



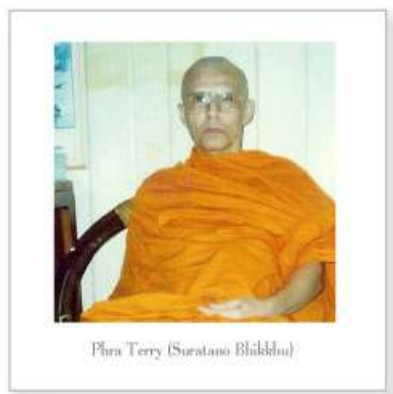
# Vistas

**Buddhist Insights into Immortality**

T. Magness  
(The Venerable Suratano Bhikkhu)

# PREFACE

(to the triple-gem.net edition)



Phra Terry was born Terence Barnett Magness on May 1929 in Penang, then British Malaya into an English Catholic family. He attended school at St. Xavier's Institute and, the church nearby. The idyllic life as a youth came to an abrupt end with the Japanese invasion of Malaya and with it, his education as well.

By February or March of 1946 at about 16-17 years old, he and an elder sister fled Penang for Thailand seeking safety from Japanese bombardment. His parents had already been stationed in Southern Thailand as his father was employed by a British company there. One sister, however, chose to stay in Penang. This sister, who was a Catholic nun, subsequently became the Mother Superior there. She died some 30 years ago.

His parents were tragically killed by Japanese bombs like so many others. The sister, who fled with him, was interned in a camp in Thailand, but managed to survive the war, and married a Thai of royal lineage. His brother-in-law owned an interior decoration business when peace arrived, and Phra Terry worked for him until he became a monk. Both his sister and brother-in-law were lost in a tragic car accident in 1971, a year after Phra Terry was ordained.

With his formal education ended precipitously, Phra Terry taught himself the 3Rs, if you will. He delved into humanities and the arts and, indeed, all matters metaphysical, esoteric, social and scientific and so forth that could occupy an enquiring mind. He spent his time at bookshops and libraries exploring the philosophies and thinking of the ancients. He had a voracious appetite for religion, philosophy, history, literature and cultures of the Romans, Greeks, Indians, Chinese, and the Europeans and others.

Apart from his apparent love of books and knowledge; he led a pretty normal life of a young man, sometimes going to the movies and partaking of fine foods, music and such like with friends. However, one group of his friends – 3 of them were of a different bent, they were interested in meditation and the Dhamma. One of these friends, Archarn Charoen Phanrat, an engineer by profession introduced him to Wat Paknam in 1958, along with the other two who were architects.

This small group of friends would go to Wat Paknam by bus and learn meditation there on a regular basis from a Mae Chi (an 8-preceptor, upasika), Archarn Kalayawadee. She was an outstanding student of the great sage Luang Phor Mongkol Thepmuni and she taught Phra Terry meditation. She

subsequently founded the Mongkol-Dham Group, Bangkok with her husband Archarn Charoen (since deceased in 1992). Phra Terry and their other friends were foundations members as well.

Phra Terry learnt and practised the Vijjā Dhammakāya and the Method of Meditation for 12 years before he was ordained as a monk at Wat Doi Suthep, Chiangmai. After his ordination he went to spend some months at Wat Djittabhawan, Pattaya in 1971. From May 1971, he went to Wat Paknam and remained there for some years before returning to Wat Doi Suthep. Phra Terry spent more than 20 years in Chiangmai and still lives there.

Phra Terry's writing career was prompted by the total lack of an English translation of Luang Phor's Teachings on the Vijjā Dhammakāya in the 1950s. His first book, "*The Dhammakāya – Metaphysical Implications*" was published in 1960 and it was later expanded and renamed *Sammā Samādhi I*, in 1961. His second book, *The Life and Teachings of the Venerable Chao Khun Mongkol Thepmuni* was published later in the same year, 1960.

Then *Sammā Ditṭhi – A Treatise on Right Understanding* was published in 1962; another book, *Sammā Samādhi II (Right Concentration)* in 1963; and, *The Altitude & the Buddhist Experience*, in the early 1970s after he became a monk. A couple of these books were expanded, re-arranged and renamed in later editions. For instance, *The Vistas – Buddhist Insights into Immortality* (is the enlarged and renamed *Sammā Samādhi I*) and *Samatha Vipassanā: An Exposition of Attainments*, is the enlarged *Sammā Samādhi II*.

Phra Terry's books exhibit a rare quality of an in-depth personal understanding and knowledge of the Sublime Dhamma and an appreciation of ancient religion and philosophies. His explanations of how the law of kamma works in ancient as well as contemporary societies are instructive and enlightening. From his works, a reader can see that he knows the Vijjā Dhammakāya and the Method of Meditation, for he is a meditator himself.

As disciples of Luang Phor and Phra Terry, we have, with the aid of his books, come to understand a little of the Sublime Dhamma in its original condition and pristine purity and are profoundly grateful to them both.

The central message of the Buddha is communicated clearly by his works: that all earnest seekers who are upright, without guile and deceit and intelligent, would be able to achieve to the Ultimate Release. And, the unique Dhammakāya Method of Meditation is the means to cultivating the Noble-Eightfold Path in full scope and measure and to comprehending the Four Noble Truths in perfect clarity, without taint or distortion.

The Editors  
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# Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

*"Let any intelligent man come to me, any man who is also without guile, not a deceiver, but an upright man, and I will teach him. And if he follows my instructions, to know and realise for himself even in this very life that perfection which earnest men seek, going from a home to a homeless life, then he too shall know and realise that same perfection in seven years. Seven years? Why, even if he so practises for seven months, nay, seven days, he may so realise. Now this I say not so as to win pupils, nor wishing to make others fall from their religious vows, nor desiring to make them give up their ways of life, nor thinking to establish them in wrong ways, nor making them renounce ways that are good. Not so. But there are ill things not put away, Nigrodha, things that have to do with corruption, suffering, decay, death, and rebirth to come, without end. It is for the rejection of such suffering that I teach, living according to which teaching all corruption shall be put away and wholesome things brought to increase. By which even in this very life, by his own supernormal powers, a man may realise the knowledge and the wisdom of perfect insight, and therein abide."<sup>1</sup>*

This statement delivered to the ascetic Nigrodha, who considered that Buddha's doctrines were aimed to overthrow the views and practices of other sects, is now more than twenty-five centuries old. We know that Buddha made much of impermanence (anicca), suffering (dukkha), and not-self (anattā), the three characteristics which dominate existence, and that he was never weary of pointing out a way by which they could be transcended. The way has become generally known as the Noble Eightfold Path. Namely:

- (1) Sammā Ditṭhi (Right Understanding);
- (2) Sammā Sankappa (Right Aspiration);
- (3) Sammā Vācā (Right Speech);
- (4) Sammā Kammanta (Right Conduct);
- (5) Sammā Ājīva (Right Livelihood);
- (6) Sammā Vāyāma (Right Endeavour);
- (7) Sammā Sati (Right Mindfulness); and
- (8) Sammā Samādhi (Right Concentration).

In this context we are concerned with the last and final clause, the apex of them all, Sammā Samādhi, it being the approach whereby the extra-sensory faculties are developed. The faculties let it be reaffirmed here, which are latent in all creatures without exception.

Now if Buddha made much of the three characteristics of impermanence, suffering, and not-self, he even made more of their opposite, namely – Nibbāna; which he characterised as the highest bliss (Nibbānam paramam sukham). We witness him explaining to another ascetic, Bhaggava, how certain recluses have abused him with groundless and empty lies, accusing him of preaching that when once one has attained emancipation one regards the whole universe as ugly.

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<sup>1</sup> D.N.iii.56-7

## Nibbāna – the Beautiful

*“But this I have never said, Bhaggava. Even this do I say: “Whensoever one reaches up to the Release, called the Beautiful, and therein abides, then he knows indeed what Beauty is!”*

When Bhaggava, however, requested to be taught, he was dissuaded, on the score that:

*“It is hard for you, Bhaggava, holding other views, acquiescing in another faith, and having other inclinations, different aims, and a different system, it is hard for you to so reach up to the Release, called the Beautiful, and having reached it to therein abide.”*

## The Ten Pāramis

Thus when Buddha stated that he would teach any intelligent man, without guile, a non-deceiver, and upright, the implication is that even to attain an ordinary good life an individual must possess inner resources. The inner resources accumulated and assimilated in numberless past existences, called pārami. Of which ten are basic. Namely:

- |                              |                                  |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| (1) Dāna (Charity)           | (6) Khanti (Fortitude)           |
| (2) Sīla (Morality)          | (7) Sacca (Truth)                |
| (3) Nekkhamma (Renunciation) | (8) Adhiṭṭhāna (Earnest Resolve) |
| (4) Paññā (Wisdom)           | (9) Mettā (Compassionate love)   |
| (5) Viriya (Energy)          | (10) Upekkhā (Equanimity)        |

Without these resources at one's command it would be futile to try, for they are the very qualities, in fact, which make a man intelligent, without guile, a non-deceiver, and upright.

## The only Way to Nibbāna

Let it be reaffirmed here once and for all. There is only one way towards ultimate release; the way as prescribed in the following text. It may be questioned, however, how there can be only one way when 40 such ways are given in Buddhist texts, entailing meditation (kammaṭṭhāna) upon a specific subject to the exclusion of all else. Namely:

- |                          |                           |  |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| (1) Buddha               | (14) Wind                 | (31) Compassionate love                    |
| (2) Doctrine             | (15) Blue                 | (32) Benevolent pity                       |
| (3) Order of Disciples   | (16) Yellow               | (33) Sympathetic joy                       |
| (4) Morality             | (17) Red                  | (34) Equanimity                            |
| (5) Generosity           | (18) White                | (35) Infinity of Space                     |
| (6) Deities and spirits  | (19) Light                | (36) Infinity of Consciousness             |
| (7) Death                | (20) Sky                  | (37) Voidness                              |
| (8) Body                 | (21–30) Corpses: bloated, | (38) Neither Perception nor Non-perception |
| (9) In-and-out breathing | purple, festering,        | (39) Loathsomeness of food                 |
| (10) Quiescence          | fissured, gnawed,         | (40) Analysis of the 4 elements            |
| (11) Earth               | scattered, pounded        |  |
| (12) Water               | and scattered,            |  |
| (13) Fire                | bloody, wormy,            |  |
|                          | bony                      |  |

It will be observed that they are not ways as such but subjects of meditation. What is more, it is not meditation in the generally accepted sense of the term, but as one scholar correctly notes:

*“Meditation, in the Buddhist sense of the word, is not mere desultory reflection but a severe exercise in attention, discipline of will and mind, and concentration of thought.”*

## **Purpose of Meditation**

Meditation on these subjects is designed so as to winnow the mind from all distractions and attachments (amongst which it is incessantly scattered and diffused from second to second) and by focusing the attention upon a specific subject to attain to tranquillity. And not only tranquillity but to mental equipoise (*samatha*) and that one-pointed (*ekaggatā*) potential of concentrated-absorption called *jhāna*.

It is obvious that it is impossible for the mind to attain any degree of coherence or insight when it is perpetually effervescent and confused. This is apparent even as regards the ordinary business of life, wherein a great deal of psychic energy is wasted and diffused. To the highest degree, therefore, is *samatha* an imperative when the intention is not only to conserve energy but to pierce beyond the veil of sense-data and penetrate into the vistas of Ineffability.

Thus the 40 subjects of meditation are devices provided to suit the mentality and disposition of the particular audience in hand, not two of which coincide, some requiring something physical and crude, others something impalpable and refined. Meditation on corpses in various stages of decomposition, for instance, is designed for those who possess an unnaturally lustful and materialistic nature; and, they are therefore recommended to consider in earnest the state of decrepitude and disintegration to which all delight in the niceties of physical charm inevitably declines. And so forth.

But whereas most of the *kasinas* are *external devices* by which one-pointedness of concentration is achieved, the Method as applied and explained in the following text is an *internal process* and no artificial device. As stated of old:

*“Even in this body, six feet in length, with its sense-impressions, thoughts, and ideas, is the world, the origin of the world, the cessation of the world, and the way leading to the cessation thereof.”*

## **The Jhānas**

Now the goal of *samatha* is to attain *jhāna*, of which there are eight: 4 Rūpajhāna, 4 Arūpajhāna. The 4 Rūpajhāna are as follows:

- (1) *Pathama jhāna*: a state of mental ease and buoyancy, wherein reason and reflection are still effective.
- (2) *Dutiya jhāna*: a state pervasive of bliss, wherein reason and reflection have ceased to be effective.
- (3) *Tatiya jhāna*: a state of equanimity, mindful and intent, undisturbed by all comings and goings, beings and becomings.



- (4) *Cathuttha jhāna*: a state beyond pleasure and pain, wherein the limbs become numb and even breathing stops. The mind, however, is translucent and keen.

The 4 Arūpajhānas are 'formless' attainments (samāpatti):

- (5) *Ākāsānañca āyatana jhāna*: a state wherein only the infinity of space is experienced.
- (6) *Viññānānañca āyatana jhāna*: a state wherein only the infinity of consciousness is experienced.
- (7) *Ākiñcaññā āyatana jhāna*: a state wherein only voidness is experienced.
- (8) *Nevasaññā nāsaññā āyatana jhāna*: a state wherein neither perception nor non-perception can be said to be effective.

### The Ninth Jhānic State

To which a ninth state is added, namely:

- (9) *Saññā vedayita nirodha*: a state wherein all perception and feeling are absent.

Now the records show that the yogis of ancient India practised these jhānas long before Buddha's time, and he himself practised and attained them under two teachers of yoga. Dissatisfied by finding in them nothing ultimate, however, he abandoned them in disgust and turned his attention to severe austerities of mind and flesh. These austerities, however, neither culminated in enlightenment nor the extinction of passion and rebirth. And, why? In his struggles under the Bodhi-tree, we witness him reflecting upon the fact that it is impossible to kindle a fire by rubbing wet green sticks. Even so, those ascetics no matter how they carried their self-tortures to extremity, attained neither enlightenment nor release because of the passion and lust unextinguished within. Thus if ascetics perished in any of the above jhānas they took up their abode among the deities of the Brahma or Arūpa-Brahma planes, remaining there often for kalpas (aeons, or world-cycles). Their merit exhausted, however, rebirth became inevitable.

We may gather from this, therefore, that although the jhānas seem ideal and conducive to equanimity (upekkhā), they nevertheless in no way achieve the extinction of the defilements (āsavas) of ignorance, egoism, and all attachment to samsaric existence. Even if deviously concealed in consciousness these seeds remain - to sprout again as soon as occasion affords. Even the last and final attainment (saññā vedayita nirodha) in no way extinguishes the āsavas - least of all is it to be confused with the attainment of Nibbāna.

In the Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta (Sutta of the Great Ultimate Release) we observe that Buddha is recorded as entering into the first jhāna, passing from it into the second, third, fourth, and so on up to the ninth, clarifying his faculties by direct (ānuloma) process. Thence he passed from the ninth to the eighth, seventh, sixth, and so on down to the first by inverse (patiloma) process. From the first he arose again to the fourth. Whence, with mind directed thereto, he attained Nibbāna without residue (anupadhi-sesa).

The question, therefore, remains: if the yogis could attain the fourth jhāna, why then couldn't they attain Release? Primarily because they failed to make the āsavas extinct. Failed to discover the knowledge (āsavakhaya ñāna) of annihilating the defilements of ignorance, egoism, and attachment to samsaric existence. The fact is that they had attained only to Samatha, whose scope includes the nine

jhānas, but not to Vipassanā - whose scope<sup>2</sup> includes an intense analytic perception into all component phenomena, both organic and psychic, by which perception and ultimate elimination of the āsavas are finally rendered null and void.

"It would be folly, however, to assume by this that Nibbāna is a state of ultimate extinction. That it is not a self-hypnotized state is obvious, since there is no cessation of perception and feeling as in the ninth jhāna. On the contrary, perception - or rather, *supra-perception* is directed to the full at the Nibbānic plane. What is annihilated and rendered extinct are the āsavas, together with the five rebirth-aggregates (pancupādānakkhandha), which are extinguished without residue.

We observe, therefore, that although Samatha is an essential factor it is insufficient insofar as analytic perception and permanent emancipation are concerned. Once the mind has become concentrated through Samatha, however, the path is clear for Vipassanā.

## The Pañca Sīla

Now if any progress whatsoever in Sammā Samādhi is to be expected, it depends (as a first step) upon the essential factor of morality (sīla). Where there is no sīla, there will be no samādhi. And where there is no Samādhi, no wisdom (Paññā) will arise. This is an ancient rule.

Before commencing this practice of Sammā Samādhi, therefore, it is of prime importance to accept and observe the 5 basic precepts of morality. These precepts are usually accepted from a *Bhikkhu* (a mendicant disciple of the Buddha). If circumstances do not permit, however, it can be done by oneself before an image of the Buddha, or even without one if unavailable. After lighting candles and 3 aromatic incense-sticks, bow prostrate<sup>3</sup> thrice in homage to the Buddha, Doctrine, and Order of Disciples. Then, with joined palms, recite:

*Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammā Sambuddhassa [Thrice]*  
(Homage to the Lord, the Emancipated, the All-Enlightened Buddha).

*Mayam Bhante Tisaranena Saha Pānca Silāni Yacāma.*  
(May I receive the Triple Refuge together with the five precepts).

*Dutiyampi Mayam Bhante Tisaranena Saha Pānca Silāni Yacāma.*  
(For the second time, may I receive the Triple Refuge together with the five precepts).

*Tatīyampi Mayam Bhante Tisaranena Saha Pānca Silāni Yacāma.*  
(For the third time, may I receive the Triple Refuge together with the five precepts).

*Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammā Sambuddhassa [Thrice]*

*Buddham Saranam Gacchāmi.*  
(I accept the Buddha as *my* refuge).

*Dhammam Saranam Gacchāmi.*  
(I accept the Doctrine as *my* refuge).

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<sup>2</sup> See page 14 onwards

<sup>3</sup> It may be objected that all this bowing and scraping is intolerable to modern 'civilised' man. If so, then more's the pity for the modern 'civilised' man, for he has still to learn the lesson of humility. In this context, where nothing is *compulsory*, if the aspirant does not care to pay respect where respect is due, he may as well forget the whole thing and go his ways

*Sangham, Saranam, Gacchāmi*  
(I accept the Order of Disciples as *my* refuge).

*Dutiyampi Buddham, Saranam, Gacchāmi.*  
(For the second time, I accept the Buddha as *my* refuge).

*Dutiyampi Dhammam, Saranam, Gacchāmi.*  
(For the second time, I accept the Doctrine as *my* refuge).

*Dutiyampi Sangham, Saranam, Gacchāmi.*  
(For the second time, I accept the Order of Disciples as *my* refuge).

*Tatīyampi Buddham, Saranam, Gacchāmi.*  
(For the third time, I accept the Buddha as *my* refuge).

*Tatīyampi Dhammam, Saranam, Gacchāmi.*  
(For the third time, I accept the Doctrine as *my* refuge).

*Tatīyampi Sangham, Saranam, Gacchāmi.*  
(For the third time, I accept the Order of Disciples as *my* refuge).

### **PAÑCA SĪLA (The Five Precepts)**

*Pānātipātā Veramani Sikkhāpadam Samādiyāmi*  
(I undertake to observe the precept of refraining from harming any living thing whatsoever).

*Adinnādānā Veramani Sikkhāpadam Samādiyāmi*  
(I undertake to observe the precept of refraining from theft).

*Kamesumicchācārā Veramani Sikkhāpadam Samādiyāmi*  
(I undertake to observe the precept of refraining from sexual immorality).

*Musāvādā Veramani Sikkhāpadam Samādiyāmi*  
(I undertake to observe the precept of refraining from falsehood).

*Surā Meraya Majjapamādatthānā Veramani Sikkhāpadam Samādiyāmi*  
(I undertake to observe the precept of refraining from partaking intoxicants of any kind whatsoever).

Only after such conditions have been fulfilled need a man bother to consider the possibilities of attaining that which earnest men going from a home to a homeless life seek and attain. But whether one will attain it in seven years, seven months, or seven days, is a matter of maturity of merit, dependent on the fertility of the soil. It is obvious that there can be no sudden growth, even as there is no sudden fruit (phala)<sup>4</sup>. If one may take seven days, for another even seven thousand lifetimes may be too few.

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<sup>4</sup> "Just as, O Bhikkhus, the great ocean deepens and slopes gradually down, hollow after hollow, not plunging by a sudden precipice. Even so, O Bhikkhus, in this doctrine and discipline the training is gradual, progress is gradual, it goes step by step, there is no sudden penetration to insight."

## Pre-meditation Chant

Be that as it may, before beginning it would be of the greatest benefit for the aspirant if he were to first invoke all the external aid he can receive. The external aid, that is, of those who through numberless past aeons discovered by themselves the knowledge leading to final integration and release. None less than the great enlightened Buddhas.

The following preliminary obeisances and invocations are therefore recommended:

*Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammā Sambuddhassa [Thrice]*

*Yamahāṃ, Sammā Sambuddham, Bhagavantam, Saranam, Gato, Iminā Sakkārenatam, Bhagavantam, Abhipūjayāmi.*

Homage to the All-Enlightened Buddha, who by himself discovered perfection and truth, wherewith he is acknowledged as the Refuge whereby all suffering may be rendered null and void.

*Yamahāṃ, Svākhātam, Bhagavantā Dhammam, Saranam, Gato, Iminā Sakkārenatam, Dhammam, Abhipūjayāmi.*

Homage to the Doctrine well-preached by the Lord, where with it is acknowledged as the Refuge whereby all dangers may be rendered null and void.

*Yamahāṃ, SupatiPaññām, Sangham, Saranam, Gato, Iminā Sakkārenatam, Shangham, Abhipūjayāmi.*

Homage to the Order of Disciples who practise the Doctrine well, wherewith it is acknowledged as the Refuge whereby all sickness may be rendered null and void.

*Araham, Sammā Sambuddho Bhagavā, Buddham, Bhagavantam, Abhipūjayāmi [Prostrate]*

Homage to the All-Enlightened Buddha.

*Svākkhāto Bhagavatā Dhammo, Dhammam, Nāmassāmi. [Prostrate]*

Homage to the Doctrine well-preached by the Lord.

*Supatipanno Bhagavato Sāvakasangho, Sangham, Namāmi. [Prostrate]*

Homage to the Order of Disciples who practise the Doctrine well.

*Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammā Sambuddhassa [Thrice]*

*Okāsa, Accayo No Bhante Accagamā Yathābale Yathāmūlhe Yathākusale Ye Mayam, Garamhā Evam, Bhante Mayam, Accayo No Paṭigganhata Ayatim, Samvarāyama.*

I take this opportunity of imploring that whatever offences, whether of thought, word, or deed, which I may have committed against the Buddha, the Doctrine, and the Order may be pardoned me from this day forth. With the stipulation (considering my heedlessness, delusion, and the unwholesomeness which has deviously impregnated my mind) that I inculcate more caution and restraint from henceforth.

May all the great Enlightened Buddhas (past, present, and to come), numberless as the sands in the bowels of the four great oceans, impregnate, illuminate, and irradiate, my six senses: *cakkhu-dvāra* (the door of vision), *sota-dvāra* (the door of audition), *ghāna-dvāra* (the door of olfaction), *jivhā-dvāra* (the door of gustation), *kāya-dvāra* (the door of form), *mano-dvāra* (the door of mind), as to apprehend and

perceive the truth in its original splendour and purity pristine.

May the teaching of the Buddhas leading to the attainment of the Supramundane, ninefold in scope<sup>5</sup>, revealed times beyond counting (past, present, and to come), impregnate, illuminate, and irradiate, my six senses: *cakkhu-dvāra*, *sota-dvāra*, *ghāna-dvāra*, *jivhā-dvāra*, *kāya-dvāra*, *mano-dvāra*, to apprehend and perceive the truth in its original splendour and purity pristine.

May all the emancipated and noble disciples of the Buddhas, beyond counting (past, present, and to come), impregnate, illuminate, and irradiate, my six senses: *cakkhu-dvāra*, *sota-dvāra*, *ghāna-dvāra*, *jivhā-dvāra*, *kāya-dvāra*, *mano-dvāra*, as to apprehend and perceive the truth in its original splendour and purity pristine.

I hereby invoke the aid of the Buddha, the Doctrine, and the Order of Disciples; and, also my good preceptor, my good mother, my good father. And, all my spiritual resources:

Dāna pārami,  
Sīla pārami,  
Nekkhamma pārami,  
Paññā pārami,  
Viriya pārami,  
Khanti pārami,  
Sacca pārami,  
Adhitthāna pārami,  
Mettā pārami  
Upekkhā pārami,

which I have practised and accumulated for a hundred existences, a thousand, ten thousand, a hundred thousand existences. Which I have practised and accumulated from the beginning, little by little, whether remembered or otherwise. May all these accumulated resources now aid me on the Path (Magga) which I hereby tread, so as to attain its Fruit (Phala), even at this very moment.

## NIBBĀNA PACCAYO HOTU

*(May this be the means whereby Nibbāna is ultimately attained)*

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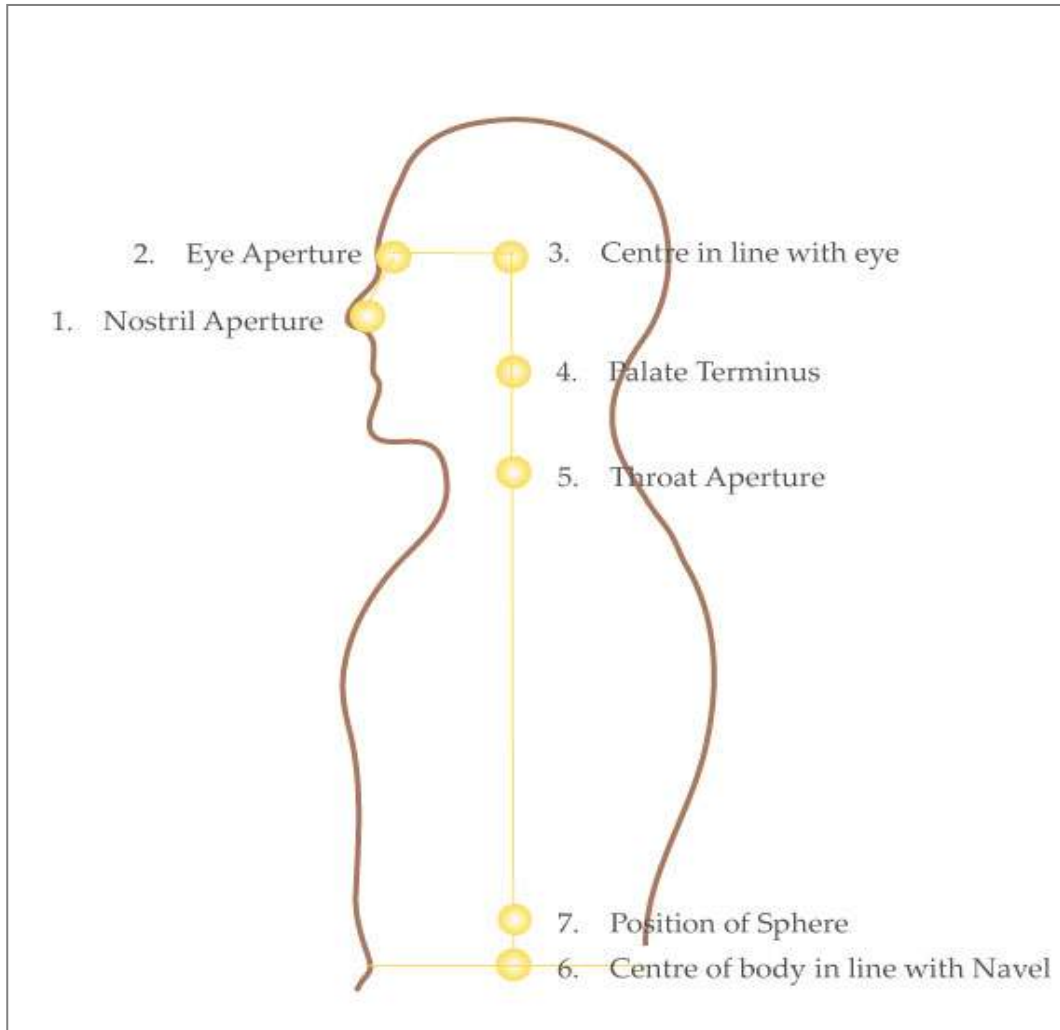
<sup>5</sup> Sotāpanna Magga, Sotāpanna Phala, Sakadāgāmin Magga, Sakadāgāmin Phala, Anāgāmin Magga, Anāgāmin Phala, Arahatta Magga, Arahatta Phala, Nibbāna.



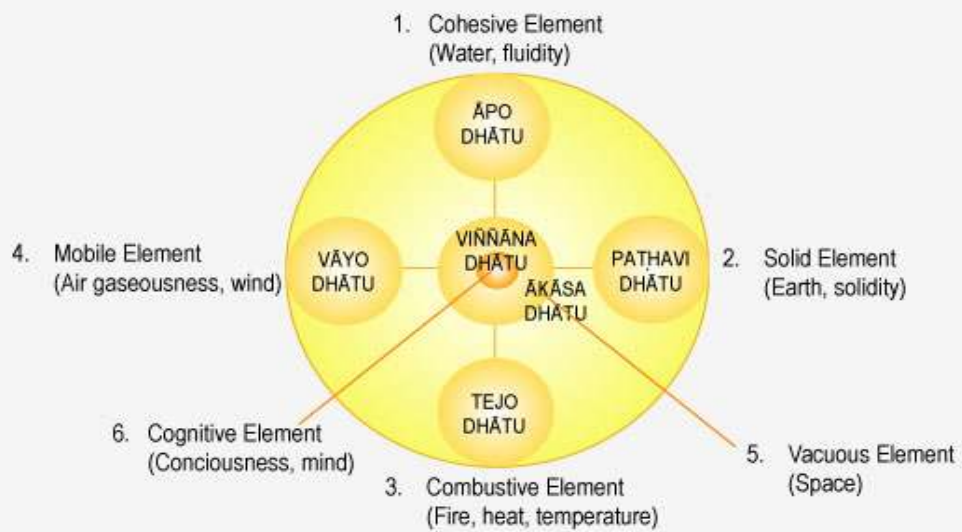
*Without a step out of doors  
The whole world may be known*

*Lao Tzu*





THE SPHERE AT THE CENTRE OF THE BODY  
IN RELATION TO THE ELEMENTS



## Chapter 2: SAMĀDHI (Concentration)

“Concentration” may be analysed into four categories:

- (1) the concentration issuing in the attainment of the jhānas (absorptions);
- (2) the concentration issuing in the attainment of ñāna dassana (extra-sensory perception);
- (3) the concentration issuing in the attainment of satisampajañña (intent awareness); and
- (4) the concentration issuing in the attainment of vipassanā ñāna (penetrative insight).

### **Jhānas (absorptions)**

The jhānas (absorptions) derived from concentrated tranquillity of body and mind are highly conducive to states of equanimity and bliss. In view of this, these concentrated-absorptions are only too susceptible of being grasped as ends in themselves, when in reality they are to be only regarded as a means to an end, and as such merit a primary and distinguished place.

### **Ñāna dassana (extra-sensory perception)**

Ñāna dassana (extra-sensory perception) is that faculty of perceiving things astral. Devoid of this kind of supernormal vision the human horizon is inevitably constrained within the limitations of the five sense-organs, to say the least. However, the attainment of supernormal vision, too, is only too easily grasped as an end in itself, when in fact it is only a means.

### **Satisampajañña (intent awareness)**

Satisampajañña (intent awareness) is that faculty of mindfulness and awareness so necessary for keeping the mind in harness and under restrained control. Without this incessant control over formations, feelings, perceptions, and concepts, consciousness is only too gamely led astray from cyclic second to second, the victim of every incident that upsprings. However, mind-control in itself is insufficient as to be regarded as an end, for although it keeps a constant vigil over random effervescences it does not annihilate them at the source. At best, it serves as a preventative and defensive device.

### **Vipassanā ñāna (penetrative insight)**

Vipassanā ñāna (penetrative insight) is that faculty which penetrates to the source. As long as this faculty is not attained, the mind is not in a position to comprehend or understand the scheme in which all things in the visible and invisible universe have their relative span. Without this objective vision, consciousness is dominated by its own limited subjectivity and personal prejudice. It is, finally, only through this faculty that the unrealised potential becomes the actualized reality. That is, the ultimate integration of personality and its unrestricted release.

These four categories of concentration - attainments, however, may be resolved under the collective term of Samatha-Vipassanā (tranquillised - penetrative insight), and shall be dealt with as such.



## Chapter 3: SAMATHA VIPASSANĀ (Tranquillised-penetrative insight)

### Introduction

In the *Potthapāda Sutta*, Buddha said:

*“There are these three ways of getting a self, Potthapāda, namely: the getting of a physical-body self, a mind-made self, and a formless self.*

*“And what, Potthapāda, is the getting of a physical-body self? It is that which has a form, is composed of the four great elements and is fed on material food. That is the physical-body self.*

*“And what, Potthapāda, is the getting of a mind-made self? It also has a form and is made of mind, complete in all its limbs, possessed of super sense-organs. That is the mind-made self.*

*“And what, Potthapāda, is the getting of a formless self? It is that which has no form, but is made of consciousness. That is the getting of the formless self.*

*“Now I, Potthapāda, teach you a teaching for the rejection of the getting of any self: a way by which impure conditions can be put away and pure conditions brought to increase. By which one even in this very life may attain unto the fulfilment and perfect growth of wisdom, realising it by his own supernormal powers, and therein to abide.*

*“Now it may well be, Potthapāda, that this thought might occur to you: ‘Yes, impure conditions may be put away, pure conditions may be brought to increase, and one may even in this very life attain these things and therein abide. But yet one remains sorrowful!’*

*“But that, Potthapāda, is not the way to look at it. For when these things are done ... there will be as result - joy, zest, calm, mindfulness, self - possession, and the happy life.....*

*“And if, Potthapāda, others should ask us this question: ‘But what, friend, is that getting of a physical-body self, a mind-made self, and a formless self about which you say all this? Then we should thus reply:*

*“It is this same self of which we speak... For at the moment when anyone of these three modes of self is going on, it is not reckoned as one of the other two. It is only reckoned by the name of that particular personality which prevails.*

*“For all these are merely names, terms, and ways of speaking definitions of everyday use. These the Tathāgata uses when he speaks. But he is not deceived by them.”<sup>6</sup>*

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<sup>6</sup> D.N. i. 194-202

## What is Samatha?

Samatha is that quality of tranquillization so necessary as a factor in integral process, being of the essence. Its function, by tranquillizing, is to disperse/passion (raga). In view of the fact that passion clouds the mind, and that the mind is by its very effervency frittered away from second to second, the only method of integration is by concentrating attention to a point (ekaggatā).

There are numerous methods of achieving this, and they need not be detailed here. The thing of prime importance is to fix the mind to centre, and to keep it there. Once the hectic effervency of the psyche is controlled to an integral point, it may be expanded later to embrace a vast field. It is to be noted that the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta begins with the Samatha factor:

*“Herein, O Bhikkhus, a bhikkhu having gone to the forest, to the foot of a tree or to an empty place, sits down with legs crossed, with body erect, and sets up mindfulness in front.”*

Now the mind cannot (without first having been trained to do so) fixate its attention upon any one thing for a protracted period, whether the 'thing' be body, feelings, thoughts, or objects of mind. To alleviate this difficulty, therefore, some form of tranquillity, involving either one of the forty subjects of Samatha kammaṭṭhāna, is recommended, according to individual congeniality. Only after the mind has become steadied, made lucent and firm, is it directed to the investigation of the body, feelings, thoughts, and objects of mind.

Although concentrated-absorption (jhāna) is a product of Samatha, it does not necessarily imply extra-sensory perception (ñāna dassana). There may be extra-sensory perception or there may not, since tranquillity is not concerned with perception but with tranquillity. If extra-sensory perception is to be cultivated, the potential faculties of vision (cakkhindriya) have to be developed by concentration on the *light* kasina. And this is so because, even as light illumines a dark room, even so in accordance with the principle of optics the darkness of the psyche within has first to be illumined by an internal light.

## What is Vipassanā?

Whereas the function of Samatha is to tranquillise, the function of Vipassanā is to disperse ignorance (avijjā) and to penetrate. Samatha and Vipassanā, although they may be practised in isolation, do not prosper without each other's support. For Samatha in no way disperses ignorance, nor is there Vipassanā without first tranquillity of body and mind. When combined and developed they result in the attainment of knowledge (vijjā) and render the defilements (āsavas) extinct.

## The Scope of Vipassanā

Vipassanā's scope includes ten insights, as follows:

- (1) *Sammāsana Ñāna*: Perceptive insight into the factors of intangibility (nāma) and formations (rūpa) in their true perspective and nature.
- (2) *Udayabbayanupassanā Ñāna*: Perceptive insight into the arising and perishing of all tangibility and intangibility from one moment to the next.

- (3) *Bhangānupassanā Ñāna*: Perceptive insight into the dissolution of all phenomena.
- (4) *Bhayapatthāna Ñāna*: Perceptive insight into what are the dangers to be feared and shunned.
- (5) *Ādināvanupassanā Ñāna*: Perceptive insight into the misery inherent in all things, being rooted in grasping.
- (6) *Nibbidānupassanā Ñāna*: After perceptive insight into the above five factors, the consequent aversion arising therefrom, as a preparatory step leading to release.
- (7) *Muñcitukamyata Ñāna*: Perceptive insight into the yearning for release through the right path.
- (8) *Patisankhānupassana Ñāna*: Perceptive insight into the discriminative contemplation whereby release may be obtained, though obstructed by the grasping aggregates.
- (9) *Sankhārupekkhā Ñāna*: Perceptive insight into the equanimity wherewith all formations are to be viewed, preparatory to the attainment of release.
- (10) *Anuloma Ñāna*: Perceptive insight into the adaptability of life, whereby release may be attained. That is, comprehension of the Four Noble Truths in all their ramifications, and the development of the Middle Path surpassing both (asceticism and sensuality) extremes.

### Contemplation of Factors, et al

The Discourse on Mindfulness continues:

*“Thus he lives contemplating form in form internally, or externally, or internally and externally. He lives contemplating origination factors in form, or dissolution factors, or both... Thus he contemplates form in form, feelings in feelings, thoughts in thoughts, and mental essences in mental essences.”*

Now to contemplate origination and dissolution factors, in Buddha's sense, scarcely implies a desultory reflection upon the decay and death of the body, but of the internal structure of the life-process itself, witnessed in full clarity of penetrative insight. As it is said:

*“As long, O Bhikkhus, as my vision pertaining to the Noble Truths, with triple insight and in twelvefold style, remained unclear, even so long, O Bhikkhus, in this world with its Maras, Brahmas, ascetics, gods, and men, highest insight and knowledge remained to be attained.”*

The ‘triple insight’ referred to being the perceptive insight of things as they are (*Sacca Ñāna*), the perceptive insight then it is something to be accomplished and known (*Kicca Ñāna*), and the perceptive insight that it has been accomplished and known (*Kata Ñāna*). Each Noble Truth (of the four there are) penetrated in this way makes for the ‘twelve-fold style’.

It is obvious that the physical eye is not implied here, since it does not penetrate into the body, not to mention mental essences, but the eye of purified intensity pertaining to the *Dhammakāya*.

## What is this Dhammakāya?

But what is this Dhammakāya? To understand the implications it is necessary to return to the ancient advice:

*“Self is the refuge of self.”*

At a casual glance, this contradicts the doctrine of *anattā*. How can self be the refuge of self when there is no self! But the seeming contradiction is merely a superficial one, and appears as a contradiction at all due to its having been shifted out of context.

Life is beset with impersonality because the five aggregates of an individual field are facile and not self-controlled, an effervescence that splits and re-splits. Nevertheless, even a personality which splits is still a personality, and if properly controlled may even attain to heights of ultimacy. As it is said:

*“Be unto yourself a refuge, an isle, and not elsewhere. Let the Dhamma be refuge, the isle, and not elsewhere. Thus shall the limit of darkness be reached, for those who are desirous to learn.”*

If there is going to be any sort of self at all, therefore, it is obviously this *dhamma* which will have to be established as such. And since equilibrium of consciousness is of the very essence, the way to mental poise is not to loosen the peripheral faculties incessantly upon externality, which is already confusion enough, but to establish them at some internally centralised point.

## The 7th Position – the Pathama Magga

As it happens, this problem is already solved by nature (*dhamma*). For in the human debris of personality such an integrated point already exists. Namely, in the pit of the diaphragm. Seated at which point a nucleus (or sphere) of *dhamma* rests. Were it not for this nucleus, wherein all the four elements and consciousness fuse, the human organism would never have come to exist. This sphere of *dhamma* serves as the base for the manifestation of organic human personality as such, and is termed Pathama Magga (First Step).

Now as soon as the human form issues from the mother's womb, it begins the gradual process of sense-contact (*phassa*) with the environment, activating along the network of nerves, which culminates in the attention being directed to the external form, thereby established and identified as the *self*.

As for the nucleus of Pathama Magga at diaphragm level, it passes from sight, because from birth onwards all men's activities are centred outside, not inside. When the peripheral faculties are withdrawn from external contact and centred within, the initial attempt is seldom crowned with success, considering that perception through protracted externality of contact has become crudified and gross. Initial attempts at introverted perception usually only result in a sensation of swimming and whirling in the dark.

What is more, once the nucleus of Pathama Magga is perceived it is too small and effervescent to fixate attention thereon for long. This is significant of the habitual hectic state of the peripheral mind. Initial attempts are always tangled up at this point, and the problem is always how to fix attention upon the nucleus of light and keep it there. As it is said:

*“There are three factors necessary, O Bhikkhus, for one, intent on the attainment of the higher consciousness (adhicitta): namely, the factors of concentration, of energy, and of*

*equanimity. If, O Bhikkhus, only the factor of concentration is applied, then consciousness conduces to laxity. If only the factor of energy is applied, then consciousness conduces to agitation. If only the factor of equanimity is applied, then consciousness conduces to that state which is devoid of the potential necessary for the destruction of the defilements. But if, O Bhikkhus, concentration, energy, and equanimity, in proportion as the need for them demands, is initiated, then consciousness becomes flexible, potent, and translucent, so as to instigate the destruction of that which is defiled. Thus only does it attain to the capacity of beholding in perceptive immediacy any state or circumstance at which it is aimed."*

Now once the peripheral faculties have been sunk and gravitated to the pit of the diaphragm (slightly above navel) and the sphere of Pathama Magga manifests translucent and bright, it is to be understood that in this sphere the aggregates (sankhāras) have their seat. It is a process of nature to aggregate in spheres; a repository, self-contained. If the aggregates were not integrated and condensed thus, they would disintegrate and disperse and memory as such would no longer exist, not to mention selfhood and personality.

Also, if penetrated into detail, in this sphere of Pathama Magga lie the aggregates of morality, concentration, and wisdom, such as pertain to the human personality, and such as have been accumulated from antecedent lives. It is not enough, however, that these aggregates (or spheres) of morality (sīla), concentration (samādhi), and wisdom (paññā) are discovered, they have to be developed and purged. Therefore are they called accomplishments (sampādas). They are the steps to the fashioning of the integrated personality, which is a matter strenuously to be accomplished, and not something given and ready-made.

### **Vortex of energy**

This is made plain by the exhortation:

*"We will not shrink back, but will struggle on... if there came to be a vortex of energy so that which is not yet won might be won by human strength, by human energy, by human striving."*

We note the emphasis on the *human* base, from which it all begins. For that is how *dhamma* arises. As given in the Anguttara Nikāya :

*"Bhikkhus, if you are asked by non-believers about the dhamma, you shall answer them as follows: The root of dhamma is will. All dhamma arises whensoever attention is focussed thereon. All dhamma appears through sense contact. All dhamma combine aided by perception. All dhamma culminate in the jhānas. All dhamma are by attentiveness controlled. All dhamma are by wisdom overcome. All dhamma have release as goal. All dhamma are in deathlessness submerged. All dhamma ends in Nibbāna."*

It would seem that in Buddha's discourse to Potthapāda the teaching is one 'for the rejection of the getting of any *self*', and that this implies a doctrine and a technique of annihilation. It, however, does not need much insight to comprehend that what is implied is the extinction of the mundane aggregates (lokiya dhamma) as signified by the human, celestial, Brahma, and Arūpa-Brahma forms. This becomes obvious at once when the lines which follow are perused: a way by which impure conditions can be put away and *pure conditions brought to increase... and therein abide.*'

## The Noble Path

What impure conditions? The root evils of delusion (moha), hate (dosa), and greed (lobha). What wholesome things? The Noble Path, called the best of paths, in that unlike all other paths it leads emancipation of mind.

'Putting away' or cessation, in Buddha's sense, never implies decrease but *increase*. There is no annihilation of a conscious-subject, or such nonsense as 'dewdrop sinking into sea'. Each emancipated one has his own supramundane 'field' of radiant personality, the end-result of an aeonic accumulation of pārami, the perfections of experience, which are by no means extinguished at death. As it is said:

*"Even here and now, in this present body (not to mention after death thereof) that essential emancipated consciousness which is the Tathāgata's remains unplumbed. And although this is what, I teach, there are those who accuse me falsely of proclaiming a doctrine which is annihilationist... As of old, so now proclaim I only this: suffering and the ceasing of suffering."*

And, again, in the discourse to Nigrodha:

*"All corruption shall be put away and wholesome things brought to increase."*

And, once this increase (namely, wisdom and insight) is attained (by supernormal concentration) 'to therein abide'.

Cessation, therefore, even if it is difficult of comprehension, is never the extinction of a conscious-subject. On the contrary, it is a gradual build-up of potential, by intensifying steps:

*"Great becomes the fruit, great the advantage of concentration when it is encompassed by morality. Great the fruit and advantage of wisdom when encompassed by concentration; the mind encompassed by wisdom is from the defilements set free."*

The function of morality is to purify, of concentration to penetrate, of wisdom to liberate. In that they are a unity, they do not prosper without each other's support. For morality devoid of concentration conduces to delusion. Concentration devoid of morality conduces to a dangerous inflation; whereas, wisdom devoid of concentration conduces to deficiency of mind-control.

Wherefore, when it is recommended to sink the peripheral faculties down into the aggregates (or spheres) of sīla, samādhi, paññā; at diaphragm-pit, the intention is to push (bhāvanā) the faculties to their logical and ultimate culmination. Namely, the attainment of the supramundane, the release-knowledge finality (aññātāvindriya)

The twenty-two potential faculties, commencing with the potential faculty of vision (cakkhindriya), come into play in this smelting-cultivation (bhāvanā) process as controlling guides. They are expedited to transmute raw material into refined, a process which can reach its fullest pitch only at this most vital of centres in the diaphragm-pit, otherwise known as the 'heartbase' (haddaya vatthu). It is termed so in that the aggregates of perception, memory, thought, and knowledge emerge therefrom. Centred there the faculties are in what is called *ceto-samādhi*, 'heart-concentration'. It is only at this focal point that the mundane faculties are able to emerge and issue out (through transmutation process) in release faculties (ceto-vimutti) that are supramundane.

## The 18 Kāyas (Bodies)

Now when the faculties have penetrated the spheres of morality, concentration, and wisdom (significant of the Path) in successive style, the sphere of release (vimutti) appears. Release from what? Release from the aggregate of the crude human form (manussa kāya hīna). It is release in the sense of *passing from*, transcending (for that moment) that particular level or stage of aggregates. Having being released therefrom in this style, it perceives its release (vimutti ñāna dassana).

## The Manussa (Human) Forms

Whereupon the next formation appears. In this instance, the refined human counterpart (manussa kāya paṇīta). Otherwise known as the 'astral'.

To understand *what* this refined human counterpart is, it is necessary first to comprehend *how* it comes to exist at all. It comes to exist through the process of contact (phassa), of *impression*, and of *intensification*. As soon as a child is born, its very physicality serves as the base for psycho-formative reproduction. For the human organism, is not merely a consistency of *dead* cells, it is infused with *activity*. It is this active potentiality which contains in it the germ of psycho-physical replication.

Now the 'field-of form' in which all this psycho-physical activity is strung, inevitably partakes of the characteristic feature and, form derived from the original base of crude materiality, being 'stamped', as it were, therewith, and sustaining the impress thereof. Each form, derived in this replicated style, serves as the base for further development in turn, each reed-like in its inverted sheath. The human organism from the moment of birth, in its ceaseless impressionistic psycho-physical interplay of reciprocity (aññamañña), thus serves as the base or 'template' for the intensification of continuous refinement in involuted style. Form (rūpa) is impressed with feeling (vedanā), and feeling with the sense of form, aggravated to immediate consciousness (viññāna) by the supporting imagery of perception (saññā) and memory (sankhāras).

In the Abhidhamma, this refined human counterpart is not classified in its formal (kāya) but in its psychological aspect (citta) as a resultant (vipāka). It is to be noted, therefore, that this particular formation is to be regarded as psychic in content, although tinges of crudely derived materiality linger therein. It is classified in the sensual sphere of origination (kāmavacāra) and does not rise above that status, being fettered by the attachments peculiar to the sense-sphere of existence, its psychic-supports (ārammaṇā) determining its *status quo*.

Now the potential faculties pass from the crude human form and impermeate this refined human counterpart, thus experiencing activity therein. It is then instigated to penetrate in mindfulness (satipatṭhāna) the further development of the Path, as signified by the spheres of morality, concentration, and wisdom, issuing out in release (vimutti) from the refined human aggregate, and the perception thereof (vimutti ñāna dassana).

## The Dibba (Celestial) Forms

Whereupon the next stage, the crude celestial form or aggregate (dibba kāya hīna) appears.

It cannot be too often repeated that each successive form or sphere is, through the intensification of 'smelting' (bhāvanā), a creative process, a replicative force, pushing to ever increasing degrees of refinement. Each successive form is established with a Path (signified by the spheres of morality,

concentration, and wisdom), and since the celestial aggregate is a more refined product than the human, its Path too is consequently more refined. And so forth for all that follows.

This, then, is what is implied by the obscure utterance:

*“Self is the refuge of self.”*

Namely, through contact (phassa) each antecedent form (self) serves as the 'template' for the production of a more refined one, which again serves as the base for the next. All of which are only subtler reproductions of the five basic aggregates of personality (pañcupādānakkhandha) which go to fashion existence in the mundane (lokiya) sphere.

The crude celestial form (dibba kāya hīna) and its refined counterpart (dibba kāya paṇīta) are products of the refined human form as base. They come to exist through the same intensification process of impressionistic smelting. Nature knows little limit in its potential capacity for refinement, which can be either instigated deliberately (as in the jhānic method alluded to here) or by the mere force of meritorious living. For it is to be understood that a meritorious life lived is not a mere desultory drifting to nothingness and dissolution but an activity which bears psychic fruit, brought about through the gradual accumulation and retention (tadārammaṇa) of wholesome (kusala) impulses from psychic moment to moment.

In the Abhidhamma, this embodiment of the celestial aggregate is classified as beneficial (kusala), but like the refined human form does not rise above the level of sensual attachments peculiar to the sensual sphere (kāma vacāra).

## **Brahma Forms**

The other forms which follow from the celestial aggregate as base are the Brahma form (brahma kāya hīna) and its refined counterpart (brahma kāya paṇīta).

Unlike the celestial aggregate, these Brahma forms do not arise merely through meritorious living as such, but have to be deliberately instigated (by jhānic concentration). Only those who practise jhāna (whether by concentration on anyone of the kasinas, or on such states of mind as compassion etc.) attain this formal embodiment, which surpasses the sensual sphere.

In the Abhidhamma, this embodiment is classified in the form-sphere (rūpavacāra), due to its absorption in formal states and because materiality is still present. Its emotional and psychic supports (ārammaṇa), however, are of jhānic content, based on equanimity or bliss, as the case may be.

From the refined Brahma form as base the Arūpa-Brahma form and its refined counterpart are produced, being proficient in the absorptions of formlessness (arūpajhāna), whether it be the experience of the infinity of space, the infinity of consciousness, voidness, or neither perception nor non-perception.

In the Abhidhamma, this embodiment is classified in the formless-sphere (arūpavacara), because materiality is no longer present and because of the intangibility of its psychic supports (ārammaṇa). It would be misleading, however, to infer from this that the conscious-subject is formless as such. It is the support which is formless; the subject is endowed with form, composed of the cognitive element (viññāna dhātu). It is to be noted that consciousness (viññāna) is one of the four forms of nutriment (ahāra) and in the Dependent Origination (paṭicca samuppāda) process it is consciousness (viññānam) which serves as the base for the arising of immateriality-materiality (nāma-rūpa). It (viññāna),



therefore, is to be reckoned as a quantity with the capacity for formative manifestation, and is not formless as such.

## Arūpa Brahma Forms

With the attainment of the refined Arūpa Brahma form, mundane aggregates reach their limit.

It is also to be understood that some already possess a celestial or Brahma form at birth. This in no way implies that they are ready-made but simply that the human form which they impregnate at conception (patisandhi) receives their life-impulse once their exhaustion of meritorious potential in the upper planes has culminated. These celestials and Brahmas have no expedient but to be reborn, and once relinked by human birth are submerged in the new life which arises. These aggregates of personality, however, still continue to exist, sunk in the life-continuum substrate (bhavanga) at diaphragm-pit. They are to be understood as resultant levels (vipāka), whose function is only three-fold: as departing consciousness (cuti), as relinking consciousness (patisandhi), and as life-continuum substrate (bhavanga).

It is a matter to be investigated, that experience is not confined to the human level of consciousness, but that there also exist in latency (Plato's theory of forms) other aggregates of experience accumulated in other spheres. The human level alone is inadequate to support the aspirant for release from mundane limits, because in the first place consciousness aspires for release only after it has had a surfeit thereof. As long as the hunger for mundane delights (as well as celestial bliss) remains, so long does the tendency to release fail to present itself. Only he who has had his fill of mundane things at the all-inclusive levels of human, celestial, Brahma, and Arūpa-Brahma attainment is beset by an urge for higher things, and it would be useless to speak of such higher things to one who has not yet had his fill. That is why it is said that there are creatures that delight in becoming, and when they hear of putting a stop to becoming their minds do not respond.

In the search for selfhood (Buddha: which is better, young men, to go in search of a woman or to go in search of your *self*?) we have arrived at this point of the Arūpa-Brahma aggregate. But, like all the other aggregates earlier passed, it is merely a higher level of the mundane personality (upādānakkhandha) and cannot be identified as the permanent refuge and isle of self, or in anyway be established as such, because it too decays and dies. A man becomes a deva, a Brahma, or an Arūpa-Brahma deity only because he worked from the human level as base, at death being translated to the upper planes.

To be satisfied with the attainment of the Arūpa-Brahma plane as something endowed with self-sufficiency would be unrewarding, to say the least, considering that the wheel of birth and death rolls on. The problem of discovering the root and base of all these offshoots of personality, labouring under the delusion of an eternal self, remains. Of which it is said:

*"No opening can be discovered by which creatures, mazed in ignorance, fettered by a thirst for becoming, stray and wander."*

The 'no opening' referred to here is the *anattā* process of split personification, leaving no trace of the split-origin already discussed in the chapter on *anattā* ( in *The Sammā Ditṭhi – A Treatise on Right Understanding* ), of the amorphous plurality which comes about through the dependent origination (paṭicca samuppāda) process.

This is why we witness Buddha preserving a noble silence on whether the self exists after death or does not exist after death. In one sense it does, in another sense it doesn't, the whole truth of it being

inextricably bound up in the anicca-anattā process of split-personality.

## **Dhammakāya Gotrabhū Forms**

However, when the Arūpa-Brahma aggregate is pushed on to dead centre, and on into the spheres which signify the Path, a more refined form manifests itself, called the Dhammakāya Gotrabhū. It is so termed because of the transition-of-lineage from mundane to supramundane.

The Dhammakāya Gotrabhū is a refinement of the Arūpa-Brahma form as base. As we have already observed, all the antecedent forms issued forth under the transmutative agency of an intensification process, each antecedent form serving as the 'template' for the emergence of a succedent, in chain-reaction impress. At this juncture, the Dhammakāya Gotrabhū serves as the psychic link between the mundane (lokiya) and the supramundane (lokuttara) consciousness, and is otherwise termed 'converted'. It is the 'bridge' whereon and whereby the mundane aggregates may be viewed in retrospect, and the promise of supramundane excellence viewed in prospect.

In its initial stages this Dhammakāya is not something to be regarded as final and complete, because it is by the same process of intensification susceptible to further degrees of refinement. The realisation of the four Noble Truths begins to dawn at this point, unfolding itself in perspective, with the consequent abandonment of wrong views and the defilements, in ever ascending scale, making for the Sotāpanna, Sakadāgāmin, Anāgāmin, and Arahatta aspects of consciousness, respectively.

It cannot be too often repeated that the production and emergence of all these forms and spheres is the result of an *intensification* process. Each form or sphere in its centre is *void*, and it is in this very voidness that the causal force of will is pushed. The void serves as the *passive* condition whereby things may arise. It is the force of direction and will, however, which actually instigates their rise. All phenomena, whether through will or occasion, arise in the basic condition of voidness, and it is due to this hiatus of voidness (between one manifestation and the next) that Hume asserts that no causal connection can be perceived from the appearance of one thing to the next.

## **Void Centre**

It is only in the nature of things that there always be a void serving as the basic condition. The void in this context is always necessary as a passive conditional matrix of emptiness (*natthi paccaya*) wherein the causal seed may be sown before any result (*vipāka paccaya*) may issue forth. It is in this passive matrix, or receptacle, that the determining force of will is put and pushed.

But will (*cetana*) or the controlling faculties (*indriya paccaya*), is not enough, it must possess some antecedent 'material' on which to work, so that what is merely in the state of potentiality becomes actuality. In the case of these forms and spheres of ever increasing refinement, each antecedent form or sphere of the same nature serves as the material (*ahāra paccaya*) which is smelted down by will into the voidness at its centre, whereon a refined counterpart of it appears. Only in this light does the injunction 'self is the refuge of self' become clear. For an antecedent 'self' is harnessed as the base for the production and emergence of a more refined one, until all sense attachment to mundane residues is purged.

All the Dhammakāya forms are release (*vimutti*) forms, in contrast to the mundane forms which are only of temporary (*sammuti*) usage. Unless the release forms are attained, emancipation from the mundane sphere of things remains an impossibility, because the mundane forms are too crude to

comprehend in their totality the Noble Truths, the characteristics of mutability, suffering, and impersonality, and the way to the transcending thereof.

### **When does vipassanā truly begin?**

Vipassanā (penetrative insight) good and proper begins only when the Dhammakāya Gotrabhū (transition-of-lineage, from mundane to supramundane) is attained. Samatha (jhānic tranquillity) carries consciousness up to Arūpa-Brahma status and there reaches its limit. That is why the yogis of old were unable to penetrate the process of Dependent Origination (paṭicca samuppāda) by which personalities arise. Surpassing the domain of Samatha, Buddha arrived at Gotrabhū Ñāna (transition-of-lineage insight). With consciousness impregnated in the Dhammakāya form, he took stock of all that which goes to compose the mundane. *Before Buddha there was only Samatha. Vipassanā begins with the Buddha.*

The Dhammakāya forms are called 'release' (vimutti) forms because they have become so refined that no attachment remains, and they become the vehicles of emancipation. They are expedited to review mundane aggregates, to observe the crudity therein, and to attain emancipation therefrom. This process (of a more refined form observing the crudity in a lesser form) is a necessary process, because it is not in the power of a crude form to comprehend the refinement in a higher form, or to jump immediately thereto. The process is not confined to an observation of the human aggregates of personality, but to the celestial, Brahma, and Arūpa-Brahma aggregates. And this is so, because if the observation is constrained merely to the human level of aggregates all that the mind will be emancipated from is the human aggregates, when as a matter of fact there are other subtler levels of a more insidious nature to be emancipated from.

### **Objectification Technique**

The process by which this takes place is through an objectification technique. Consciousness is not only capable of objectifying itself, but is by its very nature a matter of divisibility. If this were not so, then it would never be able to observe 'itself'. At any moment of time, it is always a posterior aggregate of consciousness which observes an anterior one. One group of percepts is always observing another group. The word 'itself' is misleading, because it is only one group of aggregates which is being observed and not the totality thereof. This is one reason why it is said that all phenomena are characterized by a series of "not selves" (anattā). To say, at any one time, that it is the same 'self' is not to be exact. To say, again, that it is a different 'self' is also not to be exact. There are states of awareness which arise and perceive other states. States arise and states vanish, aggregates appear and aggregates disappear. The psychic process is a series of looking-back and looking-front and looking-around. This is its very nature, and it only becomes more refined the higher it proceeds in the attainment (samāpatti) scale.

Although it is already a process of nature for one moment of consciousness to reflect upon another, it is never carried to such lengths as in this gymnastic of penetrative-insight called Vipassanā. It is due to identification with a certain moment of consciousness that man (by that moment) becomes enslaved. Feelings arise; reactions arise, by the second. Mind-control remains a dream. In the average man the aggregates of experience (sankhāras) are in such a state of confusion and disunity as to prevent exact perceptive facility. Only when the mind is centralised by the Samatha-Vipassanā technique and purged thereby does it become keen enough to observe psychic phenomena with ease. This facility too is the method by which detachment (upekkhā) is attained.

## Unifying Aggregates of Consciousness

The problem of the practitioner of Samatha-Vipassanā is to unify whatever levels, or aggregates, of consciousness there may be and harness them into service so as to be available to perceptive immediacy at a moment's notice. Once this facility, of, transiting from the crudest level to the most refined, has been attained, it can be said that the practitioner is in command of his faculties and an adept in the concentrated-absorption of mundane and supramundane states of consciousness.

It is to be observed that the term 'mystic' is not applied to these states, for there is nothing amorphous or dreamy about them. On the contrary, they are if anything extremely clear-cut and keen. For if they were not as clear-cut and keen as they are, there would surely be no release from the ceaseless round of birth and death, without end.

When faced with refinements of the mind, terminology fails. The Pali terms of *manas*, *citta*, *viññāna*, are scarcely adequate to express the various aspects of mind, capable as they are of being pushed to translucent limits. Not only is consciousness passive, it is also active. It perceives, is aware, and cogitates at different levels of refinement. All of which involves a thorough comprehension of mind-instants and the analysis of to what extent the gamut of conscious states is resultant (*vipāka*), functional (*kiriya*) or volitional (*kusala*).

It is to be understood, therefore, that Vipassanā involves something more than mere desultory human awareness. The confusion has always been to assume that mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*) at the human level of consciousness is all there is to Vipassanā. *Satipaṭṭhāna* is vigilance of mind, a basic necessity of awareness whether in or out of *jhāna*. It is not to be transmuted immediately into the highest perceptive insight of Vipassanā Nana.

## Foundations of Mindfulness

The *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* concludes with the promise:

*"Verily, O Bhikkhus, whosoever practises these four foundations of mindfulness (on formations, feelings, thoughts, and mental objects) in this manner for seven years..... seven months..... Seven days..... then one of these two fruits may be expected by him: highest knowledge (arahattaship) here and now, or if some remainder of clinging is yet present, the state of non-returner (anāgāmin). Because of this was it said: this is the only way, O Bhikkhus, which leads to the purification of creatures, to passing beyond sorrow and lamentation, to the destruction of grief and despair, to the attainment of the Method, to the realisation of Nibbāna. Namely, the four foundations of mindfulness."*

The paucity of Arahattas and Anāgāmins in the world is not due to any lack of practice, but rather to a fundamental misunderstanding of Buddha's promise. Namely, that he was speaking in an especial context, in a specific period of history, knowing by super-normal insight that many were those who possessed the faculties ripe for attainment. This promise cannot be converted at this juncture to mean all and sundry.

Nevertheless, although attainment is something dependent on individual maturity, the path to enlightenment is always open to all. As delivered to Subhadda, the last convert, before the final passing away:

*"Subhadda, if bhikkhus were to live rightly (sammā vihareyyum) the world would not be void of Emancipated Ones."*

And the living rightly, as already made known, begins and ends with right understanding (Sammā diṭṭhi) and right concentration (sammā samādhi).

## Chapter 4: THE METHOD

### Sitting down to meditate

A man retires to his room and seats himself cross-legged and upright - as seen in images of the Buddha - the right leg resting on the left, hands upturned on lap (the right one resting lightly on the left, the thumb of which lightly touching meets the index finger of the right). Having closed his eyes lightly he concentrates his mind's eye in the *centre* of his abdomen, two finger-breaths above the navel. Centred *inside*, not outside (See Diagram). All random thoughts and images are to be suppressed. All that has to be done is to let all attention sink into that portion of the abdomen where once the foetus fused in the womb, commencing as a mere cellular speck, to develop eventually into a human being.

### The Void Centre – in the 7th Position

This is the centre where consciousness has its seat. This may seem a peculiar thing to say, considering that from time immemorial the physical brain has been regarded as the seat of consciousness. No doubt, experience assimilated in this present life, reverberates primarily in the grey cells. But the accumulated experience of past existences - if one is prepared to accept that there are past existences at all, which of course one has the liberty to doubt - reverberates and has its seat in the central storehouse mentioned above. This, however, is a fact to be *experienced* not rationalized. For the natural and inevitable reaction to the statement above, is that there lies nothing in there but food! Which is tantamount to reducing consciousness to tangibility and size, when as a matter of fact it is an intangibility which can be expanded or contracted at will, and in no way interferes with such gross properties as food.

There is only one way of proving this, however, and it requires sittings, not speech. Even at this centre will come to fight the highest experiences an individual can experience, whether in this world or any other world. The only possibility left open to the novice for validating this fact lies not in incredulity or blind acceptance, but in the experiment and attempt.

In the beginning, of course, he will see nothing. Nothing, that is, except random images and such rubbish as usually clutters up his mind. What else can he expect? For so long-ever since birth-his thoughts and fancies have played him a merry-go-round of infantile and kindred images, and it would hardly be right to regard any such rubbish as providing an *insight* into *reality*.

### The mantra 'Sammā Araham'

To help keep the peripheral mind one-pointed and exalted, therefore, the words 'Sammā Araham' are recommended, to be repeated soundlessly and sustainedly. Until a luminous nucleus appears, which with sustained concentration augments into a sphere, 2 centimetres in diameter. If the sphere appears blurred, or flickers and flits, the default will have to be corrected if any further progress at all is to be

made. It is hardly likely, however, that success will be immediate<sup>7</sup>. When success does come, however, it will reveal depths unplumbed before.

It is at this juncture that Samatha good and proper begins. Proficiency, therefore, must first be attained by fixing the attention on this sphere. In entering therein, in constant mentation thereat, in retiring therefrom, in resolving therewith, and in contemplation thereof. Which should be achieved in all the four positions, whether seated, standing, walking (with eyes open), or reclined. This is of initial importance because it is only through the door of this sphere that all Buddhas and Arahattas have passed on to ultimate integration and final release. The effort should be to develop and maintain the peripheral faculties at this essential integration point.

## The 18 Kāyas (Bodies)

### 1. Manussa Kāya Hīna (The Crude Human Form)

Intensity of concentration upon this sphere, called Pathama Magga (The First Step) augments its translucence and luminosity.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere, called Dhammanupassanā Satipatṭhāna (Intent Mindfulness)<sup>8</sup>.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere, called Sila (Morality).

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere, called Samādhi (Concentration).

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere, called Paññā (Wisdom).

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere, called Vimutti (Release).

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

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<sup>7</sup> “Wherefore I say unto you, O Bhikkhus, this is how you must train yourselves: We will not shrink back, but will struggle on, with this thought: Let me be reduced to skin and sinew and bones, and let my body’s flesh and blood dry up if there came to be a *vortex of energy* so that which is not yet won might be won by human strength, by human energy, by human striving. This is how you must train yourselves.”

*A.i.50.*

<sup>8</sup> Then the Exalted One entered the potter’s shed and spread a heap of straw at one side, and sat down cross-legged, holding his body straight up, and setting Mindfulness before him as his Aim. And so the Exalted One sat far into the night.

*M.N.iii.140.*

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere, called Vimutti Ñāna Dassana (The Perception and Knowledge of Release).

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre the refined counterpart of one's physical form, called Manussa Kāya Panīta, is seen seated cross-legged in concentrated pose.

## 2. Manussa Kāya Panīta (The Refined Human Form)

This is the so-called 'astral' or 'ghost' form, and it will appear in the exact garb then worn by the crude physical form, being its refined counterpart in every detail.

Concentrate *in* this form, down into the sphere which can be seen at its centre. The sphere of Manussa Kāya Panīta.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Dhammanupassanā Satipaṭṭhāna.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Sīla.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Samādhi.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Paññā.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Vimutti.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Vimutti Ñāna Dassana.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre the crude celestial (deva) form, called Dibba Kāya Hīna, is seen seated cross-legged in concentrated pose.



### 3. Dibba Kāya Hīna (The Crude Celestial Form)

This is the form which the deities of the six planes of the Deva-World inhabit, and its garb is replete with such ornaments, head-dress, and brocade as creatures of such destiny possess.

Concentrate *in* this form, down into the sphere which can be seen at its centre. The sphere of Dibba Kāya Hīna.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Dhammanupassanā Satipaṭṭhāna.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Sīla.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Samādhi.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Paññā.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Vimutti.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Vimutti Ñāna Dassana.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre the refined counterpart of the crude celestial form, called Dibba Kāya Panīta, is seen seated cross-legged in concentrated pose.

### 4. Dibba Kāya Panīta (The Refined Celestial Form)

This is the inner celestial form, and except for its greater translucence and luminosity is similar to the immediate preceding one, being its refined counterpart in every detail.

Concentrate *in* this form, down into the sphere which can be seen at its centre. The sphere of Dibba Kāya Panīta.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Dhammanupassanā Satipaṭṭhāna.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Sīla.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Samādhi.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Paññā.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Vimutti.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Vimutti Ñāna Dassana.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre the crude Brahma form, called Rūpa Brahma Kāya Hīna, is seen seated cross-legged in concentrated pose.

## **5. Rūpa Brahma Kāya Hīna (The Crude Brahma Form)**

This is the form which the deities (devas) of the planes of the Brahma-World inhabit, and its garb is somewhat similar to the celestial form, except that its ornaments, head-dress, and brocade are more resplendent and elaborate. Such is the destiny of those who practise one, or all, of the four jhānas while on earth.

Concentrate *in* this form, down into the sphere which can be seen at its centre. The sphere of Rūpa Brahma Kāya Hīna.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Dhammanupassanā Satipaṭṭhāna.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Sīla.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Samādhi.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Paññā.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Vimutti.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Vimutti Ñāna Dassana.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre the refined counterpart of the crude Brahma form, called Rūpa Brahma Kāya Panīta, is seen seated cross-legged in concentrated pose.

## **6. Rūpa Brahma Kāya Panīta (The Refined Brahma Form)**

This is the inner Brahma form, and except for its greater translucence and luminosity is similar to the immediate preceding one, being its refined counterpart in every detail.

Concentrate in this form, down into the sphere which can be seen at its centre. The sphere of Rūpa Brahma Kāya Panīta.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Dhammanupassanā Satipatṭhāna.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Sīla.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Samādhi.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Paññā.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Vimutti.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Vimutti Ñāna Dassana.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre the refined counterpart of the crude Brahma form, called Arūpa Brahma Kāya Hīna, is seen seated cross-legged in concentrated pose.

## **7. Arūpa Brahma Kāya Hīna (The Crude Arūpa Brahma Form)**

This is the form which the deities of the four 'formless' planes of the Arūpa Brahma-World inhabit, and its garb is somewhat similar to the preceding form, except that its ornaments, head-dress and brocade are more resplendent and elaborate. Such is the destiny of those who practise one, or all, of the four arūpajhānas while on earth.

Concentrate *in* this form, down into the sphere which can be seen at its centre. The sphere of Arūpa Brahma Kāya Hīna.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Dhammanupassanā Satipatṭhāna.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Sīla.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Samādhi.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Paññā.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Vimutti.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Vimutti Ñāna Dassana.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre the refined counterpart of the crude Arūpa Brahma form, called Arūpa Brahma Kāya Panīta, is seen seated cross-legged in concentrated pose.

## 8. Arūpa Brahma Kāya Panīta (The Refined Arūpa Brahma Form)

This is the inner Arūpa Brahma form, and except for its greater translucence and luminosity is similar to the immediate preceding one, being its refined counterpart in every detail.

Concentrate *in* this form, down into the sphere which can be seen at its centre. The sphere of Arūpa Brahma Kāya Panīta.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Dhammanupassanā Satipaṭṭhāna.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Sīla.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Samādhi.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Paññā.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Vimutti.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Vimutti Ñāna Dassana.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre the crude supramundane form, called Dhammakāya Gotrabhū Hīna, is seen seated cross-legged in concentrated pose.

## 9. Dhammakāya Gotrabhū Hīna (The Crude 'Converted' Form)

This is where Samatha ends. And where Vipassanā good and proper begins. This Dhammakāya Gotrabhū Hīna is seated in the Buddhist cross-legged concentrated posture, and is devoid of all superfluous ornament. It is called 'Converted' because of the transition of lineage from mundane (lokiya) to supramundane (lokuttara).

Concentrate *in* this form, down into the sphere which can be seen at its centre. The sphere of Dhammakāya Gotrabhū Hīna.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Dhammanupassanā Satipaṭṭhāna.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Sīla.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Samādhi.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Paññā.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Vimutti.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Vimutti Ñāna Dassana.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre the refined counterpart of the crude Dhammakāya Gotrabhū form, called Dhammakāya Gotrabhū Panīta, is seen seated cross-legged in concentrated pose.

## 10. Dhammakāya Gotrabhū Panīta (The Refined 'Converted' Form)

This is the inner Dhammakāya Gotrabhū form, and except for its greater translucence and luminosity is similar to the immediate preceding one, being its refined counterpart in every detail.

Concentrate *in* this form, down into the sphere which can be seen at its centre. The sphere of Dhammakāya Gotrabhū Panīta.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Dhammanupassanā Satipatṭhāna.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Sīla.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Samādhi.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Paññā.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Vimutti.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Vimutti Ñāna Dassana.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre the crude supramundane form, called Dhammakāya Sotāpanna Hīna, is seen seated cross-legged in concentrated pose.

## 11. Dhammakāya Sotāpanna Hīna (The Crude 'Stream-enterer' Form)

This is the form of the 'Stream-enterer', the stream which leads to final enlightenment and release. In this form the ideas of a permanent ego, doubt, and belief in pernicious rites, are extinct. For one who has attained to such a state, only seven more samsaric existences await at the most.<sup>9</sup>

Concentrate *in* this form, down into the sphere which can be seen at its centre. The sphere of Dhammakāya Sotāpanna Hīna.

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<sup>9</sup> Let it not be understood by this, however, that if one has attained this form (and all the other forms which follow) that one has permanently attained to their respective states. It should be considered as merely the donning of a temporary cloak, valid only for the duration one abides therein, and should be regarded as such. For although one may be sufficiently high in the scale of being when one dons this form, immediately one arises therefrom one is one's old self again, a mere human being, with all the weaknesses to which humanity is heir. For how long can an ordinary man abide in such a state? An hour or two a day, by normal standards. There are twenty-four hours in a day, and for the rest of that time it is as a man that he exists, no more. As we have noticed from Buddha's discourse to Potthapada, when any mode of self is going on it is not reckoned as another:

*"It is only reckoned by the name of that particular personality which prevails"*  
And for that ordinary man, unfortunately, it is the crude human personality which prevails.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Dhammanupassanā Satipaṭṭhāna.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Sīla.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Samādhi.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Paññā.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Vimutti.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Vimutti Ñāna Dassana.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre the refined counterpart of the crude Sotāpanna form, called Dhammakāya Sotāpanna Panīta, is seen seated cross-legged in concentrated pose.

## **12. Dhammakāya Sotāpanna Panīta (The Refined 'Stream-enterer' Form)**

This is the inner Sotāpanna form, and except for its greater translucence and luminosity is similar to the immediate preceding one, being its refined counterpart in every detail.

Concentrate *in* this form, down into the sphere which can be seen at its centre. The sphere of Dhammakāya Sotāpanna Panīta.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Dhammanupassanā Satipaṭṭhāna.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Sīla.



Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Samādhi.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Paññā.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Vimutti.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Vimutti Ñāna Dassana.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre the crude supramundane form, called Dhammakāya Sakadāgāmin Hīna, is seen seated cross-legged in concentrated pose.

### **13. Dhammakāya Sakadāgāmin Hīna (The Crude 'Once-returner' Form)**

This is the form of the 'Once-returner'. That is to say, only one more samsaric existence awaits one who has attained to such a state before final enlightenment and release. In this form sensual passion, delusion, and malice, together with all the previous fetters, extinguished by the Sotāpanna, are extinct.

Concentrate *in* this form, down into the sphere which can be seen at its centre. The sphere of Dhammakāya Sakadāgāmin Hīna.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Dhammanupassanā Satipaṭṭhāna.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Sīla.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Samādhi.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere.

The sphere of Paññā.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere.  
The sphere of Vimutti.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere.  
The sphere of Vimutti Ñāna Dassana.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre the refined counterpart of the crude Sakadāgāmin form, called Dhammakāya Sakadāgāmin Panīta, is seen seated cross-legged in concentrated pose.

#### **14. Dhammakāya Sakadāgāmin Panīta (The Refined 'Once-returned' Form)**

This is the inner Sakadāgāmin form, and except for its greater translucence and luminosity is similar to the immediate preceding one, being its refined counterpart in every detail.

Concentrate *in* this form, down into the sphere which can be seen at its centre. The sphere of Dhammakāya Sakadāgāmin Panīta.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere.  
The sphere of Dhammanupassanā Satipaṭṭhāna.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere.  
The sphere of Sīla.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere.  
The sphere of Samādhi.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere.  
The sphere of Paññā.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere.  
The sphere of Vimutti.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Vimutti Ñāna Dassana.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre the crude supramundane form, called Dhammakāya Anāgāmin Hīna, is seen seated cross-legged in concentrated pose.

### **15. Dhammakāya Anāgāmin Hīna (The Crude 'Non-returner' Form)**

This is the form of the 'Non-returner'. That is to say one who has attained to this state shall no more return to existence on earth, but after death is destined to be reborn in the Brahma-World, where after further purification to attain final enlightenment and release. In this form the desire for form or formless states of existence, together with all the previous fetters, are extinct.

Concentrate *in* this form, down into the sphere which can be seen at its centre. The sphere of Dhammakāya Anāgāmin Hīna.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Dhammanupassanā Satipatṭhāna.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Sīla.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Samādhi.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Paññā.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Vimutti.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Vimutti Ñāna Dassana.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre the refined counterpart of the crude Anāgāmin form, called Dhammakāya Anāgāmin Panīta, is seen seated cross-legged in concentrated pose.

## 16. Dhammakāya Anāgāmin Panīta (The Refined 'Non-returner' Form)

This is the inner Anāgāmin form, and except for its greater translucence and luminosity is similar to the immediate preceding one, being its refined counterpart in every detail.

Concentrate *in* this form, down into the sphere which can be seen at its centre. The sphere of Dhammakāya Anāgāmin Panīta.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Dhammanupassanā Satipaṭṭhāna.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Sīla.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Samādhi.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Paññā.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Vimutti.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Vimutti Ñāna Dassana.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre the crude supramundane form, called Dhammakāya Arahatta Hīna, is seen seated cross-legged in concentrated pose.

## 17. Dhammakāya Arahatta Hīna (The Crude 'Emancipated' Form)

This is the form of the 'Emancipated'. That is to say one who has attained to this state finally emancipated himself from the āsavas, of ignorance, egoism, and attainment to samsaric existence, together with all the previous fetters. Which being extinct, enlightenment and release are attained even in this very life, and rebirth cut off at the root.

Concentrate *in* this form, down into the sphere which can be seen at its centre. The sphere of Dhammakāya Arahatta Hīna.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Dhammanupassanā Satipaṭṭhāna.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Sīla.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Samādhi.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Paññā.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Vimutti.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Vimutti Ñāna Dassana.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre the refined counterpart of the crude Arahatta form, called Dhammakāya Arahatta Panīta, is seen seated cross-legged in concentrated pose.

#### **18. Dhammakāya Arahatta Panīta (The Refined 'Emancipated' Form)**

This is the inner Arahatta form, and except for its greater translucence and luminosity is similar to the immediate preceding one, being its refined counterpart in every detail.

Concentrate *in* this form, down into the sphere which can be seen at its centre. The sphere of Dhammakāya Arahatta Panīta.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Dhammanupassanā Satipaṭṭhāna.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Sīla.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Samādhi.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Paññā.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Vimutti.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre is seen a nucleus. Which with sustained concentration emerges into a sphere. The sphere of Vimutti Ñāna Dassana.

Concentrate thereon. Until it is absolutely translucent and still.

Whereupon in its centre an even more refined Dhammakāya Arahatta is seen seated cross-legged in concentrated pose.

### **The Refining Process Continues *ad infinitum***

This is not the end of the process. But we have to end here because space does not permit us to go on indefinitely. For the process proceeds indefinitely, penetrating even deeper into the spheres which follow, whereupon more Dhammakāya Arahatta forms emerge, each one more refined and translucent than the last.

It may be questioned, however, how one sphere can emerge from another, and one form from another form. The answer is an ancient one:

*"Hard to perceive and understand, Vacchagotta, is this Dhamma, rare, excellent, beyond the sphere of logic, subtle, to be understood only by the wise..."*

It is in fact profound, even in its appearance profound. Even to the depth of the consciousness which penetrates it and pervades, even to that extent does the essence of existence reveal itself in the hues of Ineffability.

### **The Dhammakāya of the Buddha**

Thus the full import of Buddha's statement: 'He who sees the Dhamma sees the Tathāgata', will be appreciated only when it is realised that if one aspires to perceive the Buddha one can do so indeed. Namely, by perceiving, not his *doctrine* as such, but his *Dhammakāya*. Which can be perceived after one has attained to the Arahatta form.

However, it cannot be too often emphasized in this context that the attainment of any of these

supramundane forms does not automatically make one a Sotāpanna, Sakadāgāmin, Anāgāmin, or Arahatta. By no means. Whatever emancipation of mind is experienced is merely temporary and is valid only for the duration that one inhabits the form. As the Venerable Abbot of Wat Paknam has reminded us:

*"As long as you haven't reached to the end of all the Dhammakāya Arahatta forms (which are beyond counting), you are still a slave, neither a master nor free."*

Arahattaship (which is sometimes ridiculously confused with *sainthood*) is often understood to be easy of attainment, due to the fact that during Buddha's time he had only to utter a few words and this one or that one became a completely Emancipated One, endowed with all the supernatural faculties. The example of Bāhiya Dāruciriya is a case in point:

*"Therefore, Bāhiya, thus must you learn: In the seen there can be only what is seen, in the heard there can be only what is heard, in the thought there can be only what is thought, in the known there can be only what is known. Since, Bāhiya, for you in the seen there can be only what is seen, in the heard what is heard, in the thought what is thought, in the known what is known therefore you, Bāhiya, are not here. Since you, Bāhiya, are not here, therefore you, Bāhiya, are neither in this world nor in the next world, nor betwixt the two. This alone is the end of pain."*

At which Bāhiya immediately became an Emancipated One. To the rest of the Bhikkhus, Bāhiya's conversion and attainment seemed an extremely surprising and swift one, not knowing his remote past history in the dispensation of the previous Buddha, Kassapa, at which time even after severe struggles he failed to attain enlightenment, and died. Now, however, his time had come. Thus, in his explanation to the Bhikkhus, we witness Buddha assuring:

*"Bhikkhus, do not measure the Law as being 'little' or 'much'. There is no virtue even in many thousands of stanzas. Though a stanza consist of a thousand words, if the sentences lack meaning, better were a single sentence which if a man hear he be at peace."*

Let it be reaffirmed here, therefore, that there is *no short-cut to release*. One becomes an Arahatta at all only because one's time is ripe, it being the fruit of an earnest resolve (*adhiṭṭhāna*) in the remote past, together with the fulfilment of the requisite *pārami*. Only after these factors have been fulfilled does emancipation cease to be a mere dream and becomes a reality in which to exist.

It would be unwise, therefore, to indulge in inflated ideas of having attained to permanent emancipation of mind.

## **This is *THE* Method**

Nevertheless, it is only through the process of this method that the defilements (*āsavas*) of sangsāric existence are eventually extinguished, and the full significance of the *anattā* doctrine dawns upon the comprehension. Whereupon all ideas of selfhood and permanency finally become aligned in true perspective, culminating in the realisation that nothing in the world of sense concepts, least of all the individual stream-of-consciousness (*upādānakkhandha*), is constant or consistent for two consecutive moments of time, not to mention *eternal!*

In consequence of its attainment, Vipassanā ushers direct penetration into the following truths, sixfold in scope:

- (1) The Four Noble Truths (*Ariya Sacca*)
- (2) The Twelve Links in the Chain of Dependent Origination (*Paṭicca Samuppāda*)
- (3) The Five Aggregates of Human Personality (*Pañcupādānakkhandha*)
- (4) The Twenty-Two Potential Faculties (*Indriya*)
- (5) The Twelve Bases of Cognition (*Āyatana*)
- (6) The Eighteen Elements (*Dhātus*)

The aim of the analysis is to annihilate the ideas of permanency and solidity with which the average man regards existence, and as a consequence to winnow and extricate the mind from its bondage thereto. Because to regard existence as a thing *substantial* is to award it an honour which it in reality does not deserve. There are thus two aspects of regarding the world: from the standpoint of conventional truth and from the ultimate (*paramatthā sacca*). From the conventional standpoint it is generally agreed that a man is an easily identifiable creature with certain self-evident attributes which establish his solid existence and entitle him to the name. From the ultimate standpoint, man - or any living form whatsoever - is merely an interaction of certain forces which interlock and adhere into a certain shape and size for an extremely brief duration, breaking up and dissolving into intangibility incessantly, with no basis of permanent identity, shape, or size whatsoever.

Although this is something which can be rationalized, it requires actual experience to validate it, something more direct and impartial than mere deduction. Vipassanā supplies that directness of approach, penetrating to things in their immediacy - unlike logic, which by its very nature is indirect, always working two steps at a remove from actuality.

### Imperceptible Progress

However, it may so happen that after weeks, months, and even years of Vipassanā no *visible* result is achieved. If so, there nevertheless will be *invisible* ones. Namely, each hour of concentrated practice bears inner fruit, in that it is an augmentation of merit (*puñña*) and Perfection (*pārami*), which exist independent of their *perceptibility*. With time, patience, and perseverance all things come into their own, the will being there. Excess of zeal, however, is not always a signpost to success. As said of old:

*"Even so, Sona, excess of zeal makes one liable to self-exaltation, while lack of zeal makes one liable to sluggishness. Wherefore do you, Sona, persist with evenness of zeal, master your faculties, and therein make your mark."*

Whereupon in no long time Sona was numbered among one of the Arahattas, realising that: 'destroyed is rebirth, lived is the holy life, done is what was to be done, there is no more life for me *on terms like these*'.

### Removing Hindrances

The causes why an individual fails to attain any, or all, of the forms as mentioned in this text, may be classed under eleven categories:

- (1) Doubt
- (2) Lack of attention
- (3) Sloth, torpor, and despair
- (4) Fear



- (5) Excitement
- (6) Restlessness of body
- (7) Excess of zeal
- (8) Lack of zeal
- (9) Desire
- (10) Restlessness of mind
- (11) Over fixation on an object or objects of mind.

Once the luminous sphere of Pathama Magga is perceived it is a sign that supernormal vision is on the way, and with sustained concentration the rest will, sooner or later, follow. It may even happen that one of the supramundane forms may suddenly emerge luminously into view without previous notice. The aspirant has to be prepared for such potentialities and not to be thrown out of focus, for the form may vanish on the instant, to one's protracted regret.

### **The Preceptor's hand**

What is to be regretted is that in this field of Sammā Samādhi little progress can be made alone, without a preceptor, although cases are known in which vision is attained without much preamble or aid. It has to be admitted here, unfortunately, that such experienced preceptors are few to be found. As in most things, a person's first initiator is of the utmost importance. And this is so because he may be an impostor and a quack. Whereby not only will the novice imbibe and absorb ideas which are neither wholesome nor correct, but his sanity may ultimately be at stake. Such ideas once sown like seeds in a fertile and receptive mind may take a whole lifetime, if at all, to eject.

It may be objected, however, that all this introversion stuff is unsuited to contemporary man, who has his living to earn and worldly responsibilities to bear, and has no time to sit still and do nothing but lull himself into a dream state. This attitude is only to be expected, and is in keeping with that state of mind which prevails and has been prevalent at large in all ages and all times. As one ancient Buddhist text observes:

*"There are gods and men who delight in becoming, and when they hear of putting a stop to becoming, their minds do not respond."*

### **Making time to meditate**

The fact being that it is not really a question of no time, but of too *much*. So much so that the mind and body have to be drowned in some distraction to hold inanity at bay. Even if there were nothing in the world to do, even if there weren't an external world to reckon with, man's habitual soul-searching unease and incoherence of mind, unable to come to grips with the whole amorphous blotch of a problem, would be enough to throw him out of joint, as he crouches amorphous and out of focus in his room alone. As a poet mourned more than a century ago:

*Nor peace within nor calm around,  
Nor that Content surpassing wealth,  
The sage in meditation found,  
And walked with inward glory crowned.*

So long as truth remains veiled to mortal eyes, so long will mortality mourn, without a stay. As said of old:

*"It is by not knowing, by not understanding, by not penetrating to it, that this world of men has become entangled like a ball of twine ... unable to pass beyond the ceaseless round of birth and death, without end...Long is the night to him who cannot sleep. Long is the way to him who is weary. Long is the revolution of becoming to him who knows not the True Law."*

And if the 'True Law' remains imperceptible to the average man, it is not because he is, technically speaking, incapable. But because he is, unfortunately, inefficient. Inefficient in that his extra-sensory faculties remain clogged, and therefore are unable to intercept, digest, and relate to their origins any psychic data which impinges.

### **Sustaining wholesomeness**

In this context, it cannot be too often emphasized how essential it is to uphold and upkeep the five basic precepts of morality, together with a gradual purging of the mind from anger, delusion, and greed. For the purpose of Vipassanā is not merely to validate the existence of other external states and planes, of which the universe boasts multifold, but to attain ultimate liberation therefrom:

*"Even as the ocean has only one great taste, the taste of salt. Even so, this doctrine and discipline which the Tathāgata teaches has only one great taste. The taste of Release".*

After the eighteen basic forms, with their respective spheres, as referred to in this text, have been experienced and perceived, they have to be purified and repurified for at least an hour a day if sustained translucence and clarity of vision are to be expected. Any slackness will witness a deterioration and decline, with perhaps even a total disappearance of supernormal vision. For of all things most difficult to sustain at the highest level of perfection, consciousness is certainly the hardest. With constant practice and application each day, back and forth through all the basic forms, the highest degree of facility will be attained.

## Chapter 5: APPENDICES

### Appendix I: The Dhammakāya (Metaphysical implications)

#### Overview

In the Aggañña Sutta of the Digha Nikāya it is said:

*Tathāgatassa h'etam Vasettha adhvācanam Dhammakayo iti pi...*

That is: Vasettha, Dhammakāya is the designation by which the Tathāgata is genuinely known.

This declaration, seemingly so simple, has been interpreted to imply that the body of teaching left by the Buddha is being referred to. How such a conclusion is arrived at is a mystery and requires a large stretch of the imagination. In fact, the implications underlying this utterance can be comprehended only by those who practise the highest scale of concentrated jhāna. This, though clearly implied in the Dhammasangani of the Abhidhamma, is seldom grasped. Herein it is said:

*The aspirant (yogavacara puggala) develops the four foundations of mindfulness (Satipatthana) to supramundane status develops the four great efforts (samappadhana)... the four supernormal qualities (iddhipada)... the five potential faculties (indriya)... the five powers (bala)... the seven factors of enlightenment (sambojjanga)... the four truths (sacca)... the quality of tranquillity (samatha)... the factors of existence (dhamma)... the fivefold personality group (khandha)... the eighteen elements (dhātu)... the nutritive essences (ahara)... contact (phassa)... feeling (vedanā)... perception (sañña)... volition (cetana)... mind (citta) to supra- mundane status. Which is the centripetal force which projects the aspirant out of this world to release, leaving false views and the rest behind, attaining the stream-enterer (Sotāpanna) stage, the once-returner (Sakadāgāmin) stage, the non-returner (Anāgāmin) stage, and the emancipated (Arahatta) stage, respectively... free from sensuality, free from blemish, accompanied by reasoning and reflection, bliss and well-being, born of solitude and dispassion, attaining the first jhāna, the second, the third, the fourth, the fifth jhāna (lokuttara).*

Although this is easy to repeat it is seldom understood and even less accomplished. Nevertheless, it is here that the technique by which the Dhammakāya is attained is laid forth. That is, the technique of transubstantiation, of transmuting mundane factors (commencing with mindfulness up to contact and the rest) to their supramundane limit and counterparts, i.e. the transformation of the five-fold personality base, the elements of personality, contact, feeling, perception, volition and mentality from the status of the fettered worldling to the emancipated group (khandha vimutto). This is achieved by the jhanic factor of concentration, of an intensification process. Which stated in Abhidhammic terms (magga citta vithi) goes as follows:

1. Bhavanga calana (vibrating passivity of sub-consciousness)
2. Bhavanga upaccheda (passive arrestation of sub-consciousness)
3. Manodvaravajjana (mind-door receptivity)
4. Parikamma javana (initial impulsion)

5. Upacara javana (access concentration impulsion)
6. Anuloma javana (directed - process impulsion)
7. Gotrabhu javana (change-of-lineage impulsion)
8. Sotāpanna Magga javana (Stream-enterer Path impulsion)
9. Sotāpanna Phala javana (Stream-enterer Fruition impulsion)
10. Sotāpanna Phala javana 2 (Stream - enterer Fruition 2).
11. Bhavanga (sub-consciousness)

### Transmutation Process

This is the transmutative refining process of mental concentration in action. That is, before this the Sotāpanna consciousness did not exist, but now through the process of jhanic intensification and direction it has come into existence, and shall continue to so exist as a resultant (ā) level henceforth in the bhavanga base. From which base it has to be edged up to concentrated pitch again if the intention is to process it a step higher on the path, which is as follows:

1. Bhavanga calana
2. Bhavanga upaccheda
3. Manodvaravajjana
4. Parikamma javana (this can be dispensed with in the adept)
5. Upacara javana
6. Anuloma javana
7. Gotrabhu javana
8. Sakadāgāmin Magga javana
9. Sakadāgāmin Phala javana
10. Sakadāgāmin Phala javana 2
11. Bhavanga....

And so on for the Anāgāmin and Arahatta stages, respectively.

From this may be gleaned the wide implications of Buddha's statement that all things arise from causes and conditions. There is no eternalism (it didn't exist before) nor annihilationism (it is not destroyed) involved, but that when this arises that arises through succession of cause and effect, and that when this disappears that disappears too. If there is a cause (hetu) an effect (vipāka) appears, and for a path (magga) a fruition (phala). This is in essence the structure whereby mentality and physicality as parallel processes function in the world of personality as well as in the larger scope of impersonal universality.

Insofar as the Dhammakāya is concerned, it commences and takes form at the Gotrabhu impulsion instant, and on up to the Sotāpanna etc. Thus there is the Dhammakāya Gotrabhu, the Dhammakāya Sotāpanna, the Dhammakāya Sakadāgāmin, the Dhammakāya Anāgāmin, and the Dhammakāya Arahatta. All these Dhammakāya forms are capable of still higher refinement and may be replicated at will.

### The Dhammakāya composite

The Dhammakāya is a composite impermeation and fusion of element and essence (dhātu-dhamma). That is, commencing from the normal fivefold field of personality, element and essence aggregates are pushed (bhavana) into the path (of morality, concentration, and intelligence) until they change their lineage (from mundane to supramundane) to emerge (phala as release aggregates (khandha vimutto)).

The specific field of personality is still there; only its quality has been changed, transmuted and transformed. It is no longer mundane, it has become supramundane. One impulsion has become objectified in another, one actuality transmuted into the next, until their most translucent qualities have emerged. This is the perfection of consciousness through the right technique of intensification and the attainment of the higher mind (adhicitta). It is this transcendent mind, purged of mundane residues, which the emancipated ones take with him (as a bird its wings) in final withdrawal. In view of its being a 'release' (vimutti) form and vehicle, this Dhammakāya cannot be said to have previously existed or not. Not comprehending the implications of the intensification of the Dhammakāya process, it is only natural that the following declaration of the Buddha remains a mystery and is so often confused as to be interpreted into mere meaningless negativity:

*“Since in this very life a Tathāgata is not to be regarded as existing, is it proper to speak of him thus: the Tathāgata comes to be after death, he comes not to be after death, he both comes to be and comes not to be after death, he neither comes to be nor comes not to be after death..... A Tathāgata released from what is called mundane form, feeling, perception, aggregates and consciousness is profound, immeasurable, hard to plumb, like the great ocean. It is not fitting to state that he is reborn, not reborn, both reborn and not reborn, neither reborn nor not reborn.”*

In view of the fact that even in this very life the Dhammakāya of the Buddha remains unperceived, whether the aggregates of the human form are present or not makes no difference at all, and the terms life and death therefore do not apply. Due to lack of insight, the layman labours under the misconception that release is a state bordering on extinction, arriving at this view through inference, with the Buddha word itself as reference: neither reborn, etc. However, what follows is a refutation:

*“A Tathāgata is to be proclaimed in other than these four ways.”*

To comprehend this it is necessary to penetrate into the processes of causality. Only through right insight into causal processes will the bits of the big jigsaw puzzle that is the dhamma fall into place. Otherwise nothing but confusion will arise, unable to come to terms:

*“The world, Kaccayana, is for the most part attached to two extremes,... Transcending these extremes (eternalism and annihilationism) the Tathāgata (through right insight) expounds dhamma by way of cause.”*

As usual, it is from the human plane that a launching pad has to be made. This is so because:

*“Man’s eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind, are as an ocean. Their motion is made up of shapes, of sounds, of smells, of tastes, of sensations, of ideas. He, who conquers these, stands upon the other shore. One who has reached the other shore, O Bhikkhus, thinks thus: this raft has been of great use to me, resting on it I have crossed to the further shore. Suppose now I haul it up or sink it down into the deep and go my ways. By so doing, O Bhikkhus, that man would have finished with the raft.”*

The sixfold field of contact is always at the root of knowledge. It is to be observed that among the concomitants of consciousness (cetasikas), contact (phassa) comes first, followed by feeling (vedanā), perception (sañña), volition (cetana), concentration (ekaggata), vitality (jivitindriya), and attention (manasikara). As these seven factors are common to all forms of consciousness and are always present therein as it flows along its haphazard way, why does the above statement seem to depreciate the field of sense-contact? If individuality is not the creation of an Overlord, but self-creation through a long and tedious assimilation process, a process of assimilating potential resources into the orbit of one common centre, why has it to be abandoned even as a raft?

## **The Raft and its Maker**

There is no contradiction here if it is realised that even after the raft is finished with, the person who crossed thereon remains. And if the person remains, then the field of contact also remains, and what is left aside is only the vehicle of transport. Namely, the mundane husk of personality. The confusion has always been to annihilate the person together with the raft. Little is it taken into consideration that the development of emancipation as a definite end-result necessitates the presence of a mind which achieves the emancipation. Although the mind and the self may be reduced to a series of occasions of contact, the totality of the occasions of contact stemming down the stream of consciousness from life to life, this does not preclude that the collective nuclei of cognition once arisen must perish. They are recorded in the subconscious stream (bhavanga) as the stuff of life, impressed therein. They only disappear from perceptive immediacy, but they can be recalled by the right technique.

## **Will is the Root**

When Buddha classified the factors of existence (dhamma) under ten heads, he began with the statement that the root of dhamma is will (cetana), that dhamma arises whenever attention (manasikara) is focussed thereon, that dhamma appears through contact (phassa), and is combined with the aid of perception (sañña). This is only in keeping with the functions of process and that for psychic emancipation as an end-result (all dhammas have release as goal) to culminate necessitates duration in time. Further, when the psyche attains its maturity even as a fruit, it is in deathlessness submerged. However, as it begins its character the only food it knows is contact: for consciousness arises by way of occasion and without occasion there can be no arising thereof. The occasion (of contact) can be either internal (ajjhata) or external (bahiddha) as the case may be, and its character may be either wholesome (kusala) or the reverse (akusala) dependent on the circumstances in which it takes its rise, being, so to speak perfumed thereby.

Although all in life is mutation, the mutation itself proceeds along certain lines, and insofar as individuality is concerned, in separate streams. In that life proceeds along separate streams makes it possible for the quality of mindfulness (sati) to exist. In fact, it is in proportion to the quantity of mindfulness in any given stream of individual life which determines it as an orientation point and centre of selfhood. The stream of consciousness without mindfulness is only made too evident in nightmares, or daymares, as the case may be. Among the seven factors of the enlightened mind, mindfulness comes first, for it is the rock on which enlightenment stands. Once mindfulness is established as a point of orientating selfhood, investigation of things (dhamma vicaya) follows, and with it, detailed analysis. This again entails effort (viriyā). But since effort by itself tends to agitation, it is regulated by the factors of bliss (piti), calm (passadhi), concentration (Samādhi) and equanimity (upekkhā). These complete the seven limbs of wisdom (satta sambojjanga), so called.

With the aid of these limbs, the mind perceives passion and purges itself thereof. Perceives hatred, delusion, lethargy, distraction, and purges itself thereof. Perceives the undeveloped mind, and develops it. Perceives the superior mind and develops it. Perceives the mind with nothing higher than it, and remains firm therein. Perceives the mind as firm, perceives the mind as emancipated, and remains emancipated.

## **Investigating the Dhamma**

This is one aspect. The mind imbued with mindfulness perceives forms in forms, feelings in feelings, consciousness in consciousness, intangibles in intangibles. Perceives form, feeling, perception,

impressions, and consciousness arising and vanishing from moment to moment. Perceives the internal sixfold base of cognition and the sixfold external base, and how through the interaction of these the mind is fettered and becomes subject to their sway. Perceives suffering, its origin, its dissipation, and the way thereto. The mind perceiving this remains calm, detached, clinging to nothing in the world. It perceives its own arising in perceptive immediacy. Immediacy, that is, by moment, by continuity, and by delimitation of the subject field.

Now the point of orientation where mindfulness is established by those who would aspire to the highest pitch of insight is at the pit of the diaphragm, just two finger-breadths above the navel line (See Diagram). There is a deliberate sinking of the peripheral faculties right down into the centre of the hollow space element (akasadhātu). In this hollow space element the cognitive element must sink, whereby concentration (bhavana) it is smelted down and purged, whence it brightens and begins to glow. This is the implication of Buddha's advice to his own son:

*"Both the personal and external elements are to be regarded as they really are, by perfect insight: this is not mine, not this am I, herein is not the self of me. So regarding them, one is repelled by them and cleanses one's heart thereof."*

That is, commencing from this preliminary technique of introverting the faculties to basic centre, concentration is intensified and pushed down into the void receptacle (natthi paccaya) so that under its impression a refined replica of it emerges with all its formations complete:

*"It also has a form and is made of mind, complete in all its limbs, possessed of super sense organs. That is the mind-made self."*

If this is difficult to understand it needs only be mentioned that each moment of contact (phassa) is a creative force, a replicative process, a subjective-objective flux, of reciprocity, which is the stuff of life. Nature (dhamma) contains the possibility of an infinite refinement in its processes, and mind-made selves are only the life principle being processed by the appropriate technique, which culminates in the formation of the Dhammakāya. For which formation a great introversion has to be made, of bending the mind down to deep centre to witness things in their true perspective:

*"Thus steadied, perfectly purified and translucent, free from blemish, purged of taint, made supple and pliable, fit for wielding, established and immovable, I bent down my mind to the recalling of my former existences..."*

## **Mindfulness as Base**

In each form which proceeds from the human base, right up to the Dhammakāya Arahatta, there is feeling, consciousness, and mental essences in ever ascending scale of refinement, in emergent style. It is this process which the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta would have us observe in detail:

*"Thus he lives contemplating form internally... origination factors, or dissolution factors, or both... Thus he contemplates form in form, feeling in feeling, consciousness in consciousness, and mental essence in mental essence."*

The central core of the ideal, therefore, in no way signifies annihilation of the life-process (jivitindriya) but a development and cultivation process, to the refinedest degrees. Thus, the Dhammakāya, like all other forms, is itself possessed of feeling perception, impressions, and consciousness. This is pure groupage (visuddhi khandha), or the release group (khandha vimutto). It is to be understood that the purity pristine of the emancipated one in no way precludes that the said consciousness must

necessarily be devoid of sense-impressions or character. It only implies that the emancipated one has ceased to grasp at them as his 'self', and being unattached thereby, has transmuted himself into the realities of pure form, together with the insight and vision into another dimension.

Dhamma is both abstract and concrete: it arises through environmental contact, traversed in spatio-temporal fact, through the right technique becomes transcendent, and finally outlives its mundane base, leaving it behind. They, the mundane bases, are left behind because they are the factors which grasp (upadāna -khandha) at contacts and send life reeling into pain, with all manner of psychic offshoots, the split-process of personality which is the origin of amorphous plurality (anattā). By leaving these behind, suffering is reduced to zero, consciousness brought to highest pitch.

### **Self is the Refuge of Self**

In the last analysis, everything rests on the statement: attahi attano natho...

That is: Self is the refuge of self. And, again: attadipa attasarana nannassarana, dhammadipa dhammasarana nannassarana. Self is the isle, self the refuge, no other refuge is there. Dhamma is the isle, dhamma the refuge, no other refuge is there.

How the "self" - in a world of "no-self" - is the isle and refuge can be grasped only in terms of a fixed orienting point of consciousness. There is no need to look elsewhere for any self, because the orienting point has to be established by a deep retreat within. To push on in until 'a vortex of energy' grips the mind, so that which is not yet won might be won, by human strength, by human striving. This is so because the root of dhamma is will, and dhamma arises whenever attention is focussed on it, brought to be by contact, combined by perception, and culminated by jhanic equipoise.

The isle and the refuge referred to is nothing other than the sphere of dhamma to be processed at the diaphragm pit two finger breadths above the navel. To be processed at this integral point until complete integration is established and the split-personality of anattā becomes the self-sufficient base of atta. Thus will the limit of darkness be reached? For this, it cannot be too often repeated that a process of profound involution has to be achieved, purging the mind of what it is not. As Lao Tze observes:

*"The excellence of a dwelling is its site. The excellence of a mind is its profundity."*

### **Involution Technique**

Penetration by the involuted technique mentioned sinks consciousness deeper and deeper into dhamma which is supra-mundane and, as a consequence, accomplishes ascendancy over external supports and mundane spatiality. The spatiality which presents itself to the five sense-door field of apprehension upholds the four basic principles of elemental solidity, cohesive liquidity, temperature, and atmospheric pressure. Pure space, uncompounded and underived, exists in primal state as the unconditioned (nibbānadhātu) element, or, as it is called, the unformed (asankhata dhātu). This is cognised only by the purified mind (viññānam) of the Dhammakāya.

Although the practice of submerging the peripheral faculties by the involuted technique is difficult of assay at first, it can be achieved. In fact, it is already a normal course of nature for the faculties to sink to the diaphragm position whenever sleep descends, otherwise sleep would never ensue. Sleepless nights are passed due to this refusal of the peripheral faculties to sink down from the brain to bhavanga



substrate, which is their home base. For even as a man steps out of home each morn, to return at dusk, even so the human consciousness, as much as it may wander out when awake, in sleep returns to base, its natural resting place.

## Perfecting the Technique

With the refinement of the conscious field, extra-sensory perception is developed. For the difficulties which beset the beginner who strives for such vision, the Upakkilesa Sutta, Sunnata Vagga, of the Majjhima Nikāya, gives us a glimpse. It is related how Buddha while residing at Kosambi was approached by three bhikkhus headed by Anuruddha who requested him to explain why whilst practising meditation they were unable to attain supernormal vision for long.

*“Anuruddha, even I in the period before my enlightenment, not yet enlightened, still a bodhisatta, I too saw light (supernormal) and forms, but not for long. What, thought I, was the cause and condition for this?”*

*“At which the knowledge arose in me that defilements (upakkilesa) were the condition and cause. Namely, doubt (vicikiccha), lack of attention (amanasikara), sloth and torpor (thīna middha), fear (chambhitatta), excitement (ubbilla), impurity of mind (duttulla), excess of zeal (accaraddha viriya), lack of zeal (atilina viriya), desire (abhijappa), restlessness of mind (nanattā sañña), over fixation on an object or objects of mind (atinijjhayitatta).”*

*“Anuruddha, whensoever either one of these eleven defilements arose in me, my concentration was shaken, that defilement being its cause. Whensoever my concentration was shaken, light and forms also vanished. Therefore I strove to discover the method whereby these defilements could be removed, and did accordingly. Knowing doubt and the rest as defilements of consciousness; I removed them from my mind.”*

*“Anuruddha, not unheedless, with vigour, I concentrated my mind. Sometimes I saw light but no forms. Other times I saw forms but no light. During the night, during the day, both night and day. At which doubt arose in me. What was the cause, the condition, for this?”*

*“Anuruddha, I thought to myself, at such a time as I thought not of forms, thought only of light, at such a time I saw only light, saw no forms. At such a time as I thought not of light, thought only of forms, at such a time I saw only forms, saw no light. During the night, during the day, both night and day.”*

*“Anuruddha, not unheedless, with vigour, I concentrated my mind. Sometimes I saw only a little light, saw only a few forms. At other times I saw much light, saw many forms. During the night, during the day, both night and day. At which doubt arose in me. What was the cause, the condition, for this?”*

*“Anuruddha, I thought to myself, at such a time when my concentration was lax, at such a time vision was lax. With vision lax as this, I therefore saw little light, saw only a few forms. At such a time when my concentration was great, at such a time vision was great. With vision great as this, I therefore saw much light, saw many forms. During the night, during the day, both night and day.”*

Again, when Buddha was once in Gayasisa, beside the river Gaya, he delivered the following address

to a multitude of monks:

*“Bhikkhus, in the period before my enlightenment, not yet enlightened, still a bodhisatta, while I was practising concentration, I saw light, but saw no forms.*

*“Bhikkhus, the thought arose in me: if I were to see light as well as forms, this would be the attainment of extra-sensory perception (ñānadassana) which is pure indeed. Therefore, in the period which ensued I, not unheedless, with vigour, with concentrated mind, saw forms. But failed to communicate with these.*

*“Bhikkhus, the thought arose in me: if I were not only to see light and forms, but were also to communicate with these, this would be the attainment of extra-sensory perception which is pure indeed. Therefore, in the period which ensued, I, not unheedless, with vigour, with concentrated mind, saw light, saw forms, as well as communicated with these. But failed to discover from which astral group they came.*

*“Bhikkhus, the thought arose in me: if I were not only to see light... but were also to discover from which astral group they came, this would be the attainment of extra-sensory perception which is pure indeed. Therefore, in the period which ensued, I... came to discover from which astral group they came. But failed to discover where, after having departed (cuti) from this life these astral forms again arose (uppatti) in rebirth, through whatever resultant force (kamma vipāka).*

*“Bhikkhus, the thought arose in me: if I were not only to see light... but were to discover where these astral forms arose in rebirth... were to discover on what food (ahara) they lived, suffered what pain or enjoyed what bliss, were of what age and lived for just how long... were to discover that I myself had lived or had not lived with them before... Therefore, in the period which ensued I, not unheedless... came to discover all of these.*

*“Bhikkhus, so long as my vision regarding these remained unclear, even so long in this world, deva world, brahma world, among ascetics and brahmins, gods and men, highest knowledge and insight (anuttara Sammāsamboḍhi ñāna) remained to be attained. But vision had arose in me: that my mind was free this was my last birth, there was no more birth for me.”*

## Actualising Potentialities

The process of attaining to a self-sufficient futurity is indeed (to borrow Whitehead's terminology): the process of eliciting into actual being factors in the universe which antecedently to that process exist only in the mode of unrealised potentialities. The process of self-creation is the transformation of the potential into the actual, and the fact of such transformation includes the immediacy of self-enjoyment... In the present, future occasions, as individual realities, with their measure of absolute completeness are non-existent. In the present there are no individual occasions belonging to the future. The present contains the utmost verge of such realised individuality. The whole doctrine of the future is to be understood in terms of the process of self-completion of each individual occasion.

That is, by contact (phassa), whether mental or physical. But as it is in the nature of processes, whether physical or mental, to perish and rearise with each moment, therefore perishing is the initiation of becoming, and how the past perishes is how the future becomes. Aggregates of mentality (nāma) serve as the base for the perpetuation of mentality by six conditions (paccaya). That is: continuity by momentum (anantara paccaya), direct contiguity of succession (samanantara paccaya), volitional

impulsion (*āsevana paccaya*), association factors (*sampayutta paccaya*), receptacle of voidness (*natthi paccaya*), and the quality of proceeding forth (*vigata paccaya*).

To be specific, in the process of establishing 'self as the refuge of self' by the jhanic method (the only method) the mind gradually withdraws from all contact with the body and concentrates itself by itself. In the process, it encompasses itself with morality, because 'great becomes the fruit, great the advantage of concentration when it is encompassed by morality, and wisdom when encompassed by concentration, which wisdom sets the mind free'. These are signified by the spheres, or auras, of the said qualities of dhamma, which become developed in intensity as the process moves on to its highest pitch.

The whole process is one of greater and ever greater intensification of mind, with the understood implication that each antecedent moment of consciousness, with its set of ingrained qualities, through the very force of momentum (*anantara paccaya*) serves as the template or base for the production of a more refined conscious form, which again in turn serves as the base for the next, in ever refining chain reactive scale.

### **Self-sufficiency the Aim**

In this fashion, self becomes the refuge of self. No other profounder process is there, and in no profounder sense can it be understood. Indeed, with the expansion of the range of consciousness, as it reaches its refinedest pitch, the self becomes an extremely extensive isle and refuge, so that no other refuge is elsewhere sought. This is the attainment of the Arahatta's self-sufficiency, moving wheresoever he pleases, taking with him nothing but his 'isle of self', even as a bird its wings.

Now as the peripheral faculties (of perception, memory, consciousness, and knowledge) sink right down into the diaphragm position and impermeate the areas of experience garnered from past lives (*vipāka cittani*), they become absorbed therein, and take on for the duration of that concentration the particular sphere of experience and refinement. Each stage of concentration has its specific nature, refined to scale, and, as a consequence, the plane of being and outlook is brought higher and higher as consciousness is winnowed away from the five human sense-door field of contact.

Thus, indeed, if whoever should practise depth concentration and witness in due order of refinement the emergence of form in form, feeling in feeling, consciousness in consciousness, mental essence in mental essence, originations and dissolutions, then the result is conclusive: being the only way which leads to the purification of creatures, to the destruction of grief and despair, to the attainment of the method, to the realisation of Nibbāna.

As dhamma arises whensoever attention is focussed on it, the more refined dhamma becomes the greater its range and scope becomes, until its field expands and embraces worlds and worlds. The human, the celestial, the brahma, the arūpa-brahma, and the Dhammakāya forms are archetypes of the psyche, and possess their characteristic feature and impress whereby they are recognised. Also, when they are attained, each bears the particular resemblance of the individual who attains them. This is only in accordance with the principles of process, whereby a certain quantity when smelted down changes its form but still retains the elemental impress of which it is composed, the features with which it is stamped.

## Ancient authority

In the text of the Visuddhi Magga it is briefly stated how the forms are attained:

*“Establish the human form in consciousness (of jhāna) as hollow. It becomes hollow. Whence advert to another form therein, and having done the preliminary work once more (of establishing it in consciousness of jhāna as hollow) resolve that another form emerge therefrom. Then draw it out like a reed from its sheath... The sheath is one, the reed is another. But it was from the sheath that the reed was pulled. Even so the mind-made forms.”*

When it is said that the human form becomes hollow, it does so through the power of the jhanic will. At such moments, when the will is harnessed in any aim, results conform immediately to wish. Jhāna achieves much which it is impossible for the normal consciousness to achieve. As the mind sinks back to the normal consciousness it requires the crude supports of the human plane. Food (ahara) is a basic necessity, but it may be dispensed with as long as jhāna lasts, for the jhanic consciousness exists only on mental contact (phassa ahara), but crude food becomes inevitable with a return to human normalcy. Nevertheless, distaste for crudity lingers on in the adept whose physical vitality has not completely reasserted itself, traces of jhanic absorption prevailing even after a return to the human plane.

## States of Consciousness

All states of consciousness have the five aggregates of personality as base, only becoming more refined as they change their lineage from mundane to supramundane. The fivefold aggregate evolves through the fourfold factors of kamma, antecedent consciousness, temperature, and nutriment. Kamma determines the destiny and disposal, for it is the initial authority which like a magnet draws to it the destiny to be wrought, dependent on antecedent aggregates. It determines the type of organism that is to issue forth and the consequent environment in which it is to evolve. But kamma itself is no rigid force: it may be deviated, take its effect in this life, the next, in a succession of lives, neutralised, weakened, substituted. There are causes and conditions for these fluctuations depending on shifts of what at a moment predominates, and what is subsidiary. As for consciousness, which is reborn, it supplies the base from which name-and-form (nāma-rūpa) takes its rise. Temperature and nutriment support the name-and-form which then evolves, nourishing its physicality.

When the five aggregates interpenetrate into an organic whole and absorb the environment, they are caught in the web of its activity for good or ill. Whatever antecedent existence there was is forgotten, and since the immediate environment prevails consciousness is meshed therein, no chord of memory is evoked, until such time as jhanic attention is focused on the past, or some sensory impression revivifies it to perceptive immediacy. However, unless intensified by jhanic technique, haphazard recollection of past lives by casual contact soon loses its impress because the connecting links are usually vague and because other immediate impressions whirl it away from sustained apprehension. Nevertheless, the character of past lives does play a significant part in the present, and in the case of sinners who become great saints especially so. That is, in the beginning before basic character can assert itself, the immediate environment meshes consciousness in its web of evil, but as time activates innate disposition to assert itself, a radical orientation takes place, brought about by pulsations (viññatti) of significance, and what is called a ‘conversion’ is made. This is amply exemplified in the case of Angulimala the notorious bandit in Buddha’s time.

Now when it is said in the scriptures that Buddha converts this one or that that the ‘spotless eye of the doctrine’ arises in them. What does this imply? The fact that at that moment the Dhammakāya is

perceived. It rises to the eye in a flash, with or without previous notice. It is, however, inadequate to state that there is no previous preparation, because these special ones have already accumulated the requisite potential in antecedent lives. Besides, at that moment Buddha himself is controlling them, (psychically), though of course unknown and unseen by them.

However, although the Sotāpanna stage and Sakadāgāmin stage may be attained in this way, they have still to be reborn, as their attainment is not complete. When they are reborn they too forget their past and go their ways as normal men of the world. Until such time, of course, as when their peripheral faculties sinking by concentration or by chance, perceive once more the Dhammakāya sphere arise. For until complete integration in Arahattaship is attained the peripheral faculties are susceptible to anattā (split-personality), and even stream-enterers and once-returners produce offshoots of personality at death, the peripheral surplus of the immediate life removed.

When the consciousness (patibandhi viññāna) of a Sotāpanna or Sakadāgāmin is relinked in rebirth, it sinks to subconscious base (bhavanga sota) at diaphragm pit in the womb, completing its functional cycle. For the cycle of a resultant entity (vipāka citta) is only threefold: to depart (cuti), to relink in rebirth (patibandhi), and to sink to subconsciousness (bhavanga). Although this sub-conscious quantity serves as the base for the arising of a fresh name-and-form (nāma-rūpa), it is distinct therefrom. That is, the resultant quantity remains a Sotāpanna or a Sakadāgāmin, but the fresh aggregates which arise develop into another personality which at death splits off, the Sotāpanna going one way and other offshoots other ways. They bear away with them whatever impressions (sankharas) are ingrained by attachment (upadāna) and the debris of their kammic heritage. The main stream of the Sotāpanna or Sakadāgāmin bears away the main draught of kamma, leaving the dregs to the offshoots. Before these offshoots can be Sotāpannas themselves the cycle of revolution will have to cover hundreds of kalpas before they too can attain the stream. This is so because the potential of a fresh entity is insufficient to bear it up and experience the pitch of a semi-liberated suspense.

### **Integrating the “Offshoots”**

The offshoots of any given main stream never exceed three. If the original continuum is counted, the series is in four. This process of multiplication is to be deplored as the result of ignorance (avijjā) as its negative root, and desire (taṇhā) as its positive cause. The offshoots vary in proportion to the conflicting impulses which activate and divide personality into what it is, which bound together by the organism are unable to set themselves free, but which split apart at death, each possessing a separate existence henceforth.

That there are twenty characteristics (akara) in four streams or heaps (sankhepa) of personality is to be analysed in the light of the formula of dependent origination (paṭicca samuppāda). Firstly, there is the aggregate stream of the last life which descends to rebirth in a womb. This is a fivefold aggregate comprising of ignorance (avijjā), psychic data (sankharas), desire (taṇhā), grasping (upadāna) and becoming (bhava).

Secondly, we have the aggregate stream which, once the first stream has fused in the womb, gives rise to another fivefold set which is purely resultant in status. This is comprised of consciousness (viññāna), mentality and form (nāma-rūpa), the six sense group (salāyatana), contact (phassa), and feeling (vedanā). Their status is purely receptive and negative, and at birth are devoid of immediate responsibility.

Thirdly, as environmental contact is established, another fivefold aggregate stream accumulates, whose function is immediate and positive. Comprising desire (taṇhā), grasping (upadāna), becoming

(bhava), ignorance (avijjā), and psychic data (sankharas). It is this third stream which accumulates fresh kamma, and condenses it down into the two preceding streams, the preceding two being negative and ethically neutral insofar as this present life is concerned. However, their influence on this third stream is basic, as in the status of father to offspring.

Fourthly, the third stream serves as the base for the arising of another aggregate stream, comprising of consciousness (viññāna), mentality and form (nāma rūpa), the six sense group (salāyatana), contact (phassa), and feeling (vedanā).

At death, due to lack of sufficient integration, these four aggregate streams make a total split and go their ways.

It was the spectacle of this form of dependent origination on which Buddha concentrated (in direct order and inverse) at his enlightenment, witnessing in true perspective how life comes to be. Namely, that all life is without permanent identity (sabbe dhamma anattāti) a flux of personalities, reciprocally based, originating anew from birth to birth.

These so-called split-personalities originate in the scope of 24 modes of conditionality (paccaya). And there are six groups thereof:

Firstly, mentality is the base for the arising of mentality (nāma paccaya nāma) by 6 modes. Namely, continuity by momentum (anantara paccaya), direct immediacy of contiguity (samanantara paccaya), volitional impulsion (āsevana paccaya), association factors (sampayutta paccaya), receptacle of voidness (natthi paccaya), and the function of proceeding forth (vigata paccaya).

Secondly, mentality is the base for the arising of mentality-formations (nāma paccaya nāmarūpa) by 5 modes. Namely, root causality (hetu paccaya), concentrated absorption (jhāna paccaya), path means (magga paccaya), immediate causality (kamma paccaya), and resultancy thereof (vipāka paccaya).

Thirdly, mentality is the base for the arising of formations (nāma paccaya rūpa) by 1 mode. Namely, consequence (paccajata paccaya). That is, it is the mentality aggregates which support the body, otherwise the body would not be able to continue as a living organism.

Fourthly, formations serve as the base for the arising of mentality (rūpa paccaya nāma) by 1 mode. Namely, antecedence (purejata paccaya). That is, it is what the body and its senses gather for it that makes the mentality aggregate continue to live in its environment and proceed.

Fifthly, mentality-formations serve as the base for the arising of mentality (Paññātti nāmarūpa paccaya nāma) by 2 modes. Namely, psychic supports (ārammaṇa paccaya) and decisive dependence (upaniṣṣaya paccaya). That is, it is mental and physical objects which determine personality's consciousness and future, and the character of personality is decisively dependent on the physical-mental environment.

Sixthly, mentality-formations serve as the base for the arising of mentality-formations (nāmarūpa paccaya nāmarūpa) by 9 modes. Namely, predominance (adhipati paccaya), co-nascence (sahajata paccaya), reciprocity (annāmmaṇa paccaya), characteristic dependence (nissaya paccaya), nutriment (ahara paccaya), controlling faculty (indriya paccaya), disassociation factors (vippayutta paccaya), presence factors (atthi paccaya), appearance-continuance factors (avigata paccaya).

## 24 Modes of Conditionality (Paccaya)

The 24 modes of conditionality (paccaya) may be described thus:

(1) Continuity by momentum (anantara paccaya) implies that each occasion of contact is objectified in the next occasion which arises, and there is no break between, not even in sleep, but that one mental impulsion is followed by another without a pause, and it is this mode of conditionality which perpetuates mentality in life or in so-called death.

(2) Continuity by immediacy (samanantara paccaya). This is of the same order as the preceding mode, only its function is more direct. Whereas the first mode is general in scope, the second applies to the particular. In the first instance one flash of mentality is followed by another flash merely as a matter of general function in the second instance it is in direct sequence. That is, with each contact (phassa) sensation (vedanā) immediately follows. Thus it is that these two modes of conditionality clarify how the present moment perishes and how the future moment becomes, by an objectification process.

(3) Frequency of volitional impulsion (āsevana paccaya). This too is of the same order as the above two. However, its function is not only automatic but is volitional. It signifies will (cetana), one volitional impulsion (javana) being followed by the next (up to seven in the normal consciousness, six impulsions in some cases, five at the death-moment), whereon a fresh cycle of seven impulsions begins. There are altogether 55 kinds of volitional mentality accompanied by the 52 concomitants of consciousness. 12 are unwholesome (akusala), being dominated by greed, hate, and delusion. 21 are wholesome (kusala): 8 being mundane, 5 pertaining to the brahma-consciousness, 4 to the arūpa-brahma consciousness, and 4 to the supramundane. 18 are functional and pertain to the emancipated consciousness (kiriya). 4 are supra-mundane resultants (vipāka).

(4) Association factors (sampayutta paccaya). This implies that mentality is always accompanied by its concomitants (cetasikas) by a fourfold process, covering all the 89 kinds of consciousness (citta). Namely, they arise together (eka-uppatta), perish together (eka nirodha), possess the same support (eka-ārammaṇa), and partake of the same element (eka-vatthuka). Mentality is therefore the base for mentality by this mode of process.

(5) Receptacle of voidness (natthi paccaya). What is implied is that all factors of mentality (or physicality) function in a locus of emptiness. Were it not for this voidness there would be no place for anything to arise. It is by the very absence of obstructing material that consciousness (or physicality) is possible of projection. Thus it is that the receptacle of voidness is a prime factor of conditionality by very nature of its basic necessity.

(6) Continuity by disappearance (vigata paccaya). This mode is of the nature of direction, of a proceeding forth, and is thus similar to the first two modes. All mentality possesses direction, even the seeming aimlessness of most minds being itself a form of direction, of movement, of going. Thus it is a mode.

The above six modes (1 - 6) function in mentality as base for further mentality.

(7) Root causality (hetu paccaya). The root causality is ethical in content and compulsive in aim. It determines greed (lobha), hate (dosa), and delusion (moha), together with their opposites of non-greed (alobha), non-hate (adosa), and non-delusion (amoha). It is of prime import, because all mentality and formations have their roots in either wholesome or unwholesome material. The root causality determines the whole color, tone, and outlook of the trend of personality, mental and physical.

(8) Concentrated absorption (jhāna paccaya). This mode has influence over 79 kinds of consciousness, excluding 10 non-caused resultants (tvi-panca viññāna ahetuka vipāka cittani). Concentrated

absorption is comprised of 5 concomitants of consciousness: reasoning (vittakha), reflection (vicara), bliss (piti), feeling (vedanā), and one-pointedness of concentration (ekaggatā). These are able to regulate the process of mentality and formations by a powerful determining force.

(9) Path means (magga paccaya). This mode determines whether the stream of personality is merely mundane (lokiya) or tends to the supramundane (lokuttara). Its influence is on 71 kinds of consciousness, excluding 18 ethically uncaused kinds (ahetuka cittani). The path means is comprised of 8 concomitants of consciousness; wisdom (paññā), reasoning (vittakha), right speech (sammā vaca), right activity (sammā kammanta), right means of livelihood (sammā ajiva), energy (viriya), mindfulness (sati), and one-pointed concentration (ekaggata).

(10) Immediate volitional causality (kamma paccaya). This mode has influence on all the 89 kinds of consciousness by one concomitant: will (cetana). It is, therefore, of the nature of a compulsive force and comprehensive in scope.

(11) Resultancy (vipāka paccaya). This mode is ethical in tone and has influence over only 36 kinds of consciousness. 15 are ethically uncaused (ahetuka). 8 are wholesome though mundane (kamavacara mahāvīpāka), 5 are brahma-like (rūpavacara vipāka) 4 are arūpa-brahma like (arūpavacara vipāka), and 4 are supramundane resultants (lokuttara vipāka). It is these resultant kinds of consciousness which take rebirth in a womb whensoever their time is ripe.

The above five modes (7-11) function in mentality as base for further mentality and form.

(12) Consequence (paccajata paccaya). As already stated earlier, this mode which represents mentality, supports the body which arises after it, otherwise the body would not be able to continue as a living organism. Mentality arises first, followed by the organism, which is its consequence.

This one mode (12) serves in mentality as the base for form.

(13) Antecedence (purejata paccaya). Again, the organism which is born into the world serves in turn as the base for the arising of fresh mentality. It is what the body and its senses gather for it that enables the mind to absorb fresh data and continue.

This one mode (13) serves in form as the base for mentality.

(14) Psychic support (ārammaṇa paccaya). Mental and physical objects are absorbed by the mind as psychic supports and determine its future thereby. This mode of conditionality covers a wide field and influences all the 89 kinds of consciousness and the 52 concomitants thereof. Even Nibbāna is included in this mode. The supports, of course, are absorbed through the sixfold data field. Thus, there are visible supports (rūpārammaṇa), sounds (saddārammaṇa), odours (gandhārammaṇa), flavours (rasārammaṇa), tangibles (phoṭṭhabbārammaṇa), and intangibles (dhammārammaṇa). These are comprehensive in scope and influence all mentality.

(15) Decisive characteristic dependence (upanissaya paccaya). This mode determines the character of the mentality, and like the above mode is comprehensive in scope. It is decisive because its function is immediate, and is also integrated as traits of character, which serves as future dependence for the mind.

The above 2 modes (14-15) serve for mentality-and-form as base for mentality.

(16) Predominance (adhipati paccaya). This mode has influence over 84 kinds of consciousness, excluding 2 hate-dominated, 2 delusion-dominated, and 1 unwholesome physical suffering consciousness. Its concomitants are 37, excluding hate, envy, avarice, and doubt. There are 4



predominant qualities besides (zeal, energy, thought, and investigation) which influence 52 kinds of consciousness, comprising 8 of greed, 2 of hate, 8 of mundane benefit, 8 of mundane functionality, 10 pertaining to the brahma-gods, 8 to the arūpa-brahma gods, and 8 supramundane.

(17) Co-nascence (sahajata paccaya). This mode covers all the 89 kinds of consciousness and the 52 concomitants. In that mentality and its concomitants arise together they take heading under this mode of conditionality.

(18) Reciprocity (aññamañña paccaya). Not only does mentality and its concomitants arise together, they are reciprocal in function and activate each other accordingly as well as simultaneously.

(19) Characteristic dependence (nissaya paccaya). This mode is of a resultant nature and applies to characteristic traits of mentality brought over from a previous life. Thus it determines the nature of the personality which prevails in the immediate life.

(20) Nutriment (ahara paccaya). This implies both coarse food (rūpahara) as well as mental sustenance (nāmahāra). Mental sustenance is threefold, and is comprised of contact, will, and consciousness.

(21) Controlling faculty (indriya paccaya). This mode may be divided into two groups, physical controlling faculties (rupindriya), and mental controlling faculties (namindriya). The physical pertain to the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, female, and male faculties. The mental pertain to the mind, vitality, suffering, pleasure, grief, joy, equanimity, faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration, wisdom, aspiration to supramundane knowledge, knowledge, and release knowledge faculties. These, of course, play a great part in the determination of the direction in which personality is to develop.

(22) Disassociation (vippayutta paccaya). This implies that even though mentality is of a different nature from physicality, they nevertheless influence each other by their very functions of disassociation. They do not arise together or perish together (mentality arises faster and perishes faster than physicality by 17 instants), nevertheless they interact on each other in between intervals (before and after) thereof.

(23) Presence (atthi paccaya). This mode covers the other modes of co-nascence, antecedence, consequence, nutriment, and controlling faculty. These are all presence factors in the sense of immediate existence. Thus, this mode of conditionality is a general one and comprehensive in scope.

(24) Non-disappearance continuance (avigata paccaya). This is of the same nature as the above, in that if mind and form continue then they are present as a condition, and although they may arise and perish from moment to moment nevertheless preserve a semblance of motionlessness. Mentality and formations thus serve as the base for mentality and formations under this mode of conditionality.

The above nine modes (16-24) serve for mentality-and-form as base for further mentality-and-form.

Of all these modes of conditionality, four are all-inclusive, taking in all phenomena (paramattha dhamma) which endures. The four are objective psychic support (ārammaṇa paccaya), decisive characteristic dependence (upanissaya paccaya), immediate volitional causality (kamma paccaya), and presence mode (atthi paccaya).

Thus it is that mentality and formations depend for their arising and perpetuity on these modes of conditionality. They also serve as the base for the consequent split of personality.

## Pure Essence

To put an end to this kind (anattā) of disintegration of personality, the stream-enterer (Sotāpanna) or once-returner (Sakadāgāmin), has to submerge his peripheral faculties at diaphragm-pit and press on until the integration of emancipation (arahatta-ship) is attained. Until this is achieved, he is still a sekhapuggala, one who has still some training to undergo. And here again we have Buddha's advice:

*“There are three factors, O Bhikkhus, necessary for one intent on the attainment of the higher consciousness (adhicitta). Namely, the factors of concentration, of energy, and of equanimity.”*

By the potential of these three factors, the elemental (dhātu) portion of the human aggregate is processed and transmuted, until it emerges in pure form. The essence (dhamma) portion is processed, until it emerges in perfect qualities of consciousness (pārami). The elemental portion is the end-result of the transmuted cognitive (viññāna) base. The essence portion is the fusion of aeonic experience into a specific field of personality as signified by the Dhammakāya. Element and essence fuse in a specific field, to issue in the establishment of a state of being which from mundane has become supramundane.

## Appendix 2: Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. The Contemplative Response to muddled issues

Due to lack of adequate perspective, there are various misconceptions in the negative interpretations of Buddhist orthodoxy, fallacies existing in abundance. This has been made more acute by the ancient commentators, on whom present-day scholars rely for elucidation, who carry things to the extreme by making such remarks as: 'the path exists but not him who walks it'. This is a contradiction in terms.

The scriptures abound with positive dialogue and admonitions such as: 'which is better, to go in search of a woman or to go in search of your self'? One can wade on and on through all these fallacies which have accumulated down the ages, clotting the truth until it has become unrecognisable. This seems to be the sad fate of all religions once their founders have left the scene. Thus the true seeker has to wade through all the rubble before he can the crystal find.

### Abhidhammic Misconceptions

#### Intellectual gymnastics

Misconceptions are particularly rampant in students of Abhidhamma, who infer that they by memorizing the written word have penetrated to the core of the matter, and therefore are full-fledged to air their views on the matter, especially insight (*vipassanā*) meditation. Insight is regarded as being composed of reflecting and analysing in the mind whatsoever contacts it, as being either form (*rūpa*) or mentality (*nāma*).

It is never realised that it is insufficient for the peripheral mind to analyse phenomena, whether physical or mental, because the peripheral mind does not possess the refinement for such a process. This method is in great vogue today because of its facility of approach, for indeed even a child can do it. The main disadvantage of this line of approach is that it is susceptible to a great many pitfalls, particularly because the mind is constantly jumping about from one thing to the next, and what it gains in agility it loses in the steadfastness of an inner calm.

#### Mindfulness Understood

Body-mindfulness (*sati*) meditation is an elementary method of combating the dominion of sense-passion holding the emotions in thrall. Mental awareness at the human level, however, proves to be inadequate, because at the most it only controls the lower peripheral instincts, leaving the subtler defilements and emotions to roam at large because they are out of sight. The bodily functions are easily seen, whereas the emotions lurk furtively without check within.

The eradication of impurity and insidious emotions requires a highly refined method, involving meditation in depth. This process of concentrated in-fighting, so to speak, reduces the inner personality level by level, shell by shell, to its dregs. It is not merely the peripheral personality, but the innermost instincts with their turbidity lying dormant that are to be reduced to ash. In relative order, distorted views, doubt, pernicious rites, sensuality, malice, jhanic intoxication, formless ecstasies, conceit, excitement, and ignorance, have their hash settled for good.

Physical pleasure, celestial intoxication, jhanic rapture, and formless infatuation, are witnessed for what they are, so many impediments on the path to perfect purity, a heady hindrance to the goal of

relinquishment in its totality. It will be appreciated therefore, that the higher levels of attachment are much more difficult to erase than their physical counterparts, for these appurtenances being subtle are consequently more difficult to dispose of, being regarded by the uninitiated as assets rather than as liabilities.

It is in view of this difficulty in getting to the inner personality that the method of mere body-mindfulness proves inadequate, for the attention is limited only to the peripheral level. The method of attaining to inner calm (samatha), even if more difficult, is a more rewarding method, which is why it is recommended.

### **Cutting through the mess**

Vipassanā meditation properly commences with the Gotrabhu, not with the human level as is commonly supposed. The human stage is too crude to achieve anything worthwhile in this respect and must content itself with mere mindfulness. Some form of inner stability - as represented by the Gotrabhu - must first be established before the mind can review form in form, feelings in feelings, consciousness in consciousness, mental properties in mental properties, in ever ascending scale of refinement.

The human peripheral level of perception in reviewing psycho-physicality fails to penetrate and extricate itself from crudity, for crudeness does not perceive its own crudity, possessing no standards of comparison. A more refined perception is required to recognize crudity for what it is.

This is supplied by the Dhammakāya Gotrabhu as a first start. Reviewing the human level, the Gotrabhu perceives the inadequacy therein and thereby extricates itself from attachment thereto. It then ascends to the next higher stage of Sotāpanna.

The Sotāpanna reviews the celestial (deva) level, and finding it a little less crude than the human level nevertheless perceives its inadequacy, and weans itself from attachment thereto, attaining the next stage of Sakadāgāmin.

The Sakadāgāmin reviews the Brahma form and perceiving its inadequacy, extricates itself therefrom and attains the next higher stage of Anāgāmin.

The Anāgāmin then reviews the arūpa-brahma form and perceiving its inadequacy extricates itself from attachment thereto, attaining the Arahatta stage of emancipation. This is genuine Vipassanā process.

Another thing: it is inferred that any psychic attainment such as the Gotrabhu, Sotāpanna, and so on, takes place in a flash and vanishes. These attainments are not mere flashes but are forms (kāya) which remain in the subconscious (bhavanga) and may be reasserted at will by the practitioner proficient to do so. They are no mere flashes in the psychic-pan, but vehicles of emancipation in ever-ascending scale, and through which ultimate experiences are realised, as said:

*He experiences bliss by kāya, realises  
the ultimate truth by kāya.*

When misconceptions such as these are the order of the day, it becomes obvious how difficult it is for a noble truth to come into its own and be understood by the world at large, when even those whose mission it is to know better are unable to grasp the implications in depth and are content to remain smugly in the dark. And what is even worse; continue to aid that darkness spread. What is really at the root of the problem concerning Buddhism today, as it has been for the last thousand years, is the

undue emphasis being laid on the negative rather than the positive aspects. This is because knowledge passed on in this way is never firsthand experience, only second-hand repetition, gained from literature and talk. Thus a gradual multiplication of misinterpretations piles on, until the whole structure staggers under the load.

### **De-emphasising the negatives**

Over-emphasis on the negative rather than the positive aspects of Buddhism have done it a great disservice. For the positive lustre, the very kernel of its message has been diminished in the process and attenuated beyond recognition. It is somewhat like the six-hued radiance which issued from the Buddha's presence during his life, but which at death strangely evaporated into thin air! What is really a pious hope is that the day will come when a total revision, by those competent to do so, of what actually constitutes the kernel, sees the light of day. Until such time, there isn't much that can be done except stand around and wait. This calls for fortitude. Such is the nature of things. Thus, not merely the necessity for a true comprehension of what ultimate truth consists of, but the age-old problem of communication, remains.

### **2. Is a meditation teacher a "must"?**

The extent to which a teacher is necessary... Indeed, people do have an incredible capacity for seeing all sorts of lights, colours, shapes, sizes, etc. That is where the qualified teacher comes in. If he is qualified at all, he will be able to perceive in meditation whether the novice is on the right track or not. We cannot dismiss all the things which people see in meditation as mere hallucination. Of course, many of them are. But generalisations on the subject are deceptive, to say the least. Each case has to be taken in hand by the teacher qualified to do so...

### **3. What about a nimitta or spheres?**

The matter of the Nimitta. We omitted mention of the preliminary moving of the nimitta through the centres to simplify matters and to avoid confusion. We have known some, after they have already sunk the peripheral faculties down to the seventh position, to be jolted out thereof, and to start all over again from the nostril. This is a tedious and superfluous process. All that is necessary is to plunge the peripheral faculties down to centre and fix it there.

Of course, most people find it extremely difficult at the first start to fix consciousness at the sixth or the seventh position, because it is so deep. That is why in-and-out-breathing (anapanasati) is generally recommended in the Scriptures, because it is easier to concentrate on the breath. Nevertheless, when breathing becomes refined, fades away, and finally stops, it is to the sixth position (void centre) that the peripheral faculties sink, rising thence to the seventh position, and there stopped. Whence the sphere of Pathama Magga is perceived...

The sphere of Pathama Magga (First Step) in its beginnings may appear as a mere star-like nucleus, but when intimately approached presents itself as huge, a whole aura of light. The normal size is approximately 3 cm in diameter. However, according to the capacity of the practitioner, it can be expanded to a diameter of 4 metres.

The sphere, of course, pertains to the human form. However, the spheres which pertain to the celestial form, and all the other forms which follow, are even greater in expansion and size. Now the sphere of the Dhammakāya Arahatta, for instance, is 40 metres in diameter at its normal size. However, it can be

expanded to an even more incredible breadth, so as to capacitate the world in its void centre.

Regarding the whole matter of the luminous sphere: it has to be spherical, bright, still, and present itself as clear. It often presents itself even clearer than daylight. As for the size, it does not matter. It may so happen that the aspirant perceives a huge sphere instead of a small one. The sphere perceived may not be that of the Pathama magga, but one pertaining to a more devious form. If so, it does not matter. Just concentrate in the centre thereof, and carry on.

In most cases, however, it is only the small star-like nucleus which is perceived, and progress always seems held up there, to despair of the aspirant. It implies that perception hasn't arrived at culmination point, is still immature, unripe. Or that the subject cannot approach close enough to perceive the sphere in its true proportions. However, with time and patience, the nucleus will one day present itself as a sphere. It will have to be perceived as a sphere if anything further is to be done. And all the aspirant can do is to despair and leave off.

It is due to the very separative tendency of the peripheral faculties, always holding at a distance instead of sinking in to void centre (the sixth position), that the sphere presents itself as a blur, a star, or a mere jumping nucleus, or even not at all...

It is best not to imagine or visualize anything. One has just to sink all the peripheral faculties down to void centre and thence up to the seventh position ... This sphere of Pathama Magga, and all the other spheres which follow, are not only to be observed objectively as from a detached status, but to be merged into. It is only then that their true essences may be experienced.

The various spheres of Dhammanupassana Satipaṭṭhāṇa, Sīla, Samādhi, etc., already contain the elements of mindfulness, morality, and so forth, respectively. All experience accumulated in past lives is contained in spheres, the sphere being the most self-contained of forms. Of course, if these qualities of mindfulness, etc., are already there, they have still to be cultivated, developed, enlarged, and purified as one treads the path (Magga).

The above spheres are the Noble Eightfold Path itself, and it is only through them that release is ever achieved. However, they can scarcely be said to be inherent or not to be inherent. They are certainly to be cultivated and enlarged.

#### **4. The mantra as aid**

One pronounces "Sammā Araham" as "Sa-ma Ar-ra-hung". And it means the perfect or worthy one. Since the aim of meditation is perfection, the mind has to occupy itself with this ideal, keeping it to the fore, so that these qualities of perfection may arise as concentration becomes intense. Besides this, this word formula is a sort of mental signal to those higher spiritual beings in Nibbāna by whom supernormal aid may be transmitted down.

#### **5. Of nucleus & light, et al**

You enquire regarding the nucleus of light expanding into a sphere. This sphere is in every creature, and you do not have to imagine it, because it is already where you are looking for it, in the seventh position as seen in the diagram. All creatures have this sphere in them or they would not be alive, for it is through this sphere that they were born at all.

People do not perceive this sphere because from the time of birth onwards, all their activities are centred outside the body, not inside. When we attempt to concentrate, therefore, and sink our peripheral faculties down into the centre of the body, we cannot expect our attempts to be crowned with immediate success, because the mind has been so accustomed by habit to perceive only things which are outside. What is more, through contact with the external world, consciousness has become restless, crudified, and defiled, whence the keenness of its perception has therefore been obscured thereby.

It is essential, therefore, to first calm and purify the faculties by sinking all attention to the centre inside. This, of course, is extremely difficult at first, and all that may result is often a sensation of whirling or groping in the dark.

We have to be brave and patient, and continue. We cannot expect to perceive light immediately, even as a man going out from a brightly lit room into the dark outside cannot make out anything distinctly at first.

You enquire if the sphere appears blurred or flickers and flits how the default is to be corrected. There is only one way. That is, to calm the body and mind by attempting to fix attention on one point, upon the centre of the sphere, and keep it there absolutely still. It will then slowly clarify by itself.

Of course, this is extremely difficult, because the sphere often manifests and presents itself as a mere nucleus, upon which it is hard to concentrate. It appears small because of immaturity in meditation, for if the peripheral mind were to approach closer thereto, this nucleus will be revealed in its normal proportions as a sphere of 2-3 cm. in diameter, large enough on which to concentrate...

## 6. What about a "bright mark"?

Regarding the matter of the 'Bright Mark', it is a vague term, which conveys little sense. These so-called 'Bright Marks' as you may notice from the booklet, are really spheres which contain essential properties peculiar only to themselves. That is to say, mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*), morality (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*), wisdom (*paññā*), release (*vimutti*), and the perceptive-knowledge of release (*vimutti nana dassana*). It is important to know at which particular sphere (and to the especial form it pertains) one is concentrating on at any particular moment, and not class them all under some amorphous heading of 'Bright Light'. And this also applies for the term 'Body', which is misleading and inadequate, for each successive astral form possesses its especial significance and name, not to be confused with the next.

## 7. Of other "things" seen

Regarding the 'pin-point' or 'tiny diamond' which you say comes and goes. Yes, it is quite possible and very necessary, to enlarge it...

I have known some to take years before their efforts are crowned with visible success. On the other hand, others take only a few days... We cannot hope for quick success, because the mind is by its very nature a precipitate thing, by habit rushing on in its random and fickle course. It need hardly be stressed, however, that our efforts are not being applied in vain...

## 8. Succession of spheres

These spheres are not a repetition, because each successive form (or level of consciousness) is imbued with a succession of spheres, in various increasing degrees of refinement.

They are indeed different stages of attainment.

The forms mentioned are not the result of auto-suggestion but are the result of the process as consciousness is pushed to its most translucent limit.

As for the term Arūpa-Brahma, it is understood that it does not imply lack of form but that the 'form-lessness' lies only in the attainments practised. Namely, ākāśānañca āyatana jhāna, etc.

Unfortunately, we were not in a position to clarify all this in detail in the booklet, because these concentration exercises are something to be experienced rather than described. It is in view of this literal disadvantage (the ineffability of concentration attainments) that descriptions fail.

## 9. The need for repetition

You express doubts regarding the concentration exercises, in view of their repetitiousness. Perhaps it would be as well to clarify that they are not variations on a simple theme constantly elaborated.

The whole method is a process of pushing consciousness from its crudest mundane level to its translucent supramundane limits. This, of course, is something to be directly experienced to be appreciated. Each successive form and its respective spheres are different stages of attainment, in ever increasing degrees of refinement.

It will be appreciated, therefore, that the booklet was not intended for general reading but as a meditational manual. It is only after all the stages have been attained, and consciousness is purified to its most translucent limit, that the attention is averted to other attainments, such as the investigation and observation (in jhāna) of the Four Noble Truths, etc...

You say that you have been able to perceive a misty sphere. That is good, fix attention on it and keep it there, until it clarifies and becomes bright, and translucent. On no account let it disappear, until another nucleus is seen in its centre, which again will manifest as a sphere as concentration becomes keen.

You say a black mark appears. We have to expect such things. This black nucleus which you see is the evil in life, and whenever we meditate it does its best to overcome our minds in the darkness of ignorance, of greed, delusion, and hate. We have to be constantly on our guard against these evil forces (akusala dhamma) and extinguish them as soon as they manifest. This is why we witness Buddha's emphasis on mindfulness (satipatthana).

You say you see many nimittas. We have to take whatever nimitta that appears one at a time or else concentration wanders and strays, and the thread of the process is lost. We have to be prepared for all these manifestations, and not to be lured from our main objective... We should not allow any visions or landscapes to distract us from the main objective of arriving at the various forms and spheres, until finally the Dhammakāya form is perceived...



## 10. This IS the Method of the All-Enlightened Buddha

You express doubts about the method advocated... Of course we do not say release cannot be attained without jhāna. There are two methods of release: paññā-vimutti, and ceto-vimutti.

Paññā vimutti is that method which obtains release through repeated (life after life) discrimination (vitakka vicara) on the factor of impermanence, suffering, and impersonality, until attachment and the defilements (asavas) are winnowed away and finally exhausted. Attainment of release through this 'dry-bare' method (without jhāna) is also called sukkha-vipassaka. Perhaps this is the method most congenial to the psychology of the West, due to its peripheral facility.

Buddha himself, however, did not attain perfect enlightenment through this method (as some would like to suppose he did). And why? Because this is not the method of the All-Enlightened Buddhas. This method of sukkha-vipassaka does not endow the aspirant with all-enlightened knowledge or supernormal power essential to a Buddha, who has to teach and convince. This method however, is sufficient to winnow away the asavas, insofar as individual salvation is concerned... It is not in the domain of an Arahatta to know all, an honour reserved only for the Buddhas due to their immense aeonic travail.

As for ceto-vimutti (the involuted method of release) it is given as in the text. There is no other method. We feel called upon to belabour this subject, because it is essential to realise that the seat of consciousness, the life continuum, the heart-base (as distinct from the peripheral mind with its centre in the brain) has its function in the centre of the diaphragm. If the peripheral faculties are not consciously sunk to this life-continuum base (as they are unconsciously done in sleep) nothing really worth knowing about 'self', and 'not-self' will ever be revealed. And why? Because it is in the life-continuum, not in the immediate brain, that antecedent (rebirth) data are registered and stored. It should be understood that the Eightfold Path (condensed under the steps of sila, samādhi, and paññā) is not merely a peripheral exercise or abstraction, but is something to be cultivated (bhavana) and integrated at the life-continuum base in the centre of the diaphragm. It is through the door of this centre that consciousness finally becomes integrated and intense, so as to reveal depths unplumbed before.

## 11. Focus on the 7th position not on the others

However, emphasis should not be directed at the nostril or the eye apertures, because if so progress will be slow. We have to bring down the peripheral centres to the seventh position, and push on from there... As for walking etc., it is good to be mindful. However, it is wearying and unrewarding to direct attention only at the bodily movements, and this should not be carried too far. What is of importance is that whenever you are walking, sitting, standing, or lying down, to concentrate attention at the seventh position, in the sphere there, whether with eyes opened or closed. The sixth and seventh positions are the most vital of centres, and thinking and investigation of the Dhamma should be investigated there for the most beneficial results. Facility in this keeping of the attention at the seventh position will eventually be attained with continual practice.

Regarding the position of the elements, it should be understood that as given in the diagram they are merely visual aids. At a matter of fact, the size is really nucleic, and they are inextricably mixed and do not exist in isolation at all. What is of importance to know is that the elemental nuclei are impermeated by a cognitive base, otherwise the organism would not function. In the earth element there is the water element etc., in the water element there are the other elements, and so on, the proportions differing only in degree. The elements are distributed throughout the organism and it is only a question of

which element predominates at a given moment. If any one element is in excess the balance is disturbed. Thus, if the fire element is in excess the metabolism of the organism is upset, and fever is the result. Too much significance should not be placed on the elements, for as the Master has said:

*“Both the personal and external elements are to be regarded as they really are, by perfect insight: this is not mine, not this am I, herein is not the self of me. So regarding them, one is repelled by them, and cleanses one’s heart thereof.”...*

Those who have never practised deep concentration before are only too ready to pass an opinion. As the Master said to Vacchagotta, the dhamma is hard to see and understand, rare, excellent, subtle, to be comprehended only by the wise:

*“To you it is difficult, who have other views, another persuasion, another belief, a different allegiance, a different teacher... A thicket, a wilderness, a tangle, a bondage and fetter of views, attended by ill, distress, perturbation, fever, not leading to tranquillity...”*

Regarding the elements, it is to be understood that the external elements we perceive around us are different in composition from that of the organism, because inorganic existence is not impermeated by a cognitive base. The organism is impermeated by such a cognitive base because the rebirth consciousness supplied the foundation by impregnating the cell in the mother's womb. From thence the cell sprouted into two, two into four, etc, until the fully developed organism was complete. If there was no cognitive base, the development process would never have started to sprout its off-shoots. That is why it is said that each nucleus of the four basic elemental (organic) structure is impermeated by a cognitive base, because that is how it all began...

Some people may descend to the seventh position according to the facility whereby they are able to induce it by preliminary techniques, such as in-and-out breathing, etc. It is of no consequence, so long as the peripheral faculties eventually arrive there. There is, of course, no sense in trying to force one's way down there, because it will be unrewarding. The idea is to let the faculties sink of their own accord to that point, to gradually induce them to. This is done everyday when one is about to sleep, without any amount of force but by nature. For one cannot force oneself to sleep, one only tries to induce it. It is strange that everyone does this everyday by nature, and yet is unable to do it by an act of self-volition. The only difference between sleep and the volitional way, is that the former is done unconsciously whereas the latter is something to be done by a direct technique, accompanied by full awareness. Therefore, try and observe what happens when one is about to doze off.

You are right to say that when you want to put your mind anywhere you just direct it there. The process is automatic, and that is how the mind works. Basically, what is seen is the first nucleus (Pathama Magga). To see other nuclei, which there are, the process will have to be directed to dead centre of that first nucleus. But this is most difficult to achieve, and entails an expansion of the first nucleus to spherical dimensions and a very keen penetrative insight, which is only developed with time. Of course, your efforts are not wrong or in vain, though in the beginning one may be beset by difficulties. But then all things excellent are as difficult as they are rare.

As for the sixth position, it is the most difficult of all to understand, for that is the seat of the collective subconscious life-continuum (bhavanga) and contains all the impressions (sankharas) pertaining to antecedent experience. It is to the sixth position that the peripheral faculties sink and gravitate when sleep descends (without a dream) and the sensation is of sinking as into a void. When the faculties arise to the seventh position, then dreams arise. Therefore, to try and get to the sixth position in full awareness is something which only the adept is proficient at. It is more fundamental than the seventh position, because it is at this juncture that the embryo fused in the mother's womb. When the untrained faculties are sunk at the sixth position they know nothing, flowing on just like a river. To take

cognizance of anything, the faculties have to edge up a step from this subconscious-continuum before anything can be cognised, and that is the significance of the seventh position...

## 12. The Mahāyana and Theravada Traditions Discussed

Regarding the matter of the Mahāyana and Theravada ideals. It was good to hear that you have the Bodhisatta ideal at heart, because the world would surely be a better place in which to live were all to have such an outlook. However, it is important to understand that when the rebirth-aggregates are extinguished and the Nibbanic plane attained, one ceases to be a Bodhisatta but becomes an Arahatta or a Buddha, as the case may be. Since an Arahatta or Buddha in the Nibbanic plane knows no more rebirth, he can no longer aid creatures across to the other shore, for he possesses a physical form no more, as to make himself visible.

It also should be understood that each Buddha has only a limited following, and this is so because the extent of influence is fixed as such, no more. This disposes of the theory that Buddhas are capable of putting off their Nibbāna for an indefinite period until all creatures have been saved.

We, of course, do not say that past Buddhas and Arahattas in the Nibbanic plane are incapable of aiding creatures who supplicate for aid. But the aid transmitted is of an imperceptible nature and far too subtle for the normal person to definitely determine. The task of a living Bodhisatta, on the other hand, is to influence (although not fully enlightened himself) creatures in the immediate world by direct aid and effort, so as to accumulate gradually a band of future disciples. This is his task.

Now it should also be understood that although many may aspire to the ideal of a Bodhisatta, they cannot be recognised as such until they have accumulated a vast amount of preparatory pārami (as given in Appendix Five of Sammā Samādhi II), after which they must be accepted and predicted as such by a Buddha of that period wherein the vow is verbally made. Only then are they classed as fully-fledged Bodhisattas whose vows possess the certainty of fulfilment. There are some who originally started to build the pāramis, but later, after still having a further term to serve, renounced their vows (because of the vast amount of time and effort involved) to become ordinary Arahattas.

Thus, although in theory anyone may aspire to be an All-Enlightened Buddha, the matter is not so feasible in actual practice, because of the vast amount of resources and ability necessary to support the vow so as to fruition in actualized reality. We do not say that men should not aspire, and lack of resources does not make aspirations null and void, because even if All-Enlightened Buddhahood is a protracted affair, even an ordinary man possesses the capacity to influence his fellows, no matter in how limited a sphere. It must be understood, however, that the sphere of influence of any given personality depends upon his own spiritual weight, which like a stone thrown into a lake causes concentric ripples to expand under the impact, to an extent in proportion with the gravitational weightiness of the stone itself.

What is more, the pāramis are never on any account rendered extinct with the attainment of the Nibbanic plane. It is the weight of the pāramis which fulfil aspirations and make the attainment of release possible at all, whether for self or a multitude. We must not confuse merit (puñña) with perfection (pārami), because one who has attained to Arahattaship or Buddhahood has nothing further to do with puñña, having passed beyond, but pārami is a thing of essence and is a Buddha's and Arahatta's actual being, something without which he can neither exist or act as a Buddha or Arahatta. Any action (or non-action) of a perfect one is only an external manifestation of his internal resources called pārami, and distinguishes him as such...

The whole matter of the so-called Mahāyana and Theravada ideals has been greatly exaggerated and

overemphasized, causing a deplorable split, an offence of the first magnitude, as Buddha's reprimand to Devadatta bears witness. There is no basic distinction between the two, for there is no 'higher-greater' or 'lower-lesser' path, there is only one path. Because whether in the attainment of that path one goes alone or takes others also, it is in Nibbāna, not elsewhere, that the path ends, no more.

The true Bodhisatta is one who does not exploit his aspirations as a platform, but who toils and travails in retiring humility for the sake of universal welfare. Only this is his goal, only this, his reward. As Santideva consoles himself:

*"Thus through all the good accumulated by me, may I become a tranquilliser of all the pains of beings."*