suffer from war, famine or other catastrophies or disasters.

¹ Minor Anthologies, Minor Anthologies of the Pāḷi Canon, Vol III, 1975, Pāḷi Text Society, translated by I. B. Horner, I.6. §§4, 5, 6

The Buddha taught, that donation to the Saṅgha, the community of monks and nuns, called Bhikkhus and Bhikkhunis, literally translated as beggar, are the most precious donations. And here are the donations which are given to those with the highest realization the most meritorious ones. It is here emphasised on giving to those practitioners who dedicate their whole time to mental development. Like this also nowadays it is practiced in South-East-Asian countries. Monasteries and meditation-centers are completely supported by people's voluntary, generous giving. Food and accomodation are free. Everybody is invited to support the spiritual community in their mental development (*bhāvanā*) by giving *Dāna*.

The Buddha has given emphasis to this kind of donation because it leads to final liberation from suffering, whereas donations for worldly support also are precious but lead only temporarily to release from suffering, from poverty.

There are three aspects to be considered for the donor:

- the giving as a meritorious deed,
- the reduction or overcoming of attachment,
- the appreciation of spiritual practice by giving to those who practice it.

The last point opens the mind of the donor for the spiritual practice.

Out of these reasons the gift is seen as a present for the donor.

An attitude of arrogance towards the recipient is diminished or overcome, because spiritual liberation is the highest goal in the Buddha's teachings.

The beggar in the Buddhist tradition is not beggar out of poverty, but out of the insight, that not-possessing leads to higher spiritual goals up to the final liberation. It is emphasised on the development of wisdom.

In the Buddha's dispensation the beggar decides for himself to adopt this state to achieve higher spiritual goals and he or she does not go into homelessness by the pressure of poverty.

The beggar is usually healthy and not poor from his social background.

Mainly during the Buddha's lifetime a lot of rich people renounced their wealth, gave it as donation and went forth to homelessness.

To anchor the Buddha's teachings with their profound meaning one must understand such conditions. Without longterm-practitioners the depth of the Buddha's teachings cannot be understood and realized. And if one wants to practice for a long period one needs material support. At the same time the merit and appreciation of those who are not free to practice right now increase so far, that the opportunity for a longterm meditation-practice will arise for them in the future.

The relationship between a beggar in the Western world and the donor is more anonymous. Between practitioners and donor in Buddhist circles is often a close relationship. The Bhikkhu/the Bhikkhuni should give Dhamma in return for receiving the requisites.

To avoid misuse of donations the Buddha gave the rule for monks and nuns that they are not allowed to touch money (gold and silver).

Beside this, monks and nuns are asked to practice loving kindness meditation for the donor.

The opportunity for voluntary giving is a gift for the donor, a merit, which will not disappear until final liberation is attained.

The Buddha explains with the background of his profound and systematic analysis of existence the results of *Dāna* in a wider and longterm manner.

The Buddha taught out of wisdom how to overcome the attachment to a self or ego. In the view of a self, 'I' or ego all suffering, one can experience, is based.

The abandoning or sharing of one's property is the first step to become free of selfishness and of the view of self. Finally the wrong view of 'I' can only be overcome by correct *Vipassanā*-Meditation with the goal of path-knowledge.

Dāna is a precondition for an approach to *Vipassanā*-Meditation.

That's why it is important not to bargain the Dhamma like a worldly good. If one offers the teachings like this, one takes away the opportunity for the practitioner to improve his or her merit. Giving can be the first approach to meditation.

These conditions one can see oneself with Jhānaconcentration according to dependent origination in one's own stream of consciousness.

Dāna is like a match, to light the candle, to light the light of wisdom.

Buddha Gotama recollects from one of his previous lives at the time of Buddha Koṇagamana:

"I at that time was a warrior-noble named Pabbata.

I was possessed of friends and counsellors, unending forces and mountains.

I went to see the Self-Awakened One and heard the unsurpassed Dhamma.

I invited the Order with the Conqueror and gave a gift to my heart's content.

I gave the teacher and the disciples silk from Pattana,

silk from China, Kasi silk, woolen cloth too, and golden sandals as well.

As that sage was sitting in the midst of the Order he too declared of me:

"In this Bhadda-con this one will be a Buddha. ...

When I heard his words too all the more did I incline my mind.

I resolutely determined on further practice for fulfilling the ten perfections.

*Seeking omniscience, giving the gift to the supreme among men, I, having renounced a great kingdom, went forth in the Conqueror's presence."*²

One can see here clearly the succession of deeds, how out of generosity the power for an intensive Dhamma-practice arises in one's own mind.

Giving is a practice everybody can start with to enter the spiritual path.

Giving is an antidote towards craving and also towards stinginess or possessiveness.

Stinginess is always connected with the roots aversion and delusion.

As the whole Buddhist teachings are based in overcoming craving, aversion and delusion, one can well start with giving.

The external activity of giving means internally, in one's own mind relinquishing, abandoning, generosity, renunciation, in Pali called *cāga*.

"Generosity has the quality of making the mind pliable.

Giving serves as a decisive support to make the mind more pliable

and ready for observance of precepts, for cultivation of concentration and for development of insight wisdom through practice of Vipassanā meditation."

Chronicles of the Buddha, Mingun Sayadaw

AN 6.37 Giving

"Prior to giving one is joyful;

while giving one settles the mind in trust;

after giving one is elated:

this is success in the act of offering.

When they are devoid of lust and hatred,

devoid of delusion, without taints,

self-controlled, living the spiritual life,

the field for the offering is complete.

Having cleansed oneself

2 Minor Anthologies, Vol III, a. a. O., p. 67

*and given with one's own hands,
the act of charity is very fruitful
for oneself and in relation to others.
Having performed such a charitable deed
with a mind free from miserliness,
the wise person, rich in faith,
is reborn in a happy, non-afflictive world."*

3. *Sīla* - Ethics

Ethics should form the foundation of people's behaviour in a social community.

It is abstention from unwholesome actions, for one's own protection and that of all other beings.

Conscious ethics include the clear wish not to harm other beings.

Ethics improve harmonious coexistence of beings, without fear and anxiety.

Ethical behaviour is always conducive to reduce suffering of beings, to protect others towards harm and disadvantages. Ethical behaviour brings happiness to beings.



The Pāli word *Sīla* is translated by the Greek word ethics, by the Latin word morality.

Originally *Sīla* means nature, character, habits, practice, custom, usage, behaviour, conduct.

The Greek word ethics is used in the same way: moral behaviour. But it also has the meaning: habit, custom, usage. The Latin word morality originally has the same meaning.

Sīla includes both ethical values and ethical behaviour, the former produces the second.

The Buddha taught *Sīla* as behaviour that should cause less suffering to ourselves and others. *Sīla* is the first step and the foundation for the complete overcoming of suffering, followed by concentration and wisdom.

The Buddha gave rules of conduct or behaviour as an aid to develop wholesome human action in body and speech, which should lead to liberation from suffering and protection of beings. His motivation was compassion.

One could translate *Sīla* also as protecting behaviour, protection towards oneself and other beings. Buddhist ethics are based on the supernormal knowledge of the Buddha. He could see the results of the actions beings perform. He could see the conditions, the law of cause and effect, i.e. what effects will bring an action for the actor in the future.

He could also see what actions or kinds of behaviour are disturbing for developing concentration. Concentration is a prerequisite for understanding. Like this the ethical rules have been developed in the Buddhist community.

The ethical rules are rules that serve for the liberation of beings and they are not an arbitrarily created collection of views, which differentiate between good and evil.

The knowledge of cause and effect is an essential support for ethical behaviour. If we understand that all our actions produce corresponding effects in our own stream of consciousness, ethical behaviour becomes a natural wish.

The more wholesome actions we perform, the more old transgressions based in ignorance are weakened in their effect. So the Buddha says (AN 3.101 Effects of kamma) if we would have to encounter exactly the corresponding result for every action, which we have previously committed, there would be no liberation.

The roots as craving, aversion and delusion, and the mental factors such as conceit (*māna*) (pride, arrogance, but also mental states of inferiority), wrong view (*diṭṭhi*) and envy / jealousy (*issā*) are

factors that promote and produce unethical behaviour. Therefore, mindfulness (*sati*) and clear comprehension (*sampajañña*) are important to identify and avoid these factors and so ethical behaviour will become refined.

Ethical behaviour requires awareness of the consequences of unethical behaviour, which causes according to the law of cause and effect suffering.

Essential aspects of ethical behaviour are:

- to support the well-being of other beings
- to avoid the unpleasant effects of unwholesome actions for oneself.

Unethical behaviour leads to unpleasant experiences for other beings and also for oneself. Compassion (*karunā*) is an important factor to let ethical behaviour arise. The practice of compassion refines ethical behaviour, the contemplation about ethical behaviour supports the application of compassion.

We repeatedly can find passages in the Pāḷi Canon where the Buddha points out that good friends are important on the path of spiritual liberation. This refers to all social contexts in which we live. As long as we ourselves are not very stable in ethical behaviour, people around us have an influence on our ethical assessment of our actions.

If a government legitimizes cruel behaviour as killing and torturing, such behaviour also influences the members of this society. Thus, it can happen that even Buddhist monks, at a time when there is no longer a self-enlightened Buddha as the supreme authority, incline under a cruel government to cruel actions.

Likewise, it is also in a family, are ethics not a desirable goal, it is also difficult for children to learn ethical behaviour. The same can appear in religious communities, friendships and other groups of people.

Heedful behaviour and respect are essential factors to promote ethical behaviour.

If we do not strive for awareness ourselves and reflect on ethics again and again, but only recite rules and identify with them in this way, this important step as an access to meditation, to the development of concentration and wisdom, cannot be refined. Putting oneself in the place of the other person who could be harmed by the unethical behaviour is a good way to correct one's own ethical behaviour.

Ethical behaviour brings non-regret in one's own mind. Remorse is one of the five hindrances in meditation. Being free from remorse creates happiness.

Ethical behaviour is the first of three trainings, followed by the second training, which is collectedness/ concentration and by the third training, which is wisdom.

Without ethics there cannot be concentration,
without concentration wisdom cannot occur,
without wisdom there cannot be liberation from suffering (*dukkha*).

The ultimate goal of the Buddhist teachings is freedom from defilements without remainder.

Buddhist ethics distinguish between behaviour that is beneficial, skilful (*kusala*) on the path of liberation or obstructive and unskilful (*akusala*) on this path.

The Buddha has distinguished mental impurities on three levels:

- Through ethical behaviour gross mental defilements are avoided,
- by samathameditation so-called obsessive mental defilements are avoided for a certain time,
- by attaining the 4 paths of awakening latent mental defilements are cut off for ever.

As long as the defilements are not cut off, as long as the roots of impurities are still dormant in the

stream of consciousness, the gross and obsessive mental defilements can recur when there are appropriate conditions.

There are 5 basic rules of ethical conduct (*sīla*), which are recommended by the Buddha for all people. These include

1. to refrain from killing (lit. from destruction/injury) of any living being,
2. to refrain from stealing (lit. from taking what is not given),
3. to refrain from sexual misconduct (lit. wrong conduct in regard to sense pleasure),
4. to refrain from lying and
5. to refrain from the consumption of intoxicating drinks and drugs, which lead to negligence.

As a conclusion one can say:

- **ethical behaviour creates harmonious coexistence, fearlessness and peace in a community,**
- **it causes non-regret and happiness in one's own mind,**
- **it causes pleasant results in the future and**
- **it serves as purification of mind for meditation and on the path of liberation.**

Sīla is not only refraining from speech and actions that cause suffering and does not only consist in not performing unwholesome speech and actions, but it is the clearly conscious and deliberate refraining from them every time a possibility of transgression presents itself.

So there is no ethical merit when one sits at home and the opportunity to steal something does not arise. Only when one comes into contact somewhere with the possessions of others, and the possibility arises to take this, it is ethical behaviour when one consciously refrains from taking it. Similarly it is with refraining from killing, as long as no other being comes into our living environment, there is no possibility to kill it. Only when we are threatened by a living being, or it may cause us harm, or, if we have desire to eat it up, we can refrain from killing it. Then we observe the rule of abstinence from killing.

Sīla can be seen as twofold, as the avoidance of unwholesome actions, called *vāritta*, and as the performance of virtuous actions, called *cāritta* such as protecting the life of living beings, giving instead of stealing, sharing one's possessions with others, truthfulness, spreading the *Dhamma*, etc .. For the Bodhisatta the second type is also essential to practice.

Ethics can be understood as refraining from unwholesome deeds in several ways:

- by rules or commandments,
- by awareness, mindfulness,
- by understanding,
- by tolerance,
- by endeavour.

Regarding the five basic ethical rules:

- **Non-killing** is in the Buddhist sense, not to kill intentionally any living being, also not a mosquito or an ant. Literally it is said in this rule: abstention from destruction/injury of living beings.

Killing is always associated with hatred, one of the three unwholesome actions.

Killing means to take intentionally another being's life, that is, to apply any violent means, such as weapons or poison, so that the present life is cut off violently. It is essential that the intention to kill arises in the mind.

The following conditions must be met:

1. There must be an object, a living being.
2. It must be recognized as such by one's own consciousness.

3. The intention to kill this being must be present.
4. The act of killing must be performed.
5. The other being dies by this action.

Even if the act does not come to its end, the intention to kill leads to the corresponding unpleasant results for the person, who lets arise the intention.

It is important for observing this rule to know when life begins.

- **Not stealing** is precisely not to take what is not given. Stealing can be taking someone else's property secretly or by violent robbery. Cheating is also stealing. If one uses false weights in trade, one sells something for a price too high, by taking advantage of the buyer's ignorance, by selling fake products, by not providing adequate wages to employees, by not paying taxes, not repaying credits, damaging the property of others by using it and not being liable for the damage, using environmental resources without permission, selling products of others as one's own, all this is stealing.

To enforce services of others through extortion, intimidation or applying one's power, is also theft.

For stealing the following conditions must be met:

1. That which is taken must belong to another being.
2. One must know, recognize it as the possession of another being.
3. The intention of stealing must be present.
4. The effort to steal must be there.
5. The property has to be taken.

- **Sexual misconduct:**

Sexuality itself, if it does not belong to sexual misconduct, is not an offence like stealing or killing. Sexuality itself does not lead to rebirth in the lower realms like killing and stealing.

Essential is here also, as for all activities, the motivation. This is also important, when considering Sila from the point of view of purifying the mind for concentration and insight. The motivation in any sexual contact can be in selfish lust or in loving kindness (*mettā*).

Non-ordained people usually take in everyday life the 5 rules, which include this rule, interpreted as refraining from sexual misconduct. Literally it is said: 'I undertake the training rule of abstinence from wrong conduct in regard to sensual pleasure.'

The general interpretation means to abstain from sexual behaviour, that causes suffering to other beings'.

Sexual misconduct means to have sexual intercourse with one's own children or parents (incest), with children in general, forcing someone to have sexual intercourse (rape), sexual intercourse between teacher and student, sexual intercourse with somebody who is in a relationship with another person, with a person who is dependent on oneself, sexual intercourse in case one has a venereal disease. It is also sexual misconduct, to search for sexual intercourse with another participant during a retreat.

- **Lying** is when one says something that does not correspond to reality, if one has the intention to tell a lie to other people, if one tells something wrong but the truth, and such untrue statement is heard by someone and is accepted as the truth.

Also lying as a joke, if it is believed by others, is a lie.

If one claims to have something, but does not have it, it is also lying. And the contrary, to say one does not have anything somebody asks for, but one has it, this is also lying. For example, if someone wants to borrow something from a person, and that person says he or she does not have the object or the money, it is a lie. If one says openly that one does not want to give something, one does not experience the unpleasant results of lying, but may be that of avarice. If one claims to be able to do something or to have achieved something one does not have, just for having benefits or getting admiration or something else, it is lying.

It is a lie, when a statement is made that is not true.

There must be the intention not to tell the truth.

One must then speak with that intention and act.

Another person must believe what is told and accept it.

If you do not lie, other people have confidence in you, you are not deceived yourself, you are respected by others.

Defaming, if one spreads something about a person, which does not correspond to the facts, also belongs to lies.

- Consuming alcohol and drugs

Ethics are the precondition to develop concentration and concentration is necessary to see things as they really are, to understand life. Alcohol and drugs prevent seeing things as they really are, the goal of the Buddhist teachings. Alcohol and drugs change even in small amounts perception. By the conditions that can be achieved under its influence, the mind becomes unstable and sluggish and the driving force for spiritual development, meditation, is cut off. A clear, active and pure mind is a prerequisite for any Buddhist practice. By drug and alcohol usage carelessness can occur, one cannot fulfill one's daily duties, the assessment of reality changes. Recklessness can appear. It can no longer be distinguished, what is right and what is wrong. The consumer can easily become addictive, much money is needed, there arises the danger to earn money in an unlawful manner.

Conditions for the transgression of this rule:

There must be drugs or intoxicants.

One must have the intention to drink this or to consume it.

One must undertake the effort to perform this action.

One must swallow the drugs or the alcoholic drink.

The five ethical principles are not only found in the Buddhist teaching. They are also in other religions or social communities an orientation for behaviour, which allows peaceful coexistence.

In addition, there is a comprehensive set of rules for people who want to devote themselves exclusively to mental development. The entire Buddhist teachings have the aim to purify the mind from impurities. Only a mind free from defilements can understand things as they really are.

This purification happens on the 3 levels mentioned above:

on the level of ethics,

of concentration and

of wisdom,

the previous condition is always necessary for the following. If one takes upon oneself many ethical rules, purification on this level is more comprehensive.

Eight ethical rules - Uposatha Sīla

There is also the possibility of intensifying ethical training by observing eight ethical rules.

- In the set of eight ethical rules, the third rule of the five rules is replaced by refraining from any sexual contact, literally it is said, to abstain from not noble behaviour.

- In addition one has to refrain from eating between midday and dawn the next morning. Like this the desire for sense pleasures is reduced, laziness and sluggishness are reduced, contentment and modesty are encouraged.

- Furthermore in this set of rules one observes the rule of not wearing jewelry, not using perfumes and cosmetics and not to dance, to sing, to play musical instruments and to attend shows and entertainments.

These activities are mostly connected with craving and delusion.

Music has a permanent effect on the organ of hearing. If one is exposed to music, concentration can not be developed. Stimulating music also affects the heart rhythm, so that tranquility associated with concentration and performing the base for insight cannot be achieved.

- This set of rules also contains to abstain from using luxurious beds and seats to emphasize on modesty and non-craving.

These rules provide the possibility that the arising of consciousness associated with the roots craving, aversion and delusion is reduced.

Ordained individuals practice ethical training more intensively

Novices (*Sāmaṇerā*, *Sāmaṇerī*) must observe **10 rules**. This number is due to the fact that the seventh rule of the above mentioned eight rules constitutes two rules and a tenth rule of refraining from accepting gold and silver (money) is added.

At the time of Buddha Gotama, in the beginning of his community, there was no *Vinaya*, the code of conduct. Only when more and more people decided to ordain in the Buddhist community, the Buddha gave this code of conduct. He did not give it at one time as a completed code. The rules have developed during the living together of monks and nuns. Whenever the Buddha became to know that by unethical behaviour, even in a more subtle understanding,

- the monks and nuns disabled themselves in their spiritual development,
- disharmony in the community arose or
- members of the community brought up unsuitable behaviour towards the population,

he set up a new rule out of compassion to protect the ordained monks and nuns towards the unpleasant consequences of their unethical or careless behaviour.

These rules and also other items of ethical training provide also a very useful training for non-ordained people to approach meditation easier.

In Pātimokkha we find the rules for monks and nuns. Pātimokkha liberates those who observe it, protects those towards the pain of the lower realms. For monks there are 227 ethical rules and for nuns 311 rules.

The most important is, when accepting the ethical rules, not to break them. Breaking rules obstructs the development of concentration and wisdom. The higher the ethical rules, the more one takes upon oneself to purify oneself on the level of ethics. Taking a higher *Sīla*, and pretending to follow it, e.g. as by wearing a robe, but does not keep it, one commits in addition 'lying'.

A wider ethical training one can also take when one is not ordained to accomplish one's *pāramī* - perfections. It can for example be useful if access to concentration and wisdom is difficult. If access to concentration and development of wisdom is easy in this life, it is due to insight that one wants to practice ethical behaviour in a wider way.

Sīla can be practiced at various levels of motivation:

- mainly for oneself, to have no remorse, and to prevent punishment, etc.,
- priority for the world to protect others towards the results of unwholesome actions,
- primarily for the *Dhamma*, the end of suffering, to attain *Nibbāna*.

If one only follows ethical rules in order not to come into conflict with laws, in order not to be punished, the effect of inner purification is small. The ethical training in the Buddhist teachings goes beyond that, it has a deeper transformative function of behaviour. It has not only the external goal of being free of punishment by the law, but it has mainly the goal of internal spiritual transformation with the higher goal of liberation. Therefore *Sīla* is supportive for the development of concentration and wisdom. Concentration and wisdom on the other hand are also supportive to refine the ethical behaviour more and more. Only through direct knowledge with deep concentration of the effects of unethical behaviour one lets it drop. To get access to this direct knowledge, the coarser level of ethical conduct, as practiced in the five rules is essential.

It is essential to realize that unethical behaviour leads to one's own suffering and that of other beings. Like this the gate to profound spiritual practice can be opened.

The intention with which we perform an action produces the root, in which the consciousness arises. The root can be unwholesome (craving, aversion, delusion) on the one hand and on the other hand wholesome (non-craving, non-aversion, wisdom). And the root in turn causes the corresponding results in the future.

The mental roots of killing, stealing, lying, etc. are always craving/greed or aversion/hatred in combination with ignorance. Freedom we can only achieve if we overcome these roots. Therefore abstinence from such acts is the basis for building up this path of liberation. The results of craving and aversion are always painful and uncomfortable, so it gives us no advantage when we deceive ourselves by unethical behaviour. When we refrain from an unethical act with the knowledge of cause and effect that unethical behaviour will have unpleasant results, this consciousness is accompanied by wisdom.

Consuming of intoxicating drinks and drugs is also always based on craving on one hand, and aversion towards reality on the other hand. The sense of shame and moral fear are reduced, by which then unscrupulous behaviour and impertinence can appear, which let greed and hatred come up unrestricted. Based on this knowledge, the Buddha has adopted the fifth ethical rule of abstinence from intoxicating drinks and drugs. Since our behaviour and thinking work habitually, these unwholesome tendencies arise in the mind by repeated use of alcohol and drugs, even if it is not directly under the influence.

By the consumption of drugs and alcohol mindfulness cannot be developed. Without right mindfulness ethical behaviour is not possible. The mind can not distinguish what is wholesome and unwholesome, so this rule was given as a base for the observance of all other rules for one's own protection and for the protection of other beings.

In the Noble Eightfold Path, which was taught by the Buddha as path of liberation, the ethical training is represented in the three factors right speech, right action, and right livelihood. In this context, the Buddha explains right speech not only as refraining from lying, but also with three other aspects. One should abstain

- from coarse speech,
- from gossip and defamation,
- from useless chatter.

Right action includes refraining from the three unwholesome actions killing, stealing and sexual misconduct.

Right livelihood includes that one abstains from the four kinds of unwholesome speech and from the three unwholesome actions.

Results

Basic results of ethics are:

- Non-remorse, which forms the base for spiritual peace,
- absence of accusations of others and of self-blame,
- fearlessness for oneself and others,
- confidence,
- sincerity,
- peace,
- insight and
- the final attainment of *Nibbāna*.

In addition by abstaining habitually from transgression of unethical behaviour, the opposite is nourished, which are qualities such as compassion, truthfulness, generosity, etc ..

Ethical behaviour thus leads to inner peace, to mental health, as well as to external, worldly peace, social behaviour and is also the gateway to supramundane peace attained through meditation.

In regard to mental factors restlessness, remorse, doubt, rigidity, hardness, ignorance, based in

unethical behaviour, are replaced by qualities such as tranquility, uprightness, confidence, flexibility, softness and knowledge, as a result of ethical behaviour.

Cause and Effect

The Buddha has taught how we can liberate ourselves by insight. Our freedom does not depend on the decision of a higher institution, as from a god. Therefore honesty is an essential base for our wellbeing. There is no one who punishes or rewards, there is only the law of cause and effect, which we can influence by ourselves so that we will get good results.

Understanding is essential in the Buddhist teachings. Concerning ethical conduct it is necessary to understand the relationship between the cause in one's own behaviour and the corresponding effect. If one lies for example again and again, commits minor frauds, the view becomes on one hand more and more deluded, on the other hand one will encounter at an earlier or later time from externally the same thing and one will have trouble. Like this is the effect of our own actions. If we do not see this relationship and have confidence in it, we cannot accept ethics and live only, to get at the moment success, happiness, money and satisfaction.

However, if we observe this law of cause and effect, it can be seen that the outer apparent success, made on an unlawful way leads to fear, regret, sadness, afflicting states of consciousness and even to physical pain. These states are far from true happiness. Happiness is then not in our mind, but like on a photograph, which we look at from a pleasant situation from our childhood. It does not really exist.

Ethics in the Buddhist sense is therefore not an obedience to a higher power, but the understanding of our actions in the context of the entire existence.

The Buddha calls in the Anguttara Nikāya (AN 10.1) a chain of pleasant results, arising from ethical behaviour:

from ethical behaviour arises non-regret,
 from non-regret arises joy,
 from joy there is rapture,
 from rapture arises tranquility,
 from tranquility arises happiness,
 from happiness arises concentration,
 from concentration results vision and knowledge, seeing things as they really are,
 out of vision and knowledge of things as they really are, arises disenchantment and dispassion,
 and from disenchantment and dispassion arises liberation by knowledge and vision.

Guardians of the World

Ethics protect those who practice accordingly and also all other beings.

The forerunner of ethics the Buddha calls *hiri* and *ottappa*. *Hiri* is translated as shame. It is actually the awareness of the results of unethical behaviour for oneself and the wish, to avoid these results.

It (*hiri*) is a term for sensitivity for ethics.

Its direct cause is respect towards oneself.

One avoids unwholesome actions because one respects oneself and does not want to encounter the unpleasant results.

This shame comes from within oneself.

The term *ottappa* is translated as moral fear. It is the abstinence of unethical behaviour because of seeing the results for others.

Ottappa has the characteristic of fear towards unwholesome behaviour in body, speech and mind. It is shying away from those actions.

Its function is being shy and afraid, committing unwholesome deeds.

It manifests itself as abstaining from unwholesome deeds.

Its direct cause is respect and regard towards others.

Respecting oneself, out of shame (*hiri*) one abandons unwholesome actions; respecting others, out of moral fear (*ottappa*) one abandons unwholesome actions.

Shame has its source in one's own mind, moral fear is influenced by society.

The Buddha calls these two factors the guardians of the world.

Concerning fear one must distinguish moral fear from ordinary fear. Ordinary fear arises in a consciousness accompanied by aversion, whereas ethical fear is a foundation for all kinds of ethical wholesome behaviour. It includes also conscientiousness.

The opposites are:

Shamelessness (*ahirika*), which has the characteristic of absence of disgust towards unwholesome deeds in body, speech and mind. It is a lack of ethical sensibility.

Its function is to commit unwholesome deeds.

It shows itself in impudence, insolence and non-modesty.

It manifests itself in the non-shrinking away from unwholesome actions.

Its direct cause is lack of self-respect.

Anottappa is the lack of shyness and fear of committing unwholesome actions.

Its function is to commit unwholesome deeds.

It manifests itself like the shamelessness in non-shrinking away from unwholesome actions.

Its direct cause is a lack of respect for others (lack of benevolence - *mettā*).

Since unwholesome actions are always accompanied by delusion, this lack of moral fear can lead to unscrupulous behaviour. The delusion makes blind to regard the results of one's own actions.

Both pairs of mental factors always occur together, the two former, shame and moral fear, always accompany all kinds of wholesome consciousness, the second two, shamelessness and lack of moral fear, always accompany all kinds of unwholesome consciousness.

They appear and increase, like all mental factors by habitual behaviour. If one commits a lot of unwholesome actions, non-shrinking away from unwholesome actions becomes stronger. If one performs many wholesome actions including proper meditation, the shame and the moral fear towards nonvirtues actions becomes stronger. Respect for others and self-respect are increasing.

Practiced ethics are the cause of peace in the mind.

*There are the scents of sandalwood,
rhododendron, lotus and jasmine,
but the scent of ethics surpasses all scents.
The scents of rhododendron and sandalwood
are very faint;
but the scent of the virtuous is the strongest;
it spreads even to the abodes of the devas.
Dhammapada 55-56*

4 Kinds of Ethics

Buddhist ethics include more than only observing the rules.

Ethics, the behaviour, to approach meditation, to get insight and includes four kinds of ethics (*catu-pārisuddhi-sīla*):

1. Following the discipline rules,
2. restraint towards sense objects,

3. purity in regard to livelihood,
4. ethics concerning the requisites/necessities of life.

1. Following the discipline rules

Confidence is necessary to accomplish this section.

2. Restraint towards sense objects (*indriyasamvara sīla*)

Sati (mindfulness) is required to practice this kind of *Sīla*.

This part is particularly important for meditation, because the defilements can quickly enter the mind through the various impressions on the senses and they form an obstacle to concentration and deeper insight. This area of ethics is much more subtle, but it also has stronger effect on the attainment of concentration and wisdom.

Mindfulness is necessary in order not to respond habitually with aversion and desire to sensory impressions, but simply to see things just as they are. A smell, for example, is just a smell. If it is possible to note it just as sensory object without developing aversion towards an unpleasant object and desire for a pleasant object, wholesome consciousness, supporting for meditation arises. It is the same with sounds, sights, bodily sensations such as pain on one hand or pleasant touches such as a massage or a bath, on the other hand. Also with pleasant or unpleasant words, one should apply mindfulness in the same way.

All impressions of the sense doors arise conditionally, unpleasant ones by unwholesome actions in body, speech and mind, pleasant ones by wholesome actions in body, speech and mind. If we want to avoid in the future unpleasant objects and attain awakening or liberation, we must respond with mindfulness towards all impressions on body and mind in order to avoid craving on the one hand, and aversion on the other, since both in the future will bring up new unpleasant impressions.

The view of the objects, sense doors and the arising consciousness, as impermanent, unsatisfactory and selfless is also a protective practice against defilements.

If one practices more and more in this manner, to respond mindfully to the manifold impressions, more and more modesty will be developed. True humility is an expression of satisfaction, which in turn produces a steady gentle feeling of happiness and inner joy.

Mindfulness can either be directed to an object that appears at the sense doors as described, or mindfulness can be continuously directed to the chosen *samatha* meditation object, such as the breath at the nose or lip area. Then too, the mind is protected from unwholesome states, such as desire, aversion and delusion.

3. Purity in regard to livelihood (*ājīva-pārisuddhi-sīla*)

For a monk or a nun this means that he or she does not strive for his or her living in an improper manner. Improper way means according to Vibhaṅga: not by trickery, scheming, hinting, talking, belittling (blame someone else, accuse someone), pursuing gain with gain, babbling, desire for greater profit.

Energy is needed to fulfill this part.

This kind of ethics also offers a large field in worldly life in regard to the many needs that arise in the uncontrolled mind and how one tries to get one's livelihood accordingly.

4. Ethical behaviour in regard to the requisites (*paccaya-sannissita-sīla*).

It requires wisdom to practice this kind of *Sīla*.

The requisites are determined by the rules of a monk or a nun. The contemplations about the requisites are taught by the Buddha in several *Suttā*.

They are also for those who want to meditate seriously, a helpful reflection to reduce excessive desire and to practice modesty and frugality:

"Reflecting wisely, he/she uses the robe only for protection from cold, for protection from heat, for protection from contact with gadflies, mosquitoes, wind, the sun, and creeping things, and only for the purpose of concealing the private parts."

Reflecting wisely, he/she uses almsfood neither for amusement nor for intoxication nor for the sake of physical beauty and attractiveness, but only for the endurance and continuance of this body, for ending cruelty, and for assisting the holy life, considering: 'Thus I shall terminate old feelings (of hunger) without arousing new feelings (by overeating) and I shall be healthy and blameless and shall live in comfort.

Reflecting wisely, he uses the resting place only for protection from cold, for protection from heat, for protection from contact with gadflies, mosquitoes, wind, the sun, and creeping things, and only for the purpose of warding off the perils of climate and for enjoying retreat.

Reflecting wisely, he uses the medicinal requisites only for protection from arisen afflicting feelings and for the benefit of good health." MN 2

Ethics as the first step

Ethics is always the first step of qualities that should be developed and followed by a disciple of the Buddha. But this alone is not enough to lead the holy life, or to obtain the final goal, Arahatship:

AN 5.109 (9) At Home in the Four Quarters

"Bhikkhus, possessing five qualities, a bhikkhu is at home in the four quarters .

What five?

(1) Here, a bhikkhu is virtuous; he dwells restrained by the Patimokkha, possessed of good conduct and resort, seeing danger in minute faults. Having undertaken the training rules, he trains in them.

(2) He has learned much, remembers what he has learned, and accumulates what he has learned. Those teachings that are good in the beginning, good in the middle and good in the end, with the right meaning and phrasing, which proclaim the perfectly complete and pure spiritual life— such teachings as these he has learned much of, retained in mind, recited verbally, mentally investigated, and penetrated well by view.

(3) He is content with any kind of robes, almsfood, lodgings, and medicines and provisions for the sick.

(4) He gains at will, without trouble or difficulty, the four jhānā that constitute the higher mind and are pleasant dwellings in this very life.

(5) With the destruction of the taints, he has realized for himself with direct knowledge, in this very life, the taintless liberation of mind, liberation by wisdom, and having entered upon it, he dwells in it. Possessing these five qualities, a bhikkhu is at home in the four quarters."

The Buddha describes in MN 29 Mahāsāropama Sutta: The Greater Discourse on the Simile of the Heartwood, a monk who stops in attaining ethics, as follows:

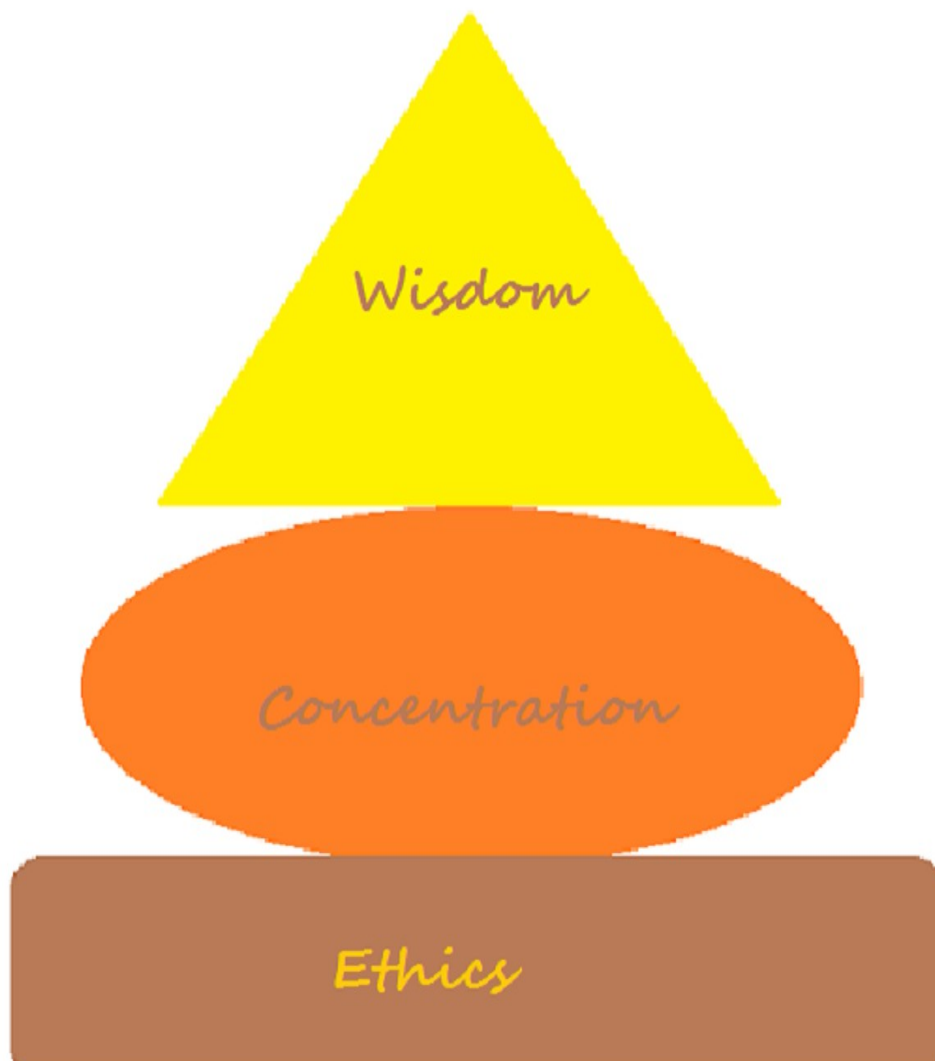
"He is pleased with that attainment of virtue and his intention is fulfilled. On account of it he lauds himself and disparages others thus: 'I am virtuous, of good character, but these other bhikkhus are immoral, of evil character.' He becomes intoxicated with that attainment of virtue, grows negligent, falls into negligence, and being negligent, he lives in suffering. This bhikkhu is called one who has taken the outer bark of the holy life and stopped short with that."

According to the simile in this sutta, the goal is to get the heartwood, which is final liberation by insight and not to be already satisfied with the bark.

Only ethical behaviour is not sufficient to find liberation. It can without deeper insight, turn into the opposite. The Buddha has said in several places in the Pāḷicanon, that the round of existence is without beginning, and hence the ignorance. That is, we are confronted periodically again and again with the consequences of our nonvirtues actions in the past. When we practice ethical behaviour only, without concentration and wisdom, our behaviour can change to unwholesome behaviour again when meeting with difficult circumstances.

Even the Buddha with his highly realized perfections was still exposed to the results of his previous unwholesome actions, so f. ex. tried his cousin Devadatta several times to make a schism in the community, to take over the position of the Buddha, he even tried several times to kill the Buddha. The Buddha remained unshakable in his wholesome state of mind, because he was perfect in behaviour, concentration and wisdom. Important is our internal stability to dwell in wholesome states of mind, whether we meet pleasant circumstances or unpleasant, undesirable conditions.

The inner Pagoda



**Not to do evil,
to cultivate merit,
to purify one's mind -
this is the teaching of the Buddhas.**
Dhammapada 183

As a not ordained person, who feels connected with the teachings of the Buddha, one should keep the five ethical rules, 5 Sīla:

1. Pāṇātipātā veramaṇīsisikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi.
I undertake the training rule of abstaining from destruction/injury of any living being.
2. Adinnādānā veramaṇīsisikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi.
I undertake the training rule of abstaining from taking what is not given.
3. Kāmesumicchācārā veramaṇīsisikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi.
I undertake the training rule of abstaining from wrong conduct regarding sense (sexual) pleasure.
4. Musāvādā veramaṇīsisikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi.
I undertake the training rule of abstaining from lying.
5. Surā-meraya-majja-pamādaṭṭhānā veramaṇīsisikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi.
I undertake the training rule of abstaining from alcoholic drinks and drugs, which are the cause for negligence.

On Uposathadays or during intensive periods of practice, as for example a stay in a monastery or during retreats, one should observe eight ethical rules:

1. Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi.
I undertake the training rule of abstaining from destruction/injury of any living being.
2. Adinnādānā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi.
I undertake the training rule of abstaining from taking what is not given.
3. Abrahmacariyā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi.
I undertake the training rule of abstaining from ignoble practice (sexual intercourse).
4. Musāvādā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi.
I undertake the training rule of abstaining from lying.
5. Surā-meraya-majja-pamādaṭṭhānā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi.
I undertake the training rule of abstaining from alcoholic drinks and drugs, which are the cause for negligence.
6. Vikāla-bhojanā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi.
I undertake the training rule of abstaining from taking food at wrong times (after midday till dawn the next day).
7. Nacca-gīta-vādita-visukadassana mālāgandha vilepana-dhārana maṇḍana vibūsanatṭhānā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ- samādiyāmi.
I undertake the training rule of abstaining from dancing, singing, playing musical instruments, watching performances, from wearing garlands, using perfumes and make up.
8. Uccāsayana-mahāsayanā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi.
I undertake the training rule of abstaining from staying on high luxurious seats and beds.

the 10th rule for novices:

10. Jātarūpa-rajata-paṭiggahaṇa veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi.
I undertake the training rule of abstaining from accepting gold and silver (money).

The seventh rule is divided into two rules, when one takes ten rules.

Contemplation of one's own ethics - *Sīlānussati*

One can increase the wholesomeness gained by ethical behaviour by taking the ethical behaviour as an object for meditation (*sīlānussati*).

The Buddha taught the contemplation of one's own ethics as one method of *samatha* meditation:

As a reflection on ethics or morality one uses the contemplation of one's own ethics.

Object is one's own abstinence from the unwholesome deeds as killing, lying, stealing, consumption of intoxicating drugs or drinks etc..

For this contemplation one imagines a situation, in which one had the opportunity, to break the ethical rules to obtain benefits.

But one has consciously abstained from doing so. This situation must appear vividly and clearly before the mind's eye. And one can observe the arising consciousness at the heart base at that time.

This consciousness is the object for contemplation and one abides with predetermined time with this object.

Like this one can attain neighbourhood concentration.



4. Bhāvanā – Mental Development, Meditation

4.1. Samatha Bhāvanā – Concentration Meditation



The Pāli term *bhāvanā* literally means development. Mental development one can say. Mental development is called mental training or meditation in our language. The mind is developed so that it can dwell in wholesome states of mind.

- There are two types of meditation (*bhāvanā*), which are taught by the Buddha:

***Samatha* - concentration or tranquility meditation**
***Vipassanā* - insight meditation.**

The first type, *Samatha*, is prerequisite for the second, *Vipassanā*. *Vipassanā* means special or profound seeing. This is not possible at the beginning of meditation as long as defilements occur in the mind. Only the mind, which is purified can see deeply and understand how things really are. The Buddha himself practiced in this manner.

We often find in the dhammatalks (*suttā*), the description of the path to awakening, the path of liberation shown in stages.

First, the Buddha teaches ethical conduct, including mindfulness (*sati*) during all activities. Then it is said, when the mind is free from the obstacles, the Buddha teaches the four or eight mental absorptions (*jhānā*), and then the student can understand the four noble truths, when the conditions are suitable by the preliminaries. Understanding the Four Noble Truths is subject of *Vipassanā* meditation (s. *vipassanā*).

The **state of mind** after successful *Samatha* meditation, ready for *Vipassanā* meditation, the Buddha describes repeatedly in his dhammatalks as:

<i>parisuddho</i>	pure,
<i>pariyodāto</i>	clear
<i>anaṅgaṇo</i>	free from blemishes,
<i>vigatūpakkilēse</i>	free from the subtlest impurities
<i>mudubhūto</i>	soft
<i>kammaṇiyo</i>	workable
<i>ṭhito</i>	stable
<i>āneñjappatto</i>	unshakable.

- *Vipassanā* meditation has the goal to develop wisdom. A prerequisite for the development of wisdom is concentration.
- **The purpose of Samatha Meditation is:**
 - The development of concentration, one-pointedness (*ekaggatā*),
 - The strengthening of the mental factor mindfulness (*sati*),
 - The purification of mind from the five hindrances,
 - Internal stability, because the mind is not distracted,
 - The continuous observation of a chosen object,
 - The development of tranquility, peace of mind. This tranquility is an active state of mind that is not to be confused with sleepy calmness.
 - The perfection of *pāramī* (perfections), so that the opportunity for *Vipassanā* meditation up to awakening can arise.
 - The possibility of longterm, uninterrupted dwelling in wholesome states of mind, accompanied by happiness and joy or sublime equanimity.
 - The ability to achieve subtle states of mind that are necessary in order to examine subtle things (*dhamma*) in *Vipassanā* meditation.

Samatha meditation leads to mental clarity and therefore the mind is prepared for direct seeing and understanding in *Vipassanā* meditation when the mind is directed to the objects in body and mind. By pleasant conditions in body and mind during and after *Samatha* meditation the mind becomes humble towards sense objects. This provides stability of mind and uninfluenced direct seeing may occur.

There are two types of concentration in *Samatha* meditation:

- Full concentration or also called *jhāna* concentration,
- access concentration or called neighbourhood-concentration.
- In *jhāna* concentration the mind is completely absorbed in the object of observation. This absorption can be deepened gradually. This concentration can be attained for example with mindfulness of in- and out-breath.

Jhānā, mental absorptions are very highly developed wholesome mental states. The *pāramī* (perfections) must be well developed for their achievement. The obstacles must be most of the time eliminated also in the non-formal meditation sessions in order to achieve these beneficial states of mind. The spiritual training to achieve these states of mind lies firstly in completing the *pāramī* on all levels in all situations of life. Secondly, the attention and mindfulness must be repeatedly directed in all life circumstances to the state of mind in order to note the obstacles and to overcome them. This is the way of training the mind, leading to its refinement. The mind, refined like this, is then able to enter absorptions. With just willpower for these states of mind and cramped striving as one might strive for worldly things, these subtle mental states cannot be attained. With the practice of *jhānā* the *pāramī* become then further completed, so that real *Vipassanā*, direct seeing, may occur.

- Neighborhood concentration is close to absorption concentration. It is also a strong, deep concentration, which can last for a long time, for many hours. This concentration can f. ex. be attained by observing the bodily sensations according to the characteristics of the four elements.

In the Pāḷicanon, we find **40 objects**, which the Buddha has taught to develop concentration as preparation for *Vipassanā* meditation. With some of them full concentration can be attained, with some only access concentration.

4.2. Brahmavihārā – Divine Abodes



The Pāli term *Brahmavihāra* is commonly translated as 'divine abodes'.

Brahma means noble, the term *vihāra* means living place or monastery or also life.

Thus one could translate *Brahmavihāra* also as 'noble life' or 'noble way of living' or 'to live in a noble place'. The higher celestial realms where these mental qualities are practiced are called *Brahmaworld*. The term for living place *vihāra* is used because they should become the permanent abode for our mind, where we should feel 'at home'. We should not visit them occasionally as visitors, but practise until we feel at home there.

The beings in the higher celestial realms practice these states of mind, also called illimitables, uninterruptedly without distinction to whom. There are no partnerships, no families, no daughters, no sons, no citizens and foreigners, no ordained and non-ordained. There are only beings, who exist benevolently with each other, there is no exclusion and no partiality. And because of this mental attitude the beings there are so constantly happy during that existence as Brahmās.

The *Brahmavihārā* include:

mettā - loving kindness, friendliness,
karuṇā - compassion,
muditā - sympathetic joy,
upekkhā - equanimity.

These four attitudes are superior and exceptional, because they are themselves wholesome mental factors and they lead as well to wholesome mental states as also to wholesome relationships among beings.

All four have in common, that they take living beings as object and that they are immeasurable, because the number of beings is immeasurable.

The four mental states, called *Brahmavihārā*, divine abodes or *Appamaññā*, immeasurables, illimitables or also immeasurable deliverances of mind are essential foundations for peace in one's own mind and also for peace among beings, among the beings living together in all kinds of social communities.

They are a foundation for harmony internally and also in contact and co-existence with others.

They are also an important practice for the achievement of higher spiritual goals, as the liberation

from all kinds of suffering, the signless, unshakable liberation of mind.

The *Brahmavihārā* are supportive to overcome mental defilements.

But only practicing them does not lead to path-knowledge, awakening and thus to final liberation and overcoming of all mental defilements.

In case one can attain the deep mental absorptions, *jhānā*, with them, and expand loving kindness towards all beings without exception, during this time the mind is liberated from defilements. They are thus called temporary liberation. The final liberation can only be attained by correct *vipassanā*-meditation, with the attainment of path-knowledge.

The immeasurables can be practiced as
qualities which determine our behaviour in daily life,
as protective meditation,
as samatha-meditation.

To develop these attitudes continuously, one should develop the immeasurables also in meditation, so long until one can attain absorptions, *jhānā*. Only in these absorptions one can stay uninterruptedly in these wholesome states of mind. Thus the habitual patterns of thinking and behaviour can be changed.

With *mettā* – loving kindness, friendliness,
karuṇā - compassion,
muditā - sympathetic joy,
one can attain the first up to third *jhāna*.

With *upekkhā* - equanimity one can only attain the fourth *jhāna*. For this one has to have practiced first with one of the other three immeasurables up to the third *jhāna*. Then based on that one can with *upekkhā* - equanimity attain fourth *jhāna*.

The practice by reflection, contemplation and behaviour in speech and deed are preconditions for the attainment of these deep meditative absorptions.

As these four states support different attitudes in different circumstances towards beings and as they are also antidotes for different mental defilements, one should be familiar with all four *Brahmavihārā*.

By practicing *mettā* – loving kindness, friendliness, benevolence one sees the happiness of beings. One wishes happiness for beings, including oneself and that the happiness will last or increase.

By practicing *karuṇā* – compassion one sees the suffering of beings and wishes the cessation of suffering.

By practicing *muditā* - sympathetic joy, joy with others' success, one sees the success, the wealth, the faculties of beings or anything that makes them in a wholesome manner happy. One wishes that their success will last long. One rejoices in the delightful states of beings.

By practicing *upekkhā* - equanimity one knows that all beings are the inheritors of their own deeds.

Mettā is an antidote for anger, ill-will. Both these states of mind are its enemies. But its close enemy is craving, because *mettā* is unselfish love, without craving and without asking something getting back.

Karuṇā is an antidote towards cruelty, but also towards disinterest towards beings.
Its enemy is cruelty, but also sorrow and worry are close enemies. Compassion is a wholesome

state of mind, whereas sorrow and worry are unwholesome states of mind, which are rooted in aversion towards reality.

Muditā is an antidote towards envy and jealousy. Both these attitudes are its enemy, but also searching for pleasure here and there and hypocrisy are its enemies.

Upekkhā is an antidote towards indifference, greed and hatred, but also towards partiality. *Upekkhā*, which contemplates actions and their effects is a protection in case of failure not to drop into unwholesome states of mind.

Especially when these divine abidings are practiced towards all living beings without exception, they lead to a broad, open mind. This is the opposite of a narrow, limited mind. The Buddha repeatedly emphasizes that a narrow mind is not capable of inner liberation from suffering. The narrow mind has a small horizon that only ever revolves around oneself, one's partner, children and family. Due to a lack of clarity, this limited awareness leads to a false search for happiness, which seeks security in partnership and family, but is ultimately the cause of all interpersonal conflicts.

SN 42. 8 The Conch Blower - Saṅkhadhamasuttam

"Just as a strong conch blower can easily send his signal to the four quarters, so too, when the liberation of mind by lovingkindness, compassion, sympathetic joy or equanimity is developed and cultivated in this way, any limited kamma that was done does not remain there, does not persist there."

The practice of Brahmavihārā paves the way for selfless behaviour, which is the prerequisite for right knowledge in the Buddhist sense.

The Brahmavihārā are thus the basis for:

1. Social behaviour and the inner attitude towards beings. They are a skillful combination of behavioural patterns to make one's own mind soft and flexible and to avoid the emergence of unwholesome tendencies, as well as to help all other beings to stay in wholesome states of mind. They should not be a makeshift solution that you call up when you get into difficulties, but should determine your entire being.
2. They form a good basis for developing concentration. Concentration is necessary to attain final liberation from suffering through wisdom.
3. Based on concentration with the Brahmavihārā, wisdom can be developed in *vipassanā* meditation. Through wisdom, the view of an existing "being" is transcended, the causes of the emergence of this "being" are uncovered, and only in this way can the cycle of existence, and thus suffering, be finally overcome.

Practicing *vipassanā* meditation with the Brahmavihārā is necessary to overcome attachment to these pleasant states of mind and the matter they produce in the body. Developing concentration up to *jhānā* with the Brahmavihārā is a very comfortable preparation for *vipassanā* meditation.

4.3. Developing wisdom

4.3.1. *Nāma-Rūpaparicchedañāṇa* - The knowledge of distinguishing materiality and mentality or purification of view (*diṭṭhi visuddhi*)

DN 34.2 Dasuttara Sutta, Expanding Decades

....
 "Which two things are to be thoroughly known?
 Mind and body (*nāma-rūpa*);
 these two things are to be thoroughly known."

The teachings of the Buddha are not a religion of faith or a religion revealed by a god. They show a way of learning, seeing, knowing, understanding and developing wisdom by one's own experience, through direct knowledge. It is a profound process of analysis of existence that leads to the final liberation from all kinds of suffering.

If one looks closer, what constitutes our life, our person, one will get two different kinds of phenomena. They are different because they have different functions and characteristics. These two types of phenomena can be described as physical and mental. The main difference is that mind can recognize an object and body cannot. Our body does not feel, and does not think. Only the mind thinks and feels.

By analyzing body and mind complete knowledge and understanding of existence can be gained, which brings liberation from suffering. Liberation can not be attained if one does not understand the things from which one wants to become liberated.

What we call existence, self, 'I' is a constant flow of impermanent physical and mental factors, internal and external in the present moment, in the past and future. To really understand this, one must examine it in detail, internally, externally and in the three times present, past and future.

One has to experience this for oneself, no one else can do this for oneself. Also by intellectual reflection one cannot go through this process of understanding. Understanding must result from direct confrontation with what one perceives. Perceiving should be free from ideas that have been formed over many years or even over many lives. Therefore, the preliminaries of ethics and concentration are very important.

Concentration meditation brings the mind in a simple, clear state. The mind is free from grasping pleasant experiences and rejecting unpleasant ones. It is also free from ideas that have been developed or have been acquired by hearsay. The mind is purified. And only with this purified mind the direct seeing is possible, which is necessary at this stage of meditation. This stage is preparation for the Buddhist *vipassanā* meditation (insight meditation). This process, which now begins in meditation is direct seeing with the mind.

Concentration meditation is a necessary condition. The perfections (*pāramī*) must also be well developed. Then it happens that this seeing out of deep concentration is possible. If these two factors are not present this direct seeing cannot take place.

By this way of gaining knowledge which becomes always deeper and more subtle with continued practice, both our thinking and our behaviour are influenced. By way of analysis and knowledge all areas of life are observed, penetrated, transcended.

The teachings of the Buddha are not a religion of dogma, but a way of exploration of our own life.

The teachings of the Buddha are a system of exploration, based on a potential which is inherent in all our minds, because we can recognize, perceive, understand. As humans, we have very good conditions for this.

The teachings of the Buddha have nothing to do with a special culture. Culture in the sense of habits, that a nation has developed, because by the Buddhist path the basic features of beings itself are explored.

The Buddha has encouraged his disciples not to accept anything uncritically, but to examine anything based on their own experiences. But he also taught how to prepare the mind for this experience of direct seeing. He has taught his students a practice of states of mind, which are beyond the mainly searching and dissatisfied everyday state of mind.

The view, which thus is obtained, leads to final liberation. It is not a system of reflective thoughts, speculations and assumptions on how liberation could be attained, but a way of direct experience.

What do we experience?

We see things as they really are.

From one's own investigations of reality one experiences directly, by one's own recognition one sees that there is no entity of being, no essence of a being. Our ordinary thinking creates the idea: I am Mrs Soandso, I am a teacher, I am the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Miller, etc ..

Most of the people think that the body belongs to themselves, that they are the body. If we examine out of a purified state of mind, what 'we' are, we see a continuous flow of phenomena that arise and pass away. These phenomena can be described because of their different characteristics and functions as physical and mental.

All these phenomena arise in mutual dependence. Nothing in the world of phenomena has an identity out of itself.

Seeing of all these phenomena and their transcendent understanding is regarded as awakening in the Buddhist sense. There is nothing mystical or mysterious in this process of awakening, because the awakening takes place through the work on one's mind, by understanding all the physical and mental processes and their conditions.

Awakening is the overcoming of the suffering causing root of ignorance. There is no ego in the Buddhist sense, which we have to overcome, or which we give therapy to. The mental factor or root of ignorance has to be overcome.

The antidote of this ignorance is the development of wisdom. With concentration meditation we have started this. Now we apply the already strengthened wisdom faculty to the analysis of body and mind. Wisdom is the essential spiritual equipment which makes liberation possible. It brings light into the ignorance.

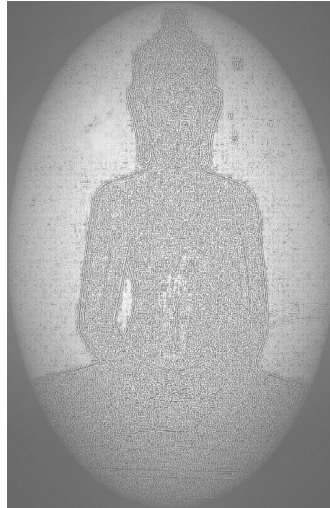
If one has taken a poison or a wrong medicine is given, in medicine also an antidote is given to eradicate the effects of the poison or suffering causing wrong medicine. Similarly it is with the suffering causing ignorance. We need to develop an antidote. This antidote is called wisdom.

Once one has purified the mind by ethics and by *samatha* meditation, one can proceed to the next stage. It is called purification of view (*ditṭhi visuddhi*). This step involves the complete analysis of physical and mental phenomena.

This stage of purification of view, eradicates through systematic analysis of what is existing, namely body and mind, the wrong view of an 'I', self or soul. It is essential at this stage to distinguish, what is matter and what is mentality. For this one must know all the individual constituents of matter and mind and one must be able to recognize them.

Based on the knowledge of body and mind gained out of concentration one can then find the causes of body and mind and then one can practice proper *vipassanā* meditation.

Insight knowledge, which leads to awakening, is the result of correctly practiced *vipassanā* meditation (*vipassanā-bhāvanā*). *Vipassanā* meditation one can only practice when one can see so-called ultimate realities. These ultimate realities can be of physical or mental nature. They are the basic parts out of which this person is composed. They are not divisible into smaller units. But they are not fixed existing, unchanging units. Materiality is not a solid mass which exists as an immutable basis. Mentality also is not a fixed entity existing somewhere. There is no continuously existing solid state, there is nothing static, that makes up this body and mind. How exactly it is one has to know by oneself in meditation.



4.3.1.1. Rūpa Kammaṭṭhāna - Contemplation of Materiality

To analyze materiality, one must start with four elements meditation, a *samatha* meditation. The four elements meditation must be developed so far, until one reaches a stable neighbourhood concentration. For this one must practice the four elements meditation, as the Buddha advises in *Mahāsatiṭṭhāna Sutta* DN 22, in all postures, as sitting, standing, lying, walking. When one practices four elements meditation one observes the characteristics of the elements in one's body and at external things. The characteristics of the elements are the body sensations, such as hardness, heat, movement etc., which we can perceive by body-consciousness. If one practices like this without interruption, one can at a certain point perceive material ultimate realities in their real appearance.

When one has practiced already *jhāna*-concentration with another object, it is easier to develop four elements meditation up to stable neighbourhood-concentration, because by *jhāna*-concentration the mind is already purified.

The four elements meditation is the bridge between *samatha* and *vipassanā* meditation. If one wants to practice *vipassanā* meditation correctly, with the goal of attaining the path, one cannot skip this step.

All materiality is composed only out of the 4 great elements, earth, water, fire, air. These are principles that have been given their names according to the realms in the world. We find these principles everywhere in matter, whether living or inanimate.

The Buddha has taught the analysis of body or matter generally as the first, before the analysis of mentality, because it is easier to examine first materiality at the beginning of meditation.

There are several reasons,

- on one hand matter is grother than mentality.
- on the other hand physical components have a longer lifetime than mental ones.
- Mentality has a very short lifespan and is very subtle. In order to perceive it in its actual appearance, the exploration of materiality is a good preparation and qualification for it.
- Materiality one can observe concurrently, simultaneously. Whereas mental phenomena one can observe only subsequently. Consciousness which observes aversion for example can arise only after the consciousness accompanied by aversion has ceased. This is because only one mind moment can occur at a time, not two simultaneously.

One can examine physical things on different levels. The stronger the concentration is, the finer things one can perceive. With less concentration one can perceive matter, thus also the own body, only on a rough level as body sensations. The perception of body sensations is correspondingly extended on a larger area. If one practices continuously, the perception becomes finer and finer and one can see the bodily phenomena more and more as they really are. Matter always consists of microparticles. The stronger the concentration, the more clearly one can see them. In the beginning one may perceive them as fine vibrations. If one does not find pleasure in this perception of the vibrations and remains with the observation of the body sensations according to the elements, the concentration becomes stronger and one can recognize after some time the microparticles exactly, distinguish and analyze them according to their components.

Material phenomena never appear alone, individually. They always appear in groups. These groups are called *kalāpā* in the commentaries on the Pali Canon. The Buddha himself used the word *kāya*, also with the meaning group.

These *kalāpā* are groups of at least eight components (earth-, water-, fire-, air-element, colour, smell, taste, nutritive essence).

The Pali term *kalāpa* means group, unit, bundle, collection etc .. *Kalāpa* are physical units which are much smaller than atoms.

They are even beyond what can be observed in science (elementary particles, quarks, etc.), as they perish very quickly after their appearing.

They are only visible with strong, deep concentration. If one can practice four elements meditation successfully, one can perceive these groups with mind consciousness, internally and externally. Here starts deep, direct understanding of our existence.

This direct seeing is only possible by deep concentration. The view of things changes by deep concentration. Deep concentration lets see things in a manner, which one can compare with looking through a microscope. The view out of fourth finematerial *jhāna* is a quite different from that of ordinary everyday consciousness. Out of this purified state of mind the Buddha himself also found the Dhamma.

The material groups have to be analyzed then into their individual constituents. Only then one can perceive ultimate realities.

These groups consist of the four elements, earth, water, fire and air, and of matter, which is derived from the elements.

These derivations include, colour, smell, taste, sound, sensitivities in the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, etc ..

The material groups are in a permanent flow of change. Our body consists of nothing else than these groups, called *kalāpā*. They occur in different compositions.

There is no physical stability, neither for internal, bodily materiality, nor in inanimate matter. There is only this steady flow of arising and passing away of tiny particles of matter.

As long as one has not analyzed these microcomponents, one still sees compactness and out of this resulting concepts. Only by analyzing these microparticles one can see ultimate realities on the material level with their characteristics and like this becoming free from suffering. Suffering which appears due to attachment to phenomena that do not exist on the ultimate level, or in other words, which are empty.

4.3.1.2. Nāma Kammaṭṭhāna - Contemplation of Mentality

*"All mental phenomena have mind (mano) as their forerunner;
they have mind as their chief; they are mind-made.
If one speaks or acts with an evil mind,
suffering (dukkha) follows him/her,
just as the wheel follows the hoof-print of the ox that draws the cart."*
Dhammapada 1

*"All mental phenomena have mind as their forerunner;
they have mind as their chief; they are mind-made.
If one speaks or acts with a pure mind,
happiness (sukha) follows him/her,
like a shadow that never leaves him/her."*
Dhammapada 2

In order to distinguish between materiality and mentality, one must carefully analyze both. After one has analysed all physical components precisely, based on the deep concentration out of four elements meditation, one has developed the ability to analyze mentality in detail. The way of analysis leads to deep understanding. By *samatha* meditation, the depth of concentration is strengthened. By the preliminary analysis of the body, the momentary concentration is strengthened. Both are prerequisites to understand mentality in a profound way.

The systematic exploration of materiality and mentality constitutes the insight stage 'knowledge of distinguishing matter and mentality' (*nāmarūpa-pariccheda-ñāṇa*) or the stage of purification 'purification of view' (*diṭṭhi visuddhi*).

For the Buddhist path of liberation mentality is the most important object of investigation, as one can see according to the Dhammapada verses quoted in the beginning. If we do not have this knowledge how mentality works, first known through learning, later realized through one's own experience, we cannot distinguish what is wholesome and what is unwholesome. And only when we have this knowledge, we can direct our lives towards wholesomeness. Most people are not aware of letting arise unwholesome states of consciousness. Many people even do not know what is wholesome and what is unwholesome and also not the appropriate consequences of both. Therefore, the following comments may be helpful for a better understanding of your own mind and the mind of other beings, as well as encourage to practice.

*"Bhikkhus, I do not see even one other thing that changes so quickly as consciousness (citta).
It is not easy to give a simile for how quickly consciousness changes."* AN 1. 9

The mind is not something unchangeable, ever lasting, but rather it consists of non-material individual components that arise with a very fast speed and completely pass away before new individual components arise. Together with materiality, *rūpa*, explained in the previous chapter, it is all what we call 'I', 'person' or 'being'.

The mind is still more fleeting and subtle than the material, presented in the previous chapter. The lifespan of material phenomena has the duration of seventeen mind moments, that is, a mind moment lasts only as long as one seventeenth of the time of a material phenomenon. It needs deep concentration and a well trained mind, to see how mentality works.

The Buddha used the description of five aggregates, called *khandha*, to summarize materiality and mentality. These five *khandha* include body, feeling, perception, mental factors and consciousness. These are only phenomena, composed out of the material and non-material ultimate realities which constantly arise and pass away. Included in these five groups is everything that is wrongly perceived as compact 'I'. In order to resolve this illusion that causes suffering, a systematic analysis of these groups is required.

Mentality (*mano*) consists of moments of consciousness (*cittakhaṇa*, *viññāṇa*) and their accompanying mental factors (*cetasika*).

They are called mind moments, because they exist only for a very short time and then they disappear, and also because they are not a fixed existing entity which is called consciousness.

Mind moments are always accompanied by specific mental factors. Consciousness never arises alone. In the Theravāda tradition 52 mental factors are distinguished.

What we call thoughts are several mind moments, which appear in a sequence according to a law in cognitive processes (*vīthi*). The particular consciousness moments have in this succession certain functions so that recognition of the object is possible. There are consciousness moments, which appear in cognitive processes and those which do not appear in a process.

In summary: there are consciousness moments, accompanied by mental factors, which usually appear according to a law in succession as a process.

All of these individual factors one must examine in order to understand what mind is. And as well mentality as also materiality one must understand in this way to go the Buddhist insight-path with the goal of liberation from suffering.

Consciousness

Consciousness can arise only when an object is present. The objects can be of material nature or it may be consciousness itself, it may be the mental factors or it may be the variety of concepts with which our mind is busy most of the time. It can also be *Nibbāna* when one has reached a path.

Consciousness itself has no other function than the knowledge that there is an object. All other mental functions are performed by specific mental factors.

In the human sensesphere consciousness can only arise dependent on a material base. There are six bases on which consciousness can arise. These are the eye-base, the ear-base, the nose-base, the tongue-base, the body-base and the heart-base.

Consciousness arises, recognizes the object and then it passes away. This process takes only a tiny fraction of a second. It has after this activity of the mere knowing no further existence. There can be only one moment of consciousness at the same time, only if it has passed, the next occurs. But as the consciousness moments pass away so quickly and are of extremely short lifespan, it seems as if one could see and hear at the same time. However, there is only one mental activity occurring at a time, only when this is over, the next mental process can occur with another object. The visual object and the auditory object are perceived alternately in rapid succession.

With respect to its quality (*jāti*) one can group consciousness with its appropriate mental factors into four types:

- kammically wholesome (*kusala*),
- kammically unwholesome (*akusala*),
- resulting, caused by wholesome or unwholesome kamma (deeds) (*vipāka*),
- functional, kammically independent (*kiriyā*).

The first two groups include the consciousness that creates through physical, verbal or mental

activities causes. It is that consciousness which according to the law of cause and effect, creates the foundation for what we experience in the future, in the near future or later future as objects.

**Wholesome consciousness has pleasant experiences as result,
unwholesome consciousness has unpleasant experiences as result.**

The last two types are neither wholesome nor unwholesome, so they are also classified as neutral (*abyākato*). The resultant consciousness is a result of previous wholesome or unwholesome actions, but has itself no further effect anymore. Only the reaction (javana/impulsion consciousness) towards the objects that have been experienced with this consciousness creates new kamma and results. The functional consciousness is neither cause nor effect.

The classification of the kinds of consciousness is due to the combination of the factor consciousness (*citta*) with the mental factors (*cetasika*). Consciousness alone cannot be wholesome or unwholesome, because it only recognizes the object. The accompanying mental factors direct it in one direction or another direction.

Wholesome and unwholesome consciousness can be further distinguished according to their roots. There are 3 wholesome roots, which are non-craving, non-aversion and wisdom and 3 unwholesome roots which are craving, aversion and ignorance. They are called roots because on them the corresponding results grow like the fruits of a tree grow according to its roots.

Another classification of consciousness into four types, refers to the sphere in which it occurs:

- consciousness of the sense sphere (*kāmāvacara*),
- the fine material sphere (*rūpāvacara*),
- the immaterial realm (*arūpāvacara*),
- supramundane consciousness (*lokuttara*).

The sense consciousness can be divided into wholesome, unwholesome, resulting and functional. To sense sphere consciousness belongs the ordinary consciousness, which we can let arise as humans. Finematerial consciousness includes the consciousness of the fine- material *jhānā* (1st to 4th *jhānā*). Immaterial consciousness includes the consciousness of the immaterial *jhānā*. Supramundane consciousness are the kinds of consciousness of the four pathes and fruits. These kinds of consciousness experience *Nibbāna*, the cessation of mind and matter, final peace, as object.

Consciousness can also be classified according to the place, where it arises.

So there is

- eye-consciousness,
- ear-consciousness,
- nose-consciousness,
- tongue-consciousness,
- body-consciousness and
- mind-consciousness.

The first five kinds of consciousness, arising on the bases of the eye, ear, nose, tongue and body include only one kind of consciousness according to the place where it arises. These kinds of consciousness can only perceive their specific object. Eye consciousness can only perceive colour and shape, nose-consciousness can only perceive smells, etc.. The mind-consciousness includes all kinds of consciousness that arise on the heart-base.

Feeling

Each consciousness is accompanied by feeling. Feeling has to be distinguished from sensation, which is of physical nature, such as hardness, pressure, etc.. It is the object of the body-consciousness, accompanied by one of the two physical feelings (pleasant - *sukha*, uncomfortable - *dukkha*).

Feeling is also to be distinguished from emotion, which is a complex of thoughts based on memories and which is not a single mental factor.

Feeling is at the second place in the usual enumeration of the five aggregates in the dhamma-discourses, it follows the physical group. Feeling is specially pointed out by the Buddha, because it has a special meaning for beings in the cycle of existence. By feeling arises craving, like this it is represented in the sequence of dependent origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*). It is a decisive precondition for craving, for the second noble truth, the cause of suffering, because it is this craving, which causes suffering. To overcome suffering, to overcome craving, one must understand feelings and learn to deal with them in a wholesome manner. For this one must learn to distinguish with which of the six roots the feeling is connected.

There are three kinds of feelings:

- pleasant (*sukha*)
- unpleasant (*dukkha*)
- neither-unpleasant-nor-pleasant (neutral) feeling (*adukkhamasukha*).

These kinds of feeling can be further differentiated according to the consciousness with which they occur.

52 mental factors (*cetasika*)

1. Seven universal mental factors (*sabbacittasādhāraṇa*):

Of the 52 mental factors 7 are called universal, because they accompany all kinds of consciousness, whether wholesome or unwholesome, whether resultant or functional. They are the minimum of mental factors in one mind moment so that an object can be recognized.

- 1.1. contact (*phassa*)
- 1.2. feeling (*vedanā*)
- 1.3. perception (*saññā*)
- 1.4. intention (*cetanā*)
- 1.5. one-pointedness (*ekaggatā*)
- 1.6. life-faculty (*jīvitindriya*)
- 1.7. attention (*manasikāra*)

2. Six occasional mental factors (*pakīṇṇaka*)

There is another group of six mental factors, which can accompany as well wholesome and also unwholesome consciousness. But they occur only occasionally, that means they appear not always all together and not accompanying all kinds of consciousness.

- 2.1. initial application (*vitakka*)
- 2.2. sustained application (*vicāra*)
- 2.3. decision (*adhimokkha*)
- 2.4. energy (*virīya*)
- 2.5. joy (*pīti*)
- 2.6. wish (*chanda*)

3. mental factors in connection with kammically unwholesome (*akusala*) consciousness.

The following four mental factors appear always together with kammically unwholesome consciousness, rooted in craving, aversion and ignorance (*akusala sādhāraṇa cetasika*).

- 3.1.1. ignorance (*moha*)
- 3.1.2. shamelessness/lack of respect towards oneself (*ahirika*)
- 3.1.3. lack of moral fear/lack of respect towards others (*anottappa*)
- 3.1.4. restlessness (*uddhacca*)

These four can either be accompanied by craving, aversion or by doubt.

3.2. mental factors accompanying consciousness rooted in craving (*lobha*):

- 3.2.1. craving (*lobha*)
- 3.2.2. wrong view (*diṭṭhi*)
- 3.2.3. conceit (*māna*)

3.3. mental factors accompanying consciousness rooted in aversion (*dosa*):

- 3.3.1. aversion (*dosa*)
- 3.3.2. envy/jealousy (*issa*)
- 3.3.3. stinginess (*macchariya*)
- 3.3.4. remorse (*kukkucca*)

3.4. mental factors with prompted unwholesome consciousness:

- 3.4.1. sloth, laziness (*thīna*)
- 3.4.2. torpor, stiffness (*middha*)

3.5. mental factors accompanying consciousness rooted in ignorance (*moha*):

- 3.5.1. doubt (*vicikicchā*)

4. mental factors in connection with kammically wholesome (*kusala*) consciousness.

There are 19 mental factors which appear always together with kammically wholesome, beautiful (*sobhana*) consciousness (*sobhanasādhāraṇa*). They appear in the beautiful wholesome kinds of consciousness and as well in resultant and functional beautiful consciousness.

- 4.1.1. confidence (*saddhā*)
- 4.1.2. mindfulness (*sati*)
- 4.1.3. moral shame/respect towards oneself (*hiri*)
- 4.1.4. moral fear/respect towards others (*ottappa*)
- 4.1.5. non-craving (*alobha*)
- 4.1.6. non-aversion (*adosa*)
- 4.1.7. equanimity (*tatramajjhatatā*, lit. there in the middle)
- 4.1.8./9. tranquility (*passaddhi*)
- 4.1.10./11. lightness (*lahutā*)
- 4.1.12./13. softness (*mudutā*)
- 4.1.14./15. flexibility (*kammaññatā*)
- 4.1.16./17. proficiency (*pāguññatā*)
- 4.1.18./19. uprightness (*ujukatā*)

The 19 mental factors mentioned up to this point occur in every beautiful, whether wholesome, resultant or functional, consciousness.

If one compares these beautiful mental factors with those of the unwholesome ones, there is probably no question as to which are desirable, which make one healthy and satisfied.

In order to develop and strengthen these beautiful mental factors, meditation, if properly guided and correctly practised, is a very effective method. Since, for example, in attaining *jhāna* concentration or in correct *vipassanā* meditation, one can dwell for long periods of time uninterruptedly in these wholesome states of mind and reap fruits accordingly, this kind of dwelling is a very auspicious occupation.

The ordinary consciousness of many people tends to move between craving and aversion with their corresponding unpleasant results. One then tries to compensate these results out of ignorance with new craving and attachment. In this way, the endless cycle of painful *saṃsāra* is created again and again.

The mental factors should all be distinguished individually. For this practice deep, sustained concentration is necessary.

With the not so deeply concentrated mind one cannot recognize all of the mental factors. Some, such as for example craving, envy, stinginess etc., one can also see in a gross manner by contemplative observation of the mind. This contemplative observation is an approach to the development of deeper concentration, however it is not enough to practice correct *vipassanā*-meditation with the aim of awakening.

One also has to analyse the different cognitive processes, when one wants to understand mentality.

If one wants to analyze mentality in meditation, one must first have attained an adequate, stable concentration. This can be neighbourhood concentration (*upacāra samādhi*), f. ex. with four elements meditation or absorption concentration (*appanā samādhi*).

SN 35.99 Concentration (*samādhi*)

"Bhikkhus, develop concentration (samādhi). A bhikkhu who is concentrated understands things as they really are.

And what does he understand as they really are? He understands as it really is: 'The eye is impermanent.' He understands as it really is: 'Forms are impermanent.'... 'Eye-consciousness is impermanent.'... 'Eye-contact is impermanent.'... 'Whatever feeling arises with eye-contact as condition—whether pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant — that too is impermanent.'... ear ... nose ... tongue ... body ...

He understands as it really is: 'The mind is impermanent.'... He understands as it really is: 'Whatever feeling arises with mind-contact as condition ... that too is impermanent.'

Bhikkhus, develop concentration. A bhikkhu who is concentrated understands things as they really are."

Furthermore one should be able to analyse materiality (*rūpa*) properly and completely, because in our existence of the five aggregates mentality always arises on a material base, which may be the eye-, ear-, nose-, tongue-, body- or heart-base. If an object occurs, it occurs simultaneously at one of the five senses and at the mind-door.

In Visuddhi Magga it is stated:

"But if he has discerned materiality in one of these ways, and while he is trying to discern the immaterial it does not become evident to him owing to its subtlety, then he should not give up but should again and again comprehend, give attention to, discern, and define materiality only. For in proportion as materiality becomes quite definite, disentangled and quite clear to him, so the immaterial states that have that (materiality) as their object become plain of themselves too.

... For in portion as materiality becomes quite definite, disentangled and quite clear to him, so the defilements that are opposing him subside, his consciousness becomes clear like the water above the (precipitated) mud, and the immaterial states that have that (materiality) as their object become plain of themselves too."³

If one has explored like this materiality and mentality in detail, one observes both groups in exchange to determine repeatedly their differences. If one clearly recognizes, this is matter and this is mentality, and there is nothing else in this existence, called person, one has reached this first stage of insight meditation, the distinction between matter and mentality (*nāmarūpa-pariccheda-ñāṇa*).

3 Buddhaghosa: Visuddhi Magga, translation Nyanamoli Mahathera, BPS 2011, p. 614

*The mind (cittam) is very difficult to see,
very delicate and subtle;
it moves and lands wherever it pleases.
The wise one should guard his/her mind (cittam),
for a guarded mind brings happiness.*
Dhammapada 36

4.3.2. Paṭiccasamuppāda - Dependent origination

Now after physical and mental phenomena, matter and mentality, have been explained, one might wonder where these physical and mental phenomena come from.

Since the Buddha's teachings are not a religion of faith, which is based on the belief in a creator, but are a system of analysis of the entire existence and its causes, the causes of the existence of beings can be found with the mental instruments concentration and mindfulness.

The knowledge then gained is based on one's own experience.

This is the next step in meditation, which is necessary to prepare the mind for insight (*vipassanā*) meditation.

In the Sutta MN 24, Rathavinīta Sutta, The Seven Carriages, the Venerable Puṇṇa gives a discourse to the Venerable Sāriputta, one of the main disciples of the Buddha, about the seven stages of purification (*sattavisuddhi*), which lead to complete liberation.

- The first stage is purification by ethics (*sīla visuddhi*),
- The second, the purification of mind by concentration (*citta-visuddhi*),
- The third, the purification of view or knowledge (*diṭṭhi visuddhi*).
This step includes the complete analysis of physical and mental phenomena, as they are explained in the previous chapters.
- The fourth stage is called purification by overcoming doubt (*kankhāvitarāṇa-visuddhi*).
This step includes the analysis of the causes and conditions of the mental and physical phenomena (*nāma-rūpa*), which will be described in this chapter.
It is also called the knowledge of the discernment of conditions (*paccaya-pariggahanāṇa*).
- Based on this knowledge acquired by concentration *Vipassanā* can be practiced in order to practice the other 3 stages of purification.

This means, on one hand for insight meditation one must have understood by what this existence is composed of, on the other hand, one must be able to see and understand the law of cause and effect (*kamma - vipāka*).

If one has not experienced these steps through one's own experiences, the consciousness does not penetrate to deeper levels on which impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and non-self become clearly evident.

Principally, the dependent origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) is not the field of everyday thinking, because it is a very profound teaching of the Buddha, which, concerning conditionality, which is its actual content, finally can only be attained by deep concentration and direct knowledge or understanding.

The Buddha himself said after his awakening in MN 26 Ariyapariyesanā Sutta:

*"I considered: 'This Dhamma that I have attained is profound,
hard to see and hard to understand,
peaceful and sublime,
unattainable by mere reasoning,
subtle,
to be experienced by the wise.
But this generation delights in attachment, takes delight in attachment,
rejoices in attachment.
It is hard for such a generation to see this truth,
namely, specific conditionality, dependent origination.'"*

In the Sutta MN 28, Mahāhatthipadopama Sutta, The Greater Discourse on the Simile of the Elephant's Footprint the venerable Sāriputta quotes the Buddha as follows:

*"Someone who sees dependent origination,
sees the Dhamma;
someone who sees the Dhamma,
sees dependent origination."*

Sāriputta continues:

"And these five aggregates affected by clinging are dependently arisen."

Briefly explained, the Buddha explained the dependent origination as follows:

*"When this is, that comes to be;
from the arising of this, comes the arising of that.
When this is not, that does not come to be;
from the cessation of this, comes the cessation of that."*
(MN 79)

In regard to these words one can see there is nothing that is produced without a cause, and if the causes are eliminated, it no longer exists.

According to the Four Noble Truths the first truth, with the question: 'What is suffering', and the corresponding response summarized as the five aggregates, has been already described.

The now following purification stage corresponds to the second noble truth:

'What is the cause of suffering?'

With the answer: Craving (*taṇhā*) is the cause of suffering.

The discernment of dependent origination is unique in the Buddha's teaching.

It cannot be found in any other religion in such a detailed and gapless presentation.

The practice and the resulting understanding is the basis for the complete responsibility for one's actions in body, speech and mind, and for the liberation from suffering. By a Buddha this system of cognition was discovered, but not created. Whether a Buddha appears in the world, or not, this law about the origination of all phenomena is always valid.

The dependent origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) includes the law of cause and effect of the origination of beings in the rounds of existence, where one factor results out of the previous one.

The *paṭiccasamuppāda* describes the main causes of the rounds of existence. There is not only one condition for the occurrence of a phenomenon. The result of an action can only come into effect if appropriate supportive conditions are present for their appearance. This recognition of the conditionalities, namely that only causes and effects exist, without anything else, as maybe a creator, a supreme being, or an eternally existing soul, is important to overcome the view of a self, an 'I', in order to become free from attachment and suffering, resulting out of wrong view, because there is nothing else than conditions and dependently arisen phenomena, conditioning and conditioned factors. As because of ignorance, the first factor of dependent origination, conditions are created again and again, dependently arisen results occur. In this manner the cycle of existence has been created since beginningless time and will continue in the future, if the ignorance will not be overcome.

The conditions, as well as the conditioned arisen phenomena are both ultimate realities, as well the mental as also the physical phenomena. There is nothing in this structure of the present five aggregates, which has not developed like this, and there also will not arise with their permanent change anything what is not conditionally arisen.

It is essential first of all to understand the conditions of the thus arisen present existence and then for deeper understanding, to go further back to previous existences. This investigation always has to be done on basis of ultimate realities in mind and body, shown in the preceding chapters. Their appearance has to be linked then causally by direct understanding or knowledge. This is at this

level as well possible because of deep concentration due to the *samatha* practice, as also by the ability to discern phenomena quickly by momentary concentration (*khaṇika samādhi*), gained through the discernment of body and mind, one has practiced before.

If one has in this manner sufficiently examined the causes and effects with regard to existence in general and one has become proficient in seeing both, causes and effects, one can also discern other phenomena, whether physical or mental on the level of ultimate realities. By linking causes and effects one gains profound insight into the nature of existence. Everything what arises, maybe pleasant or unpleasant phenomena, is cause or effect and both are, like all phenomena impermanent and therefore non-self. Without seeing this by one's own experience face to face, one cannot overcome ignorance and thereby conditioned suffering.

Twelve factors of dependent origination

The dependent origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) is represented by the Buddha in the discourses in a series of twelve factors with eleven connections:

1. with ignorance as condition,
2. formations (*saṅkhāra*) [come to be];
3. with formations as condition, consciousness (*vinṇāṇaṃ*);
4. with consciousness as condition, mentality-materiality (*nāma-rūpa*);
5. with mentality-materiality as condition, the sixfold base (*saḷayatanaṃ*);
6. with the sixfold base as condition, contact (*phassa*);
7. with contact as condition, feeling (*vedanā*);
8. with feeling as condition, craving (*taṇhā*);
9. with craving as condition, clinging (*upādānaṃ*);
10. with clinging as condition, becoming (*bhava*);
11. with becoming as condition, birth;
12. with birth (*jāti*) as condition, aging (*jarā*) and death (*maraṇaṃ*),
sorrow (*soka*), lamentation (*parideva*), pain (*dukkha*), mental unpleasantness (*domanassa*),
and despair (*upāyāsa*) come to be.

Such is the origin of this whole mass of suffering (*dukkha*).

Three periods of time

The twelve links of dependent origination can be divided into three periods of time to explain the related arising of rebirths in the past, present and future:

Through the five factors

ignorance,
craving,
attachment
intention accompanied by mental formations and
kammic potential

in the past life,

arise in this life

consciousness,
mentality and body,
the six sense bases,
contact and
feeling.

The active side is in the past life, the passive, resulting in this life.

By
 ignorance,
 craving,
 attachment,
 intention accompanied by mental formations and by
 the kammic potential
 in this life,
 in the next life
 consciousness,
 mentality and body,
 the six sense bases,
 contact and
 feeling
 will arise.

The active side is in this life, the passive in the future. In this manner there are 20 factors.

The twelve links of dependent origination, however, can also be applied to other conditions and conditionally arisen phenomena, because not all causes arise originated from a preexistence. Here, however, the understanding for rebirth conditions in order to understand the dimension of existence should be attained. Only through the contemplation of the present life, which in the beginningless cycle of existence, takes up only a very short time, one cannot really become aware of the ignorance that causes the migration from one existence to the next again and again.

One also speaks about three rounds,
 the round of impurities (ignorance, craving, attachment)
 the round of action (formations, becoming) and
 the round of results (consciousness, mentality and body, six sense bases, contact, feeling, birth, aging, death, etc.).

Ignorance

Although the dependent origination with its twelve factors begins by enumerating the ignorance as the first factor, this ignorance is caused by previously arisen ignorance in the stream of consciousness. That means the ignorance is not unconditioned but conditioned by the so-called influx (*āśava*) of ignorance, which is reproduced in case of non-insight again and again and accompanies or influences consciousness. This ignorance is due to the countless existences, through which we have gone, a strong underlying stream, which is activated by craving for existence due to lack of insight again and again. It can only be cut off by insight.

The understanding of dependent origination is very important for the understanding of the Buddha's teachings in general. This life is a very short period in the context of beginningless rebirth rounds, which this stream of consciousness has already gone through.

To understand life in general, it is very important to go back to past lives in order to understand their dependent origination. This practice is an important prerequisite to understand *Nibbāna*, the unconditioned. If one does not understand the conditions by which the conditioned is created, one cannot really strive for the unconditioned.

The fundamental causes for existence are ignorance and craving. Without craving, which is always accompanied by ignorance, existence would not appear. Repeated craving is attachment. Existence is conditioned by repeated craving what is attachment.

Two causes of human existence

Our human existence is caused by two mental processes. One is wholesome and one is unwholesome. The unwholesome is that which is accompanied by ignorance and craving, craving for human existence, desire to be male or female. Since it appears repeatedly, the craving becomes attachment.

The other mental process in order to become a human being has to be a wholesome one.

A wholesome deed as
 giving (*dāna*),
 ethical behaviour (*sīla*) or
 meditation (*bhāvanā*),
 is the second cause of human existence.

Giving (*dāna*) can be of material nature, as service, as giving of fearlessness or giving *Dhamma*. Ethical behaviour is the abstinence of transgression of ethical rules, as abstaining from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, etc ..

Meditation can be *samatha* meditation or proper *vipassanā* meditation.

This wholesome deed can be practiced directly before the moment of death as meditation or it can appear directly before the moment of death as a memory of a wholesome deed, which has been carried out at some time during that life.

Within this wholesome mental process one mind moment has so powerful wholesome kammical potential that it can let arise an entire human life. This mind moment is the factor formations (*saṅkhāra*) in the twelve-linked chain of dependent origination.

If according to the sequence of the individual factors one practices dependent origination in meditation, one will find out by one's own experience, that there is neither a person who creates the causes, nor a creator or a higher power, which governs our existence. There are only the factors, which are ultimate realities, which create conditions repeatedly. One factor causes the next.

The practice of dependent origination

If one wants to see cause and effect in accordance with dependent origination, one must be able to see and understand ultimate realities. Only based on ultimate realities one can practice this level of purification or insight.

Furthermore, one must be able to discern mind and body in the past. In the second discourse, the Buddha has given, in the Discourse on the Characteristics of Non-Self (SN 22.59), he instructs his disciples, to discern the five aggregates (body, feeling, perception, intention (mental formations), consciousness) in three periods of time, as presence, past and future.

In order to understand this very life, one must seek and understand the causes in the previous life. For this one begins in this life to go back to conception, and then from there to find the end of the previous life.

In order to find the moment of death of the previous life, one goes backwards in this life according to ultimate realities in mind and body, until one reaches at the first moment of consciousness in this life, which is the moment of conception. From there one goes back to the moment of death of the previous life. The mental process before that last moment in the previous life is determining for this present life.

If one has found here the wholesome cause for this life, one has to go further back in the previous life to find the mental processes connected with craving for this human life as man or woman. By analyzing the physical and the mental phenomena in the previous life according to ultimate realities one knows then, in which sphere the former existence of life had occurred.

In this way one can go back several lives for clearer and better understanding of existence and its causes.

Furthermore, one can connect then all the resultant mind moments and all by kamma caused bodily particles in this life with their respective causes.

Conclusions from the practice of dependent origination:

- If one practices long enough in this manner, one overcomes doubts about whether there is a person, a soul, a creator or anything else. We know clearly through our own exploration that there are only causes and effects.

- One finds out by one's own observation that there is a continuous stream of consciousness, but not an eternally existing unchangeable essence.

- The view of non-existence before or after this life, the view that there is only this one life, and that nothing will follow after death (annihilation view) is also overcome in this way.

- Similarly, the view that existence without causes comes from nowhere, is overcome in this way.

- One also knows by investigating more and more clearly that there is no 'I', no self, no ego. One begins to realize more and more the doctrine of non-self.

- One can also see directly that ignorance does not require any special effort to show its effects. It happens according to a natural law that produced phenomena show their corresponding effects. Here the non-existence of a supernatural creator or other supernatural forces, which create existence, become obvious. There is nobody who must or can think, these formations should now appear, and those should disappear. When *kamma* is ripened, it shows its effect, when its effect expires, the corresponding phenomena disappear.

- The opinion that actions show no effects will be overcome by this practice. Nothing happens by chance or automatically. We only experience the consequences of previous actions, which may be committed a very long time ago. Like this also fatalism is overcome.

- It also becomes clear through the practice of dependent origination that there is no arbitrariness by which the phenomena can occur, but that just the consequences of a specific deed will come to its respective appearance. In this sense, the Pāḷi term *dhamma* is to be understood in one of its different meanings as law, because it is a law that ignorance and craving lead to specific actions, and these in turn to their corresponding effects. Thus, fatalism can be overcome.

- Another aspect of the Buddha's teaching can also be seen, namely the emptiness (*suññata*). There is no person, no 'I', no soul, only conditioned arisen phenomena, devoid of a soul. The rounds of existence turn on and on, as long as there is ignorance and craving.

The liberation from suffering in the Buddha's teachings lies in the realization of selflessness (*anatta*). This realization has to be understood on three levels:

1. on the level that there are only bodily and mental appearances, nothing else;
2. on the level that there are only conditioned arisen or conditioning appearances. This realization should be gained on this level of practicing dependent origination.
3. On the level that all appearances are impermanent, unsatisfactory and selfless.

All these direct experiences, and knowledge arisen out of these, must be further strengthened by further, profound insight knowledge.

Based on this knowledge of dependent origination, obtained because of concentration, one can practice *vipassanā* meditation to go through the further steps of purification.

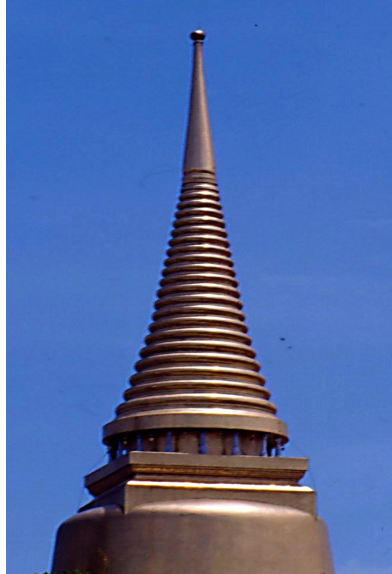
Only if one can clearly see at ultimate realities the three universal characteristics, impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and non-self, *vipassanā* starts. And only by clear insight during *vipassanā* the

defilements up to the latent tendencies can be overcome. And only in this manner, suffering can finally come to an end.

In the discourse SN 22.90 Channa Sutta, the Venerable Channa asked the Venerable Ānanda, about his practice because he could not see any progress in his practice. He could meet again and again craving in his mind, and also fear. He had already practiced insight meditation and could see the impermanence of mental and physical phenomena. Ānanda quotes a lecture, which the Buddha gave earlier. In this discourse the dependent origination is explained.

While he listened to these words, he began to understand.

The commentary explains that the Venerable Channa began to observe impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and non-self, before he had practiced and understood dependent origination. By this reason the insight remained weak and the view of an 'I' could not be overcome. *Anatta*, non-self, could not be understood. Thereby he got fear towards the cessation and destruction.



4.3.3. *Vipassanā-bhāvanā*- Insight-meditation

MN 149, Mahāsaḷāyatanika Sutta, the Great Discourse on the Sixfold Base

“And what things should be developed by direct knowledge?

Concentration and insight (samatho ca vipassanā ca).

These are the things that should be developed by direct knowledge (abhiññā).”

What is *Vipassanā-bhāvanā* - insight-meditation?

Vipassanā-meditation is a meditation, taught by the Buddha, a fully enlightened human being on materiality (*rūpa*) and mentality (*nāma*) as well as on their causes and characteristics. This kind of meditation, we can only find in the Buddha's teachings.

The Pāḷi term *vipassanā* is commonly translated as insight. It is composed of the prefix *vi* and the nominalization of the verb *passati*. The prefix *vi* has several meanings. It is used in this context with the meaning to see something exactly and in detail, or in a special manner. The verb *passati* means to see.

In this case of Buddhist *vipassanā*-meditation a special path of developing insight is meant. This term, translated as insight, cannot be applied on everything we call insight in our language. In the following description the Buddhist *vipassanā*-meditation will be explained, by which the difference should become evident.

By insight meditation the previously analyzed groups of existence, bases, elements, etc., and their causes are seen with deep concentration in their true nature.

The true nature of things expresses itself by the three universal characteristics

**impermanence (*anicca*),
unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha*) and
selflessness (*anatta*).**

They are inherent to all conditionally arisen phenomena. These three general characteristics

(*samañña lakkhaṇa*) must be directly experienced.

In the preliminary analysis of body and mind the specific or natural characteristics (*sabhāva lakkhaṇa*) of phenomena, such as for example that the earth is hard or firm, that consciousness recognizes an object, have been examined.

The investigation on specific characteristics is a prerequisite for the recognition of the universal three characteristics.

This path of insight is the path that leads to liberation from suffering, to liberation from the beginningless cycle of existence (*saṃsāra*), a path that leads to the destruction of all defilements and to the overcoming of ignorance.

Vipassanā meditation is a unique method that has been taught by all Buddhas. Today we are fortunate that we can find and read in the teachings from the lifetime of Buddha Gotama his instructions and explanations for meditation (*bhāvanā*). In addition, commentaries from the old masters in the footsteps of the Buddha, who have successfully practiced according to these instructions and who have also made by written evidence their experiences available, we have nowadays.

Merely thinking about one's life or focusing on an inappropriate object of meditation one cannot designate with the same term as an authentically transferred, profound, precious method.

Prerequisites and tools of insight meditation

The prerequisites for this meditation have already been explained in the preceding chapters. These are the purification steps:

- Purification by ethics,
- purification of the mind (by concentration meditation)
- purification of view,
- purification by overcoming doubts.

Vipassanā meditation is a highly developed stage of Buddhist meditation (*bhāvanā*). Only when the mind is free from unethical behaviour and purified by concentration and by general mindfulness, *vipassanā* can arise or can be systematically developed. For *vipassanā* the mind has to be free from the hindrances. If this state is attained, *vipassanā* can spontaneously arise, but not without causes, or it can be systematically developed. *Vipassanā* meditation is not a meditation-practice for beginners.

To live with the *dhmma* in a satisfying manner, is very helpful, in case the mind is mature enough, to develop *vipassanā* systematically. If *vipassanā* has been developed systematically, one should organize one's life in that manner, that the ability to practice *vipassanā* daily does not get lost. This means, one should keep one's mind clean from mental impurities, only then *vipassanā* meditation is possible.

For insight meditation two tools are essential,
one is continuous, strong concentration,
the other is mindfulness (*sati*).

With these two tools wisdom has to be developed.

Mindfulness (*sati*) in itself is not the same as *vipassanā*. For *vipassanā* a certain depth of correct mindfulness is necessary in order to gain insight.

Therefore, the explanations and practice about the mind are important knowledge and experience for the *vipassanā* meditation that builds on it. Since in seeing phenomena as concepts, a consciousness accompanied by delusion (*moha*) occurs, but in an unwholesome consciousness accompanied by delusion, the mental factor mindfulness (*sati*) is not present at all, one cannot penetrate deeply and create a basis for insight with such a view.

Mindfulness (*sati*) is a mental factor, which is only present in wholesome mind moments, in mind moments resulting from wholesome deeds and in the functional mind moments of an Arahant.

Therefore, it requires correct guidance how mindfulness (*sati*) at ultimate realities has to be practiced. The wholesome mental factor (*sati*) is not the same as any kind of attention towards things. In the Noble Eightfold Path the Buddha taught this factor as right mindfulness (*sammā sati*). Wrong mindfulness (*micchā sati*) itself as an unwholesome factor does not exist. In this case it is the absence of this wholesome mental factor, or attention to a conceptual object.

The three universal characteristics can be experienced only when the concentration is correspondingly deep and continuously. In Paṭisambhidāmagga⁴ it is stated:

"The contemplation of impermanence has to be understood with direct knowledge.
The contemplation of unsatisfactoriness has to be understood with direct knowledge.
The consideration of selflessness has to be understood with direct knowledge."
(*Aniccānupassanā abhiññeyyā*,
dukkhānupassanā abhiññeyyā,
anattānupassanā abhiññeyyā).

The Pāḷi term *abhiññā* means direct knowledge, which is not a knowledge by reasoning, by superficial observation or intellectual conclusion, but a knowledge that arises through direct vision, through confrontation face to face with the object, from a very deep concentration.

In most of the teachings the Buddha taught the path of insight based on mental absorptions, *jhānā*. There is the possibility also to start *vipassanā* meditation with the analysis of materiality, what is the four-elements-meditation, and to build up in this manner a certain depth of neighbourhood and momentary concentration by mindfulness and concentration.

With *jhānā* concentration as a base it is a very comfortable way to practice *vipassanā*. By the deep and sustained concentration insight is sharp and well aimed. For *vipassanā* concentration, the concentration must be able to go quickly into the depth, because the objects must be detected quickly due to their impermanent nature. This practice, the development of momentary concentration, has been practiced with the forerunning purification steps, purification of view and purification by overcoming doubts.

If one has seen dependent origination clearly the next step of insight follows as seeing the three characteristics.

One can experience the three characteristics only at ultimate realities, so the three preceding chapters about materiality and mentality and their causes were indispensable preparations. At concepts one cannot see the three characteristics through direct knowledge. One can reflect on impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and the selfless nature of concepts, this reflection can be useful for motivation for *vipassanā* meditation, but it does not lead itself to the destruction of the defilements by path consciousness and the associated liberation from suffering.

The confrontation of the mind with the true nature of the phenomena face to face is essential for liberation.

If one cannot attain *jhāna* concentration, one has to take the access to *vipassanā* by neighbourhood concentration. The four-elements-meditation is for this to a suitable method. The four-elements-meditation is an indispensable condition for proper *vipassanā* meditation as the objects of *vipassanā* meditation are body and mind. To be successful with *vipassanā*, one must observe both body and mind. The four-elements-meditation is the beginning of the analysis of materiality.

If one cannot directly experience the three characteristics of phenomena, impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and selflessness, one cannot speak of *vipassanā*. This meditation has been taught by all fully awakened ones since beginningless time, revived and taught in this world cycle by Gotama Buddha, from what we nowadays are still able to profit, as we have the teachings and lectures, as well as the instructions from later developed commentaries. For a long time, for many

4 The Path of Discrimination (Paṭisambhidāmagga), übersetzt Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, PTS Oxford, 2009, § 16, S. 14

centuries, this meditation has not been practiced in the Theravāda tradition or only by a few individuals. At the beginning of the last century this insightpath was revived in Myanmar (Burma) and has spread since that time in several countries.

If one cannot see the three characteristics of phenomena, it is based on delusion, which has been accumulated over a long period of time. This delusion ties to suffering. It is caused by unwholesome actions in body, speech and mind. It obscures the view.

If one has accumulated enough wholesome deeds in one's stream of consciousness, it opens up the recognizing of suffering and one starts the path to liberation. We have this unique opportunity as human beings. We experience happiness and suffering and we can reflect these experiences and search for liberation. Animals, for example, do not have this possibility of insight, they can feel pain and unpleasant feelings, but do not recognize suffering in general. As humans, we are also able to apply energy to increase wholesomeness.

In the Sutta MN 129 Bālappaṇḍita Sutta, Fools and Wise Beings, the Buddha describes how rare it is to be born as a human being:

"Suppose a man threw into the sea a yoke with one hole in it, and the east wind carried it to the west, and the west wind carried it to the east, and the north wind carried it to the south, and the south wind carried it to the north. Suppose there were a blind turtle that came up once at the end of each century. What do you think, bhikkhus? Would that blind turtle put his neck into that yoke with one hole in it?"

"He might, venerable sir, sometime or other at the end of a long period."

"Bhikkhus, the blind turtle would sooner put his neck into that yoke with a single hole in it than a fool, once gone to perdition, would take to regain the human state, I say. Why is that? Because there is no practising of the Dhamma there, no practising of what is righteous, no doing of what is wholesome, no performance of merit. There mutual devouring prevails, and the slaughter of the weak."

By accumulation of wholesomeness the possibility to practice correct *vipassanā* opens up. *Vipassanā* meditation leads to the liberation of the mind. It leads to the attainment of the four paths of awakening (enlightenment). By each path-consciousness, which is the culmination of *vipassanā* meditation, certain mental impurities are completely destroyed, so that they can no longer occur in the stream of consciousness.

Only with the attainment of Arahantship, the fourth awakening (enlightenment) stage, all mental impurities are removed without remainder and can no longer occur in the stream of consciousness. So all suffering has been overcome.

The Buddha himself describes his state of mind, with which he started to practice *vipassanā* as follows:

"When the concentrated consciousness in this way was

*pure,
clear,
without faults,
free from the subtlest defilements,
soft,
flexible,
stable and
unshakable*

I directed the consciousness to the knowledge of the destruction of influxes.

I directly knew as it actually is: 'This is dukkha.'

I directly knew as it actually is: 'This is the origin of dukkha.'

I directly knew as it actually is: 'This is the cessation of dukkha.'

I directly knew as it actually is: 'This is the path leading to the cessation of dukkha.'" (MN 4)

Consciousness during insight meditation

MN 138 Uddesavibhaṅga Sutta, The Exposition of a Summary

“Bhikkhus, a bhikkhu should examine things in such a way that while he is examining them, his consciousness is not distracted and scattered externally nor stuck internally, and by not clinging he does not become agitated.”

When insight meditation, based on full concentration or neighbourhood concentration, is properly practiced, the wholesome, beautiful impulsion-consciousness of the sense sphere arises. This consciousness can occur as impulsion-consciousness, depending on the object of observation, both in the five-sense-door-process as well as in the mind-door-process. It is either accompanied by a pleasant feeling (*somanassa*) or by a neutral feeling (*upekkhā*). In case it is accompanied by pleasant feeling, also joy (*pīti*) arises as a mental factor.

This consciousness is also accompanied by wholesome mental factors as confidence, mindfulness, shame, moral dread, non-craving, non-aversion, harmony, tranquility, lightness, softness, flexibility, skillfulness, uprightness and wisdom. It will have as a result pleasant objects in the future. Since every consciousness produces appropriate material groups (*rūpa kalāpa*), by this consciousness very subtle, light, flexible groups of materiality are produced.

The three characteristics of existence

Impermanence

By impermanence (*anicca*) is meant here the profound seeing and understanding of the passing away of ultimate realities in body and mind, which takes place innumerable times in one hour.

What is meant here is not contemplation on the emotions that change from time to time.

Nor is death in the conventional sense the realm of this contemplation. To understand death in the conventional sense, the Buddha taught contemplation of death as concentration meditation.

In *vipassanā* meditation, the compactness of things as continuity, function and groups, already broken down by the preparatory stages, must be broken down further with deeper understanding in order to develop a deep, liberating understanding of impermanence.

Unsatisfactoriness

By unsatisfactoriness or suffering (*dukkha*) is meant here the clear and profound understanding of suffering through constant passing away. It is the fundamental suffering inherent in the existence of these ultimate realities that constitute our existence and which, when intensely observed, is also felt physically and mentally as suffering and painful.

There are two levels of suffering, an ordinary level, namely suffering such as pain, grief, disease, etc., and a second level of suffering which constitutes the five groups of existence as suffering because of their perishable nature. The second level can only be understood through *vipassanā* meditation.

SN 46.72 Anicce dukkha Sutta

“Bhikkhus, when the perception of suffering is developed and cultivated in impermanence, it is of great fruit and of great benefit. ...”

When we observe the five aggregates with concentration and continuous awareness (*sati*) in *vipassanā* meditation, we can see that they appear and disappear from one moment to another in a very fast manner. They are impermanent and therefore unsatisfactory (*dukkha*). They are also *dukkha* because conditions such as illness, pain, worry, despair can arise only through the existence of the 5 groups of existence. As long as they exist, there is also suffering, because they are the foundation for the arising of suffering.

The Buddha described three kinds of suffering:

1. *Dukkha-dukkha*: the obvious kind of suffering, pain, death, grief, etc.,
2. *Saṅkhāra-dukkha*: The unsatisfactoriness of the formations (*saṅkhāra*)/ five aggregates

because of their uncontrollable and impermanent nature.

3. *Vipariṇama-dukkha*: The unsatisfactoriness which is caused by always changing circumstances. Worldly happiness is never long lasting and therefore unsatisfactory.

SN 38.14. Dukkha Sutta - Suffering

"Friend Sāriputta, it is said, 'suffering, suffering.' What now is suffering?"

"There are, friend, these three kinds of suffering: the suffering due to pain, the suffering due to constructions (formations - saṅkhāra), the suffering due to change. These are the three kinds of suffering."

Selflessness

When meditation is intensive, also the third characteristic of these ultimate realities, *anatta*, clearly can be perceived. There is a clear perception of the insubstantial, the not to any unit or entity belonging, the only arising and passing away of mental and physical particles, which do not belong to anybody. The Pāḷi term *anatta* is the negation of *atta*, which means substance or essence, or self, soul, person. In meditation this absence of an essence, this insubstantiality or absence of a permanent existing being is clearly perceived. Emptiness, non-existing of a self can be experienced by observing only constantly emerging and disappearing material and mental phenomena. The other two characteristics can also easily be perceived with ordinary, superficial consciousness and can be known on the conceptual level. The characteristic of selflessness can be really perceived only by deep concentration. One can understand this aspect of the Buddha's teachings, if the compactness of the phenomena is broken down, and one experiences ultimate realities. Another view is speculative and does not lead to liberation.

The understanding of selflessness has been started already:

1. by the analysis of body and mind, with the result that there are only physical and mental phenomena, without a fixed unit, as an 'I' or self;
2. by understanding the conditions of body and mind on the *paccaya-pariggaha-ñāṇa* stage. It has been clearly experienced that there are only cause and effect of phenomena.

These experiences need to be strengthened by the now following *vipassanā* meditation by the direct experience of the universal characteristics of impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and selflessness.

SN 46.73 Dukkhe Anatta Sutta

"Bhikkhus, when the perception of selflessness in what is painful, is developed and cultivated, it is of great fruit and of great benefit. ... "

Insight stages

If one has sufficient deep and momentary concentration, and the previous stages of analysis of body and mind and their causes have been practiced correctly, one goes with *vipassanā* meditation through various stages of insight.

The three universal characteristics are seen at these levels clearer and are experienced and understood with specific aspects.

These steps start by perceiving all three characteristics in a quite gross manner.

With continuous observation of the phenomena, there then comes a stage in which impermanence becomes particularly clear. One sees very clearly the arising and passing away of phenomena in body and mind.

If the momentary concentration at this stage is strongly developed, one can see the rise and fall continuously and easily in all phenomena.

Thus, as the wholesome, beautiful consciousness of the sense sphere arises over a long period of time, the wholesome mental factors accumulate very pleasant states in body and mind, usually accompanied by great joy and happiness. On the one hand, these states are called a blessing of

vipassanā meditation; on the other hand, if one becomes careless with the practice, defilements arise in the mind through attachment to these states. These defilements are then called *vipassanā upakkilesā*, defilements of insight meditation. They are only defilements when one becomes attached to these pleasant states, thereby preventing further progress on the path of insight.

If one has practiced correctly, the wisdom ability is very sharp and one can see bright light. Mindfulness is continuously focused on the appearances and understanding is effortless. One can practice for a long time.

If one continues to practice correctly, the mind can then only perceive the passing away of phenomena.

It comes to the point that one can no longer perceive the arising, but one sees only the disappearing, without interruption, in a very quick succession. At the beginning of the practice, one could still see clearly the three stages, arising, static phase and disappearing and differentiate them from each other, now one sees only the disappearance. At the preceding insight stage one could still see material groups (*rūpa kalāpa*) and also see the mental groups, now one sees only ultimate realities passing away. These ultimate realities are now clearly perceived without effort.

At this stage also the disappearing of the *vipassanā* mental process, the observing mental process, is clearly to be seen, an important step to understand selflessness deeper.

Then a stage follows in which the *dukkha*-aspect, which lies in impermanence becomes very clear. If one continuously perceives the passing away of phenomena, one can clearly see that there is nothing what one can hold on.

With improving practice, the shortcomings and deficiencies of the phenomena in all times and in all realms of existence are seen more and more.

The *vipassanā* knowledge is becoming increasingly clear and focused. With the rejection of worldly phenomena, the joy becomes stronger in one's practice and the enlightenment factors mindfulness, investigation on phenomena, energy, joy, tranquility, concentration, equanimity become increasingly strengthened.

The experience during these insight stages are only possible from profound states of mind. The superficial everyday consciousness is not able to know like this.

One sees during these profound insight stages the deficiencies of all existing and arising phenomena and develops out of these deep experiences, the desire for liberation from all that, which one was attached to since unimaginably long periods.

This wish is in no manner aversion, because then unwholesome mental processes would occur, which would cut off the insight. The wish for liberation is a mature desire born out of matured investigation.

After thorough examination of the conditionally arisen phenomena practiced in the previous insight stages, opening into the wish for liberation, a sublime equanimity has been developed. The knowledge that this is the way leading to the cessation of formations, which is the final liberation, has been stabilized.

It has been developed a powerful insight knowledge (*balava vipassanā*) with the preceding insight stages, since one can only see the desolution of phenomena.

There occur no complaints, the mind can stay for a very long time focused and calm on the objects of observation. Mindfulness is present without effort. One can perceive very subtle conditions. There is now neither longing for, nor worry about the phenomena, the mind dwells with equanimity, neutral and peacefully towards all phenomena with strong mindfulness. Also here one sees only the passing away of phenomena, now in a very subtle manner. The mind now finds neither pleasure in any phenomena, nor does it reject them.

At this stage, the characteristic of selflessness (*anatta*) is experienced very clearly.

By continuing the practice correctly, it can be with sufficiently developed perfections (*pāramī*), that the culmination of *vipassanā* meditation, the path-mental-process, the awakening, occurs. Consciousness takes then *Nibbāna*, the unconditioned, as an object.

Until the complete liberation (arahantship) from all defilements, the insight stages have to be practiced four times.

The awakening in the Buddhist sense happens in four pathes, that of stream-entry, that of once-returner, that of non-returner and that of the arahant.

With each path impurities (*kilesa*) are destroyed, so that they can no longer occur in that stream of consciousness. The complete destruction of all the impurities of the mind is the only goal of any Buddhist practice, for only then the liberation from any kind of suffering is possible.

The knowledge, gained in the higher insight stages arises only due to a high level of realized *pāramī*, perfections, and longterm dwelling in wholesome states of mind. These lasting wholesome states of mind can arise only through control of the mind over diffuse internal and external impulses.

To go this path a teacher who knows this path by personal experience and who has reached the goal, is of great help. One avoids many roundabout ways and unnecessary difficult experiences. The insight path in *vipassanā* meditation appears differently than people unexperienced in *dharmā* practice imagine this path. Only a self-awakened Buddha, like the Buddha Gotama in our world cycle, can find out, walk and understand this path alone to teach it. We as followers or disciples need a teacher who has reached the goal to guide us to the goal.



5. Perfection of the *Pāramī* - Perfections

- Preconditions for real happiness -



The 10 perfections are:

1. Generosity,
2. ethical behaviour,
3. renunciation,
4. wisdom,
5. mental energy,
6. patience, forbearance,
7. truthfulness,
8. determination,
9. loving kindness,
10. equanimity.

They are the prerequisites for any spiritual progress. They are the basis for true, lasting happiness. These 10 perfections are spiritual qualities, which one can both develop and complete in everyday life, as well as in meditation and especially in longer meditation periods.

The perfections *pāramī*, are prerequisites for meditation. Their fulfillment to a certain extent is also necessary in order to gain access at all to meditation. Meditation, in the sense of developing concentration and wisdom, is necessary in the Buddhist teachings in order to gain awakening (enlightenment).

The development of perfections to a certain degree is a prerequisite for any spiritual realization or liberation, both for the achievement

of a streamenterer (*sotāpanna*)

of a once-returner (*sakadāgāmi*)

of a non-returner (*anāgāmi*)

of a holy one (*arahant*), i.e., for the 4 stages of holiness

as well as for 3 *samāpatti*, achievements (lit. perfection, full effectiveness), namely
jhāna samāpatti (mastery of 8 *jhānā*)
phala samāpatti (fruit achievements of the 4 paths, as well as
nirodha samāpatti (cessation state).

The perfections, *pāramī*, are a useful set of characteristics to overcome egocentricity, a collection of noble qualities, to overcome any kind of suffering, the conditions in order to experience true happiness.

In Buddhavaṃsa (chap. 2), Khuddaka Nikāya, the path of the Buddha Gotama and that of previous Buddhas to Buddhahood is described during their lives as Bodhisattas.

The Venerable Sāriputta asks the Buddha at what time he has made the decision for the first time, to attain Buddhahood, and what perfections he had to fulfill in order to attain perfect enlightenment.

Here he enumerates ten *pāramī*:

1. *Dāna* - generous giving,
2. *sīla* - ethical behaviour,
3. *nekkhamma* - renunciation,
4. *paññā* - wisdom,
5. *virīya* - energy, effort,
6. *khanti* - patience and forgiveness,
7. *sacca* - truthfulness,
8. *adhiṭṭhāna* - determination,
9. *mettā* - loving kindness,
10. *upekkhā* - equanimity.

In Buddhavaṃsa the Buddha laid down based on his own past lives as a Bodhisatta the conditions for the Bodhisatta ideal. According to this story, the Buddha, as the ascetic Sumedho laid down countless aeons before, the insurance to become a Buddha at the feet of Buddha Dīpaṅkara. He renounced the attainment of *Nibbāna* for the benefit of all beings. He received a prediction of the Buddha at that time, who confirmed his desire. The Bodhisatta Sumedho then went into solitude and reflected about the qualities that have to be developed in order to achieve the goal. Like this he found the ten *pāramī*, as the necessary characteristics to attain Buddhahood, the prerequisites for perfect enlightenment, Bodhisambhāra. From all 23 Buddhas following the Buddha Dīpaṅkara, the Bodhisatta has been confirmed in his desire to attain Buddhahood.

He tells about this:

*"When I heard his words too (the confirmation that he would achieve Buddhahood),
all the more did I incline my mind.*

*I resolutely determined on further practice for fulfilling the ten perfections."*⁵

All *pāramī* have in common that their goal of action is, on the one hand, the welfare of other beings with the function of helping others. On the other hand, purification from all defilements should be achieved in one's own mind in order to attain Buddhahood. Its cause is compassion towards the suffering of all beings. Besides compassion, the use of skilful means is common to all *pāramī*. Compassion and wisdom are the two mutually supportive qualities for effectively helping other beings to become free from suffering. By properly practicing the *pāramī* all obstacles obstructing the path of one's own liberation from suffering and of the liberation of all other beings are overcome. They are the necessary conditions for any kind of true happiness, for worldly and for supramundane happiness.

Important for fulfilling the *pāramī* as for developing all mental qualities, is the motivation (*cetanā*), of any action. One should always clarify one's own motivation for all actions in body, speech and mind.

5 Buddhavaṃsa in Minor Anthologies of the Pali Canon, Vol III, 1975, Pali Text Society, translated by I. B. Horner, S. 33 § 14

Confidence is necessary at the beginning to start with the practice of the perfections. The confidence will be strengthened by studying, listening to the teachings, practicing and reflection.

The development of the *pāramī* has to be performed together with the development of mindfulness (*satī*). Without *satī* no giving, no ethical behaviour, no wisdom is possible. *Satī* is strengthened by practicing *pāramī*. *Satī* is the most important tool on the entire path. It is the ability to penetrate phenomena deeply and directly, not to remain on the surface. Only like this deep understanding and wisdom can be the result.

If we want to improve our living conditions, the *pāramī* are a program of attitudes that support this. We need to learn what is *kusala* and what is *akusala*. *Kusala* can be translated as wholesome, because it contributes to our mental and physical healing. The literal translation means skillful, skillful in the sense that it involves skillful mental states and actions, which at the present make our life easier and in the future will bring us less difficulties and problems internally as well as externally. Skillful are these states of mind especially in the sense that they lead to the complete awakening.

The *pāramī* are important qualities that support the entire *Dhamma* practice.

They are qualities that can be practiced at all levels, in everyday life, at work and on the highest levels of insight meditation. They lead us if we have understood them correctly, to grow beyond the limited view of a narrow ego.

They open the way to deeper levels of the mind, to mature to a true human being, to fully profit from the potential of being a human. One must know them exactly and become therefore again and again familiar with them, so that one can develop them spontaneously.

Wisely practiced, all the perfections result in a non selfish attitude, because their basic tendency is to act for the benefit of all beings.

Also in a meditation-session one can strengthen the *pāramī* by remembering them, for this the following example:

1. Confidence:

Namo Tassa bhagavato arahato sammā sambuddhassa

Namo Tassa bhagavato arahato sammā sambuddhassa

Namo Tassa bhagavato arahato sammā sambuddhassa

Honour him, the Blessed One, the Holy One, the Perfectly Enlightened One.

2. Forgiveness (*khanti*):

- May all beings, to whom I have caused in any manner suffering or harm out of ignorance whom I have hurt or offended forgive me.

- May I forgive all beings, who have caused in any manner suffering or harm out of ignorance to me, who have hurt or offended me.

- May I forgive myself for all unwholesome actions that I have committed out of ignorance.

3. Mettā:

3 - 5 minutes

4. Determination (*adhiṭṭhāna*):

May the mind during the next ... minutes with wakefulness, (f.ex. white Kasiṇa) take as an object to achieve the 1st *jhāna*.

May the mind, when other physical or mental objects arise, return to the main object of meditation with **equanimity**.

5. Samatha meditation:

renunciation (*nekkhamma*): The mind accepts only the object of meditation as an object, no sense objects.

Energy (*virīya*): the mind repeatedly returns to the object of meditation.

Wisdom (*pañña*): In the case of the *samatha* meditation it is wisdom that one always knows and observes the object. When the mind is distracted, there is no wisdom. Wisdom is also the awareness about the fact that one can achieve higher spiritual goals with this simple object of concentration.

Truthfulness (*sacca*):

a. One is honest with oneself and follows the decision to stay with the object of meditation.

b. One reports honestly after meditation, how the meditation really was.

c. Practicing f. ex. Mindfulness of Breathing or another object as a means to realize the universal 4 Noble Truths.

6. Sharing of merits (*dāna*):

May all beings share in the merits of this practice.

The listing of steps 3., 4.1., 4.3. corresponds to the 7 stages according to MN 24 to reach the final Nibbāna without attachment.

According to MN 24, Rathavinīta Sutta - The Seven Carriages corresponds

3. to the stage *sīlavisuddhi* - purification of ethics,

4.1. the stage of *cittavisuddhi* - purification of consciousness,

4.3.1. the stage *diṭṭhivisuddhi* - purification of vision,

4.3.2. the stage *kaṅkhāvitaraṇavisuddhi* - purification by overcoming doubts.

In 4.3.3. the stages

- *maggāmaggañāṇadassanavisuddhi* - purification through knowing and seeing path and non-path
- *paṭipadāñāṇadassanavisuddhi* - purification through knowing and seeing the path of practice
- *ñāṇadassanavisuddhi* - purification through knowledge and seeing

are included.