

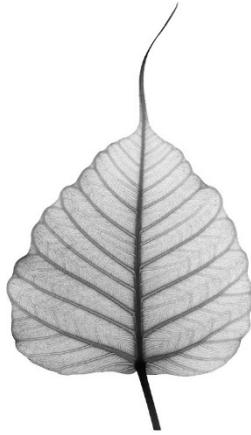


# *Bhāvanā*

The Buddha's Path to Awakening  
&  
Wholesome Mental Development

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The Buddha's Path to Awakening  
&  
Wholesome Mental Development



*In the Buddha's Words*

Written & translated by  
Ānanda

First Edition  
July 2020



*Teachings from  
The Sāmaññaphala Sutta,  
The Ānāpānasati Sutta and  
The Saṅkhadhama Sutta  
And More...*



*"Monks,*

*Just as the great ocean has but one taste:  
The taste of salt.*

*This Dhamma and way of life have but one taste:  
The taste of Freedom."*

*- Udāna V 5 Soṇa*



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*Hilversum, The Netherlands*  
*Nelson, BC (Canada)*  
*July 2020*



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# INTRODUCTION

*The Buddha Himself is most proficient and skilled in teaching the Dhamma.<sup>1</sup> Great solace of wisdom are found in the Buddha's own words.*

*It is difficult to move away from the original discourses without moving away from the original teaching. Here is a simple guide for seekers. Based on the direct discourses of the Buddha himself, which goes to the heart. Here, one will find the core Teachings from:*

***The DN 2 Sāmaññaphala Sutta,***

*Discourse on the Truth-Seeking Life*

*The Buddha's famous and most essential exposition of the Gradual Training.*

***The MN 118 Ānāpānasati Sutta***

*Discourse on [Cultivating] Awareness with the Breath  
The original meditation instructions on Breathing with Awareness.*

***The SN IV 42.8 Saṅkhadhama Sutta***

*Discourse of the Conch Blower*

*The original meditation instructions on Boundless Love.*

***The Dhammapāda***

***And many other essential suttas...***

---

<sup>1</sup> Anuttaro purisa dhamma sārathhi.

*The Collection of Long Discourses<sup>2</sup> is the first book of Discourses<sup>3</sup> in the Pāli Canon, the repository of the oldest and most complete textual evidence for the Buddha's direct words and his original Teaching. Which also makes the DN, the beginning of the entire basket of discourses.*

### ***The Heart Goes Unnoticed***

*There are thirteen suttas in the very first chapter of the DN. To the exception of the first sutta, which deals with very profound and advanced teachings,<sup>4</sup> the twelve following suttas, beginning with the Sāmaññaphala Sutta, the fruits of the Truth-seeking life, all contain the same method of exposition. That is, the entire path of training that the Buddha taught to the monks and to everyone else who desired it and sought it.*

*This invaluable sequence explains how the path starts with (1) the gaining of faith through hearing the Teaching of the Buddha, (2) the going forth, (2) the practice of virtue, (3) the practice of self-mastery, (4) the practice of seclusion, (5) the blameless bliss that arises from these practices, (6) how the mind enters meditative states through upliftment, joy, relaxing, and (7) ends by a very clear description of awakening.*

*One problem is, in most English translations, as well as in the original Pāli texts, this sequence seems to only appear in Sāmaññaphala sutta. Because in fact, the whole*

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<sup>2</sup> DN: Dīgha Nikāya

<sup>3</sup> Sutta Piṭaka

<sup>4</sup> DN 1 Brāhmajāla Sutta: Which is similar to "Beginning with the end of the Teaching."

*sequence is completely abridged in each of the following eleven discourses.*

*In Pāli, this is reflected by the very common use of the word: "...pe...", which is an abbreviation of "peyyāla" and means [same] repetition, succession, formula. In English, this is replaced by the usual ellipsis. Therefore, from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sutta until the 13<sup>th</sup> Sutta, it is usually followed by a brief note referring the reader to the Sāmaññaphala sutta.*

*This obviously saved a lot of ink and paper to the compilers and a lot of effort to the reciters of the Canon.*

*It makes sense...*

*But unfortunately, this wonderful sequence, which is the heart of the Buddha's Teaching, ends up unnoticed and widely missed. This is probably the single most important piece of the Teaching that we have to show us exactly how the Buddha really taught his path of virtue, meditation and wisdom. His gradual training<sup>5</sup> in wholesome mental development<sup>6</sup> or at least, how he most often taught.*

*Knowing that twelve of the first thirteen suttas<sup>7</sup> of the basket of discourses<sup>8</sup> all contain the same sequence is, needless to say, rather important.*

*Perhaps a wise seeker may be well advised to give it proper attention. Instead of according so much importance and*

---

<sup>5</sup> Anupubbasicchā

<sup>6</sup> Kusala dhammā bhāvanā

<sup>7</sup> The exception being DN 1

<sup>8</sup> Suttanta Piṭaka

*emphasis to the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta,<sup>9</sup> a sutta which can be a good reference for advanced meditators who already understand the proper way of practice.*

*More specifically, this sequence is particularly important since it contains the Buddha's basic explanation on how the mind works. How the mind attains Samādhi<sup>10</sup> as it naturally flows from gladness into joy, then into tranquility, then into happiness and then, naturally, into collectedness.<sup>11</sup>*

*The Buddha explains in many suttas how to uplift the mind and to allow it to release its tension. To open it up, to wisely let go of craving and to eventually let go of any "objects".*



*"Seekers,*

*Being wise and continuously present,  
Develop samādhi<sup>12</sup> that is immeasurable.  
Doing so, these five understandings will arise:*

- 1. "This present samādhi is happiness and results in future happiness."*
- 2. "This samādhi is noble and beyond matter."*

---

<sup>9</sup> DN 22 or MN 10 The Four Foundations of Awareness.

<sup>10</sup> Mental collectedness

<sup>11</sup> *Sukhino cittaṃ samādhīyati*

<sup>12</sup> Meditation, mental unity, see glossary.

3. *“This samādhi cannot be practiced by unrighteous persons.”*
4. *“This samādhi is peaceful and sublime, obtained through calming down, attained by mental unity, not by forcefully holding back [the mind] and pushing away [with the mind]*
5. *“[In this samādhi] I am aware while entering it and aware while emerging from it.”<sup>13</sup>*



*This same sequence also contains a clear description of each level of understanding or jhāna with vivid and wonderful similes which explain these states and how the way of practice to attain them with striking clarity.*

*This also clearly demonstrates that the Buddha taught a kind of meditation that was completely happy and uplifted, using the awareness of body as a foundation. It shows that awareness of the body was central to his teaching. A blissful abiding, using “awareness of the body” as a joy-filled vehicle. This sequence also reveals that he most likely taught this more than anything else. The meditation instructions from the Ānāpānasati Sutta only strongly support this way of practice by giving direct, practical advice on how to meditate.<sup>14</sup>*

---

<sup>13</sup> AN V 27 Samādhi Sutta

<sup>14</sup> Along with the entire Ānāpānasati Saṃyutta.

## *Avoiding the Tangle*

*This being said, for those who are simply beginning on this wonderful path of liberation and happiness, there is no need to be overly concerned about these more technical matters. One can simply proceed to reading the instructions.*

### *In the Buddha's Words Series*

*The goal of this series of books is to let the Buddha's words shine on their own, with as little change as possible, in a direct way. Of course, the reader must understand that there are 2500 years of oral and written transmission that separate us from Bhagavan Buddha.<sup>15</sup> And that these centuries have seen their share of wars and famines and diseases.*

*Even the original Pāli texts have been modified and changed in the course of history. Not to mention that the English vocabulary and its cultural context in the "modern" civilization is quite different than the Pāli vocabulary and its own cultural context in Ancient India. Every translation is bound to be different. Hopefully, these translations will be a good bridge for the Teaching to cross over gap left by the centuries, unimpeded. Of course, all translations in this book are my own.*

*In the first section of this book, I have kept explanations and comments in the footnotes in hope that the Buddha's words would stand for themselves. The reader may or may not choose to read the explanations.*

---

<sup>15</sup> *Bhagavan: Blessed, Awakened...*

*The second section serves a different purpose: To “open the gates to awakening” and to provide the seeker with solid understanding of the Dhamma and how to make good progress on the path, using a broad selection of passages from the original discourses. In this section, I have mixed my own explanations and their related suttas together.*

*May this book bring attention back to the essence of the Buddha’s Teaching, shedding new light onto an ancient wisdom and open the door to all those interested in the Buddha’s most precious gift to the world, the Dhamma.*

*So that everyone may enjoy,  
Here and now,  
The bliss of Release,  
Nibbāna.*

*Sabbe satta bhavantu sukhitatta  
May all beings be happy at heart.*

*Ānanda  
Vesak 2020  
Kootenays*

# *Part I*

## THE BUDDHA'S PATH



## THE PURPOSE OF THE TRUTH-SEEKING LIFE

*[On this auspicious full-moon night of the uposatha,<sup>16</sup> the King Ajātasattu of Magadha feels inspired and his mind inclines to seek out spiritual guidance. His ministers recommend to visit a number of famous spiritual teachers of the time, which he declines one after the other. But one of his ministers remains silent; Ajita Kesakambali.*

*After being asked about his silence, he replies that the Blessed One, the Truth-finder, the Buddha, is living in his mango grove right now. And that if it suits the king, he may pay him visit tonight. The king then accepts and resolves to seek guidance from the Buddha.*

*Once arrived at the mango grove, the king alights from his elephant and is directed to where the Buddha and the monks are sitting very quietly. Amazed by the calm and poise of the assembly of monks, he approached the Buddha and pays homage to him.*

*The king then asks a question, which he admits having asked to various other teachers. He then explains how their answers made poor impression on him and left him dissatisfied, and his hopes that perhaps the Buddha could provide a better explanation.]*

*[Here, the king formulates his question...]*

---

<sup>16</sup> Observance day. See Glossary.

*[King Ajātasattu]*

*Dear Bhante,*

*There are various professions and crafts such as:*

*Chefs, barbers and soap-makers,  
Cooks, gardeners and dyers,  
Weavers, reed workers and potters,  
Translators and accountants,  
And all those with similar professions and skills;*

*They live by the visible fruits of their professions.*

*They themselves happily enjoy this.  
Their mothers and fathers happily enjoy this.  
Their children and wives happily enjoy this.  
Their friends and relatives happily enjoy this.*

*They can thereby support the spiritual life,  
And offer to wandering seekers and brahmins.*

*They stand      In what is divine,  
                         In what has a happy result,  
                         In what is conducive to the celestial  
                         abodes.*

*“Bhante, is it possible to reveal,  
Any visible fruit of the truth-seeking life?”*

**[The Buddha]**

*“It is possible, Great King.”*

*“Listen carefully and apply your mind to what I say.”<sup>17</sup>*

**[King Ajātasattu]**

*“Yes Bhante” replied the King.*

**[The Buddha]**

*The Awakened One said this:*

*“Great King,*

*A Truth-Finder<sup>18</sup> arises in the world,  
An Arahant,<sup>19</sup> Perfectly All-Awakened  
Endowed with righteous knowledge  
and righteous behavior,*

*A Blissful One, Knower of the worlds,  
Unsurpassed guide for those who seek peace,  
Teacher of Devas and humans,  
Awakened and Exalted.*

---

<sup>17</sup> *Paying attention, which directly implies having a respectful behavior, notably towards monks and teachers is the very first step to learn anything. It is a sign of wisdom and it also indicates one’s level of mental presence. The Buddha often began important talks by reminding the listener to make a special effort to maintain mental composure, so to receive and understand his teaching, for their own welfare and benefit. (See last section on gratitude, respect and the ability to listen.)*

<sup>18</sup> *Tathāgato: See Glossary*

<sup>19</sup> *Araha: Truly worthy. This term is very often used to describe a fully awakened person, who has made an end of selfishness.*

[...]

*He teaches the Dhamma which is*

*Beautiful in the beginning,  
Beautiful in the middle,  
Beautiful in the ending.*

*In the meaning and the phrasing.*

*He embodies and shines forth,  
The completely perfected and utterly pure Spiritual life.*

[...]

*Then, this Dhamma is heard by someone,  
Reborn in any family or country.*

[...]

*Having heard this Dhamma  
That person acquires faith in the Buddha.<sup>20</sup>*

---

<sup>20</sup> Faith is confidence, determination and inspiration. Faith is based on hearing the Dhamma and being inspired, interested, even impressed by its meaning. This kind of faith is gained through one's own direct understanding. Many have heard of the Buddha. Not everybody knows about the Buddha's Teaching, but this is often how a person will be drawn to meditation retreats for example. Having heard the Dhamma from a friend, or the benefits of meditation practice, faith arises, and the desire to try and practice this wonderful path of wisdom and Liberation springs up. Faith is a very important factor of the path. Without faith, nothing is possible. With faith, possibilities are endless.

## [THE GRADUAL TRAINING]<sup>21</sup>

*[...And one takes on the training...]*

*One lives,  
Self-mastered and protected by the pātimokkha<sup>22</sup>  
Continually living in righteous behavior,  
Seeing danger in the smallest lapse of attention  
Undertaking the training in the virtues,<sup>23</sup>  
Skillfully conducted in physical and verbal actions,  
Completely pure in living and good in nature,  
Watchful over the doors of one's sense faculties  
Possessed of presence and full awareness,*

*Happy and content.*

---

<sup>21</sup> Even though it is not directly mentioned here, this is an exposition of the Eight-Spoked path of the Awakened (Eightfold Noble Path). Wise Speech, Wise Action, Wise Living, Wise Practice, Wise Awareness, Wise Meditation, Wise Understanding and Wise Thought. This was the method of exposition most commonly used by the Buddha to explain his teaching and the entire path of practice that a noble seeker would go through.

<sup>22</sup> Rules of good conduct for monks. But translated to a regular life context, this means mainly the five or eight virtues.

<sup>23</sup> The five virtues are:

(1) Not to hurt any living beings consciously; (2) Not to steal; (3) Not to commit sexual misbehavior; (4) Not to lie; (5) Not to consume substances that cause negligence.

# THE TRAINING IN VIRTUE

## SĪLA



## [WISE ACTION]

## [GOOD IN NATURE]

*How is a seeker<sup>24</sup> good in nature?*

*One abandons hurting living beings,  
One turns away from hurting living beings,  
With neither stick nor sword.  
One lives, considerate and kind,  
Friendly and compassionate towards all living beings.*

*This constitutes one's good nature.*

*One abandons the taking of what is not given,  
One turns away from taking what is not given.  
Taking only what is offered,  
Expecting only what is offered.  
One lives without stealing, with inner purity,<sup>25</sup>*

*This constitutes one's good nature.*

---

<sup>24</sup> In this book, the word "bhikkhu" which is the Pāli word for a "monk" is purposefully changed for the word "seeker" for the sake of universality. The teaching is usually addressed to monks, but anyone can undertake this practice.

<sup>25</sup> For the lay person, this simply means not stealing. The directions about accepting alms food are obviously directed to the monks. Nevertheless, practicing to let go of personal expectations is a very wholesome endeavor and is assuredly part of the Buddha's Teaching.

*One abandons [sexual misbehavior,]<sup>26</sup>  
[One lives content and at peace,]  
[Not obsessed by physical attraction.]*

*This constitutes his good nature.*

---

<sup>26</sup> *This section which usually recommends complete celibacy was adapted to fit a broader audience. Celibacy is the training of monks. If you are not a monk or a nun, and do not plan to be one anytime soon, do not fuss over the things that seem too restrictive. Simply take on what feels appropriate for you right now and leave the rest. Better it is to take on the training partially than not even trying. Otherwise, there will be no chance of understanding. The monk's training can be used as inspiration. For the lay people, the training is to abandon any blameworthy sexual activity, this means: No harm coming to anyone. It also means performing this with someone who is an adult, independent, not under the care of their parents and consenting.*

## [WISE SPEECH]

*One abandons speaking lies,  
One turns away from speaking lies,  
One is known to speak the truth,  
Filled with truth, firm and trustworthy,  
Not a deceiver of the world.*

*This constitutes one's good nature.*

*One abandons hurtful speech,  
One turns away from hurtful speech,*

*One does not repeat elsewhere  
What one has heard here,  
In order to divide the people here.*

*One does not repeat here,  
What one has heard elsewhere,  
In order to divide the people elsewhere.*

*One is a unifier of those who are divided,  
A promoter of those who are united.*

*One enjoys harmony,  
Delights in harmony,  
Rejoices in harmony.*

*One speaks praise of making peace and harmony.*

*This constitutes one's good nature.*

*One abandons coarse speech  
One turns away from coarse speech.  
Speaking with words that are polished,  
Pleasant to the ear, loving,  
Going to the heart and civilized,  
Beloved and dear to many.  
Such are the words that one speaks.*

*This constitutes one's good nature.*

*One abandons meaningless talk,  
One turns away from meaningless talk.  
One is a speaker of words that are timely,  
Factual and meaningful.*

*A speaker of Dhamma,  
A speaker of Vinaya.*

*One speaks for the purpose of Laying Down the Burden.*

*Words that are appropriate,  
Reasoned, well defined,  
In connection with the meaning.*

*This constitutes one's good nature.*

## [WISE LIVING]<sup>27</sup>

*One turns away from injuring  
The seed kingdom and  
The plant kingdom.<sup>28</sup>*

*One is a one-meal eater,<sup>29</sup>  
Not eating in the evening,  
One turns away from eating at improper times.*

[...]<sup>30</sup>

## [THE BLAMELESS BLISS OF VIRTUE]

*In this way, Great King,  
For a seeker of a good nature,  
There is no fear arising from anywhere,  
Since one is protected by his virtue.*

---

<sup>27</sup> For lay life, wise living is mainly about having a work that does not entail hurting living beings. Righteous wealth, righteously gained.

<sup>28</sup> Monks train not to hurt vegetal life. The lay person can also choose to observe this noble training, as much as possible.

<sup>29</sup> Once again, this is peculiar to the monks training though it is surely a virtuous and uplifting practice for anyone. Eating in the evening is hard on the body. Food doesn't get properly digested before and while sleeping. The body has to work harder in the morning to cleanse the unutilized, undigested food from the gastro-intestinal tract. This causes dullness and heaviness, which are hindrances to meditation and a clear mind.

<sup>30</sup> The long list describing virtuous behavior is here abridged since most of the list concerns monks.

*Just as,  
For a highly celebrated king of the ruling caste,  
Who has conquered his enemies [in the four directions],  
There is no fear arising from anywhere,  
And he lives, protected by his conquest.*

*In the same way,  
For the good-natured seeker,  
There is no fear arising from anywhere,  
Because one is protected by one's own virtue.*

*Following this entire body of Ariyan<sup>31</sup> virtuous behavior,  
One experiences within himself  
a completely blameless happiness.*

*In this way Great King, a seeker is of good nature.*

---

<sup>31</sup> *Ariyan: See Glossary*

# THE TRAINING IN MEDITATION

*Samādhi*



## [WISE PRACTICE & AWARENESS]

### [MASTERY OF THE SENSE FACULTIES]

*How is a seeker, a gatekeeper of one's sense faculties?*

*[The Eye]*

*Seeing a shape with the eye,  
One does not dwell on it [with one's mind],  
Nor does one dwell on any of its features.*

*If one were to live with the visual faculty unprotected,  
Longing, impatience and unskillful, unwholesome states  
Would take over [one's mind].<sup>32</sup>*

*Thus, one practices for its mastery.  
One protects the visual faculty.  
One becomes skilled regarding the visual faculty.*

---

<sup>32</sup> This is another way of explaining the Four Resting Places of Awareness, especially awareness of the body, in a practical way, which the Buddha called "Wise Awareness." But this time with the six sense faculties instead of the usual formula: "Observing body as body, feeling as feeling, mind as mind, mental activity as mental activity, letting go of longing and impatience for the world." The first fold of Wise Practice is about preventing unwholesome states to arise, that is "Mastery of the sense faculties." It is also Wise Awareness and the Four Resting Places of Awareness. Wise Practice is included in Wise Awareness. Wise Awareness is included in Wise Practice.



[The Ear]

*Hearing a sound with the ear,  
One does not dwell on it [with one's mind]  
Nor does one dwell on any of its features.*

*If one were to live with the auditive faculty unprotected,  
Longing, impatience and unskillful, unwholesome states  
would take over [one's mind].*

*Thus, one practices for its mastery.  
One protects the auditive faculty.  
One becomes skilled regarding the auditive faculty.<sup>33</sup>*

---

<sup>33</sup> This could be summarized as “remembering to relax into life,” relaxing into everything that we do. Which is also Wise Attitude (Sammā-saṅkappa). Not holding on to anything. Remembering to stay light, not to take on anything on our shoulders. Letting go of any tension that arises at any given time during the day. Not giving into agitated mental states. Therefore, preserving mindfulness and full awareness. Remaining in the happiness of a clear mind. For the wise, the bliss of samādhi is maintained and protected by this watchfulness of the sense doors.

*[The Nose]*

*Smelling an odor with the nose,  
One does not dwell on it [with one's mind]  
Nor does one dwell on any of its features.*

*If one were to live with the olfactory faculty unprotected,  
Longing, impatience and unskillful, unwholesome states  
Would take over [one's mind].*

*Thus, one practices for its mastery.  
One protects the olfactory faculty.  
One becomes skilled regarding the olfactory faculty.*

*[The Tongue]*

*Tasting a flavor with the tongue,  
One does not dwell on it [with one's mind]  
Nor does one dwell on any of its features.*

*If one were to live with the gustative faculty unprotected  
Longing, impatience and unskillful, unwholesome states  
would take over [one's mind].*

*Thus, one practices for its mastery.  
One protects the gustative faculty.  
One becomes skilled regarding the gustative faculty.<sup>34</sup>*

---

<sup>34</sup> *Just as if someone were trying to fill a bucket of water that has six holes in it; if these six sense faculties are not watched over when someone tries to cultivate a happy wholesome and collected mind through meditation, the precious water of inner happiness and contentment will leak out. Strong attachments and opinions about food is a good example.*

*[The Body]*

*Touching a tangible with the body,  
One does not dwell on it [with one's mind]  
Nor does one dwell on any of its features.*

*If one were to live with the body faculty unprotected,  
Longing, impatience and unskillful, unwholesome states  
would take over [one's mind].*

*Thus, one practices for its mastery.  
One protects the body faculty.  
One becomes skilled regarding the body faculty.*

[The Mind]

*Aware of a mental object with the mind,<sup>35</sup>  
One does not dwell on it [with one's mind]  
Nor does one dwell on any of its features.*

*If one were to live with the mind faculty unprotected,  
Longing, impatience and unskillful, unwholesome states  
would take over [one's mind].*

*Thus, one practices for its mastery.  
One protects the mental faculty.  
One becomes skilled regarding the mental faculty.<sup>36</sup>*

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<sup>35</sup> "Thinking" or "mind" is but another sense faculty which, like the others, we learn to calm down and not become so involved with it through meditation and letting go.

<sup>36</sup> This is about learning how to direct our minds to wholesome and skillful ends. Where it can be invested in a beneficial pursuit, in the longer term, in a sustainable, wholesome way which will also benefit us in return. Having the wisdom and mindfulness to not "engage" in trivial pursuits, not getting carried away whimsically by the winds of attractions and repulsions. Renouncing quick reactivity toward all external stimuli to allow sustained stability of mental presence and happiness.

*[The Blameless Bliss of Self-Mastery]*

*Possessing this awakened self-mastery,  
One experiences within oneself  
A happiness that is completely blameless.*

*This is how a seeker  
is a gatekeeper of one's own sense faculties.<sup>37</sup>*

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<sup>37</sup> There is a common belief that the Buddha's Teaching is only about sitting meditation. That is not true. The Buddha's Teaching is about wholesome personality development. Developing wisdom in order to move towards greater happiness. A happiness that is wholesome, all-inclusive and beneficial. The Buddha taught that the root of all human problems and distress resides in selfishness or discontent. Selfishness has three roots: greed, anger and delusion. Where can we see those, where do they arise? At each of the sense doors. These six sense faculties are the ground for selfishness or tension to arise, in the mind and in the body. Clinging to the pleasant and rejecting the unpleasant, we tear ourselves apart, continually. This creates lapses of mental presence, which is this third root: delusion. The Buddha's teaching is about breaking free from this maddening circle. Meditation is helping us develop our mind in order to see these unwholesome states with wisdom as they arise and to develop the ability of letting them go in order to experience true lasting happiness, the happiness of a liberated mind. The mastery of the sense faculties is to help us protect this happiness in regular life.

## [PRESENCE & FULL AWARENESS]

*How is a seeker present and fully aware?*

*One is fully conscious,  
While going forward and coming back;*

*One is fully conscious,  
Looking ahead and looking down;*

*One is fully conscious,  
Moving and extending [one's body];*

*One is fully conscious,  
Wearing the saṅghāṭī,<sup>38</sup>  
One's bowl and one's robes;*

*One is fully conscious,  
While eating, drinking,  
Chewing and swallowing;*

*One is fully conscious,  
While evacuating and urinating;*

*One is fully conscious,  
While walking, standing, sitting,  
Sleeping and waking up,  
Talking and keeping silent.*

*This is how a seeker is present and fully aware.*

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<sup>38</sup> *The outer robe of a monk.*

## [CONTENTMENT]

*How is a seeker content?*

*One is happy with robes to cover one's body,  
With alms food to satisfy one's stomach.*

*Wherever one goes,  
One sets out, taking only these things.*

*Just as birds, wherever they fly,  
Take nothing but their wings,  
And fly with themselves as only burden.*

*In the same way,  
One is happy with robes to cover one's body,  
With alms food to satisfy one's stomach.*

*Wherever one goes,  
One sets out, taking only these things.*

*This is how Great King, a seeker is content.*

## [SECLUSION]

*Following the entire body of Ariyan<sup>39</sup> good conduct,  
Possessing this Ariyan mastery of the sense faculties,  
Endowed with Ariyan presence and full awareness,  
Attained to this Ariyan contentment,*

*One resorts to a secluded dwelling,  
To the forest,  
At the root of a tree,  
On a hillside,  
In some cave,  
A refuge in the mountain,  
A forest hut,  
In the open air  
Or on a pile of straw.*

*After having eaten, returning from alms round  
One sits down with legs folded and one's body upright.  
Settling down, one attends with presence about oneself.*

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<sup>39</sup> *Ariya: The Awakened Ones, Noble persons. (See Glossary)*

## [THE BREATH AS A REMINDER]<sup>40</sup>

[How is cultivating Awareness with the Breath  
very fruitful and highly beneficial?]

First, one is simply aware:  
Breathing in with presence,<sup>41</sup>  
Breathing out with presence.<sup>42</sup>

1. Breathing in long, one is aware,  
Breathing out long, one is aware;
2. Breathing in short, one is aware,  
Breathing out short, one is aware;

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<sup>40</sup> This is an insertion from the Buddha's teaching on how to abandon the hindrances, from the MN 118 *Ānāpānāsati Sutta*, the Discourse on Cultivating Awareness with the Breath.

<sup>41</sup> This passage simply means "being aware" of the fact that one is breathing, as it is. Focusing on the breath is not observing reality as it really is since this implies controlling the mind. It is only by relaxing and opening up that there can be true awareness. The Wise Awareness taught by the Buddha. The more passive translation of the Pāli word "Sati" as "Presence" is perhaps more desirable than the word mindfulness, which has become a forceful principle, a kind of controlling faculty.

<sup>42</sup> Here, there are no instructions about "focusing" on the breath, or on any particular object. This would mean narrowing down our field of awareness. Rather, these instructions are about relaxing into a broad and open presence of both mind and body which come together. To be conscious of the naturally occurring awareness of body and mind, while cultivating bliss, joy and happiness, with each breath. The breath here is a mere figure of speech to convey that this is to be done continuously.

Then, one trains oneself:

3. To experience the entire body,  
Breathing in and breathing out.<sup>43</sup>
4. To calm the tension in the body,<sup>44</sup>  
Breathing in and breathing out.<sup>45</sup>



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<sup>43</sup> Awareness and letting go come together as the core of the Buddha's Teaching. They are inseparable. This is called *Samatha-Vipassanā*, which means to cultivate Awareness by way of Tranquility. It is by relaxing and letting go of tension (*saṅkhāra*) that we cultivate a deeper sense of awareness.

<sup>44</sup> *Passambhayaṃ kāyasaṅkhāraṃ.* This is the relax-step. Craving manifests as tension in the body and in the mind. The word "upādāna" itself, which means "clinging," is synonymous with tension. The relax-step is the "escape" that the Buddha discovered. This is the third Awakened Understanding, the direct experience of the release from hurt. This is experienced here and now "Sandiṭṭhiko, akāliko." Without the relax-step, there is no escape, no release. Letting go is the essence of the Buddha's teaching. A meditation technique which does not contain this step misses "Vimutti," Liberation.

<sup>45</sup> These first four steps which are found in the DN 22 *Mahāsatipatṭhāna Sutta*, one of the most influential discourse in the modern world Buddhism, are quite deficient and incomplete in many ways. These were probably shortened to accommodate oral transmission. The rest of the sequence, which follows, is essential for a complete practice.

5. *“To experience bliss,<sup>46</sup>  
Breathing in and breathing out.”*
6. *“To experience happiness,<sup>47</sup>  
Breathing in and breathing out.”*
7. *To experience the movements of the mind,<sup>48</sup>  
Breathing in and breathing out.*
8. *“To calm the movements of the mind,<sup>49</sup>  
Breathing in and breathing out.*




---

<sup>46</sup> *Pītipaṭisaṃvedī. Pīti can also be translated as Joy. With release comes relief. With relief comes joy! Therefore, enjoy! Literally. This is when smiling comes in. 😊 The happy mind is aware, the happy mind is present. Why? Because it is the nature of these wholesome states, they carry awareness within them, they are states imbued with awareness. Love, Compassion, Joy and Calm come with awareness; they arouse presence of mind.*

<sup>47</sup> *Sukhapaṭisaṃvedī. The intentional cultivation of blissful happiness born of letting go and mental collectedness is essential. It is the path and the foundation of the beginning stages of meditation (Jhāna). The basis of mental development.*

<sup>48</sup> *Cittasaṅkhārapaṭisaṃvedī. Mental activities. Distractions.*

<sup>49</sup> *Passambhayaṃ cittasaṅkhāraṃ. The mental movements or distraction are imbedded habitual patterns developed over time. The mind is habituated to longing for this or longing for that and this has become the pattern of the mind. These are called “involuntary processes” (Saṅkhāras), they have become unconscious. They are the root cause for mental scatteredness (Āsavā), the opposite of mental collectedness (Samādhi). The mind is used to constantly flowing out. By calming down, we become increasingly aware and reverse this process.*

9. To experience the mind,<sup>50</sup>  
Breathing in and breathing out.
10. "To uplift the mind with joy,<sup>51</sup>  
Breathing in and breathing out.
11. To gather the mind,<sup>52</sup>  
Breathing in and breathing out.
12. To untangle the mind,  
Breathing in and breathing out.<sup>53</sup>



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<sup>50</sup> *Cittapaṭiṣaṃvedī.*

<sup>51</sup> *Abhippamodayaṃ cittaṃ. How? Smiling!*

<sup>52</sup> 11. *Samādahaṃ cittaṃ*, 12. *Vimocayaṃ cittaṃ*. This happens naturally as one lets go of tension and cultivates joy. (See section on The Samādhi born of Happiness in Wise Samādhi)

<sup>53</sup> This is the direct application of Wise Practice or Right Effort in practical terms. The four steps of Wise Practice are: (1) To know when tension (distractions) arises in the body and in the mind, (2) to let it go and relax the tension caused by the distraction, (3) to bring up a wholesome feeling (Joy, Love, Compassion... Smiling helps a lot), (4) and to practice to stay with that wholesome feeling, to cultivate it, protect it and carry it to growth and maturation. (Becoming established and easily accessible). In short: (1) Being aware of tension, (2) Relaxing the tension, (3) Bringing up the wholesome and (4) Staying with the wholesome.

13. To directly experience passing away,<sup>54</sup>  
Breathing in and breathing out.
14. To directly experience disengaging,  
Breathing in and breathing out.
15. To directly experience release,  
Breathing in and breathing out.
16. To directly experience surrender,  
Breathing in and breathing out.<sup>55</sup>

*This is how cultivating Awareness with the Breath  
is very fruitful and highly beneficial.*<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> 13. Aniccānupassī, 14. Virāgānupassī, 15. Nirodhānupassī, 16. Paṭinissaggānupassī.

<sup>55</sup> Mental distractions or “hindrances” are simply revealing the true state of our minds. By forcing the mind to stay contracted onto one particular object, the hindrances can be pushed away temporarily due to the force of concentration. That is one way... Likening our practice to behave as dictators onto our own minds and to control mind by force. As soon as the force is released and one resumes daily activities, the distractions come back. Like this, there is no understanding, no discernment, no wisdom, no personality change. Hindrances teach us that we need to let go. The Buddha here is showing us another way, by actively calming, releasing, disengaging and surrendering.

<sup>56</sup> We find here an uplifting, calming, joyful and liberating teaching on wholesome mental development. With very clear instructions on how to train the mind to be at ease, joyful, uplifted and liberated, with each and every breath. Meditating with the blissful awareness of the body and mind. The Four Resting Places of Awareness in practical advice. These instructions are only continued and strengthened later when

## [LETTING GO OF THE HINDRANCES]

*Abandoning longing for the world,  
Dwelling with a mind void of longing,  
One's mind is cleansed from longing.*

*Abandoning hostility and hatred,  
One dwells with a mind rid of hostility,  
With heart-felt compassion towards all beings that live.  
One's mind is cleansed from hostility and hatred.*

*Leaving behind laziness and dullness of mind,  
Dwelling with a mind void of laziness and dullness,  
Perceiving clearly,  
Present and fully aware,  
One's mind is cleansed from dull laziness.*

*Leaving behind agitation and worry,  
One dwells, uplifted,  
With an inwardly relieved mind,  
One's mind is cleansed from agitation and worry.*

---

*the Buddha explains how to suffuse the body with blissful happiness. (See the section on the Jhānas in Wise Samādhi).*

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*Leaving behind perplexity,  
One dwells unperplexed,  
Rid of uncertainty towards what is good,  
One's mind is cleansed of perplexity.<sup>57</sup>*

[...]

*Just as if someone was in debt, sick,  
imprisoned, in servitude,  
on a wild desert journey;*

*This is how a seeker perceives  
Carrying around the five hindrances within oneself.<sup>58</sup>*

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<sup>57</sup> *Understanding the mind is the cornerstone of the Dhamma. The path of wisdom taught by the Buddha is about understanding how hurtful and unwholesome these impurities of the mind are, for ourselves and everyone around us. Then it is about changing, letting them go and enjoy a blameless, uplifted kind of happiness.*

<sup>58</sup> *Mental Presence (Awareness) arises as a result of Wise Practice, which means letting go of the hindrances. Lack of Mental Presence is the cause for the hindrances to arise and take over the mind. This entails unwholesome hurtful consequences for oneself and others. The ability to see this and to practice away from unwholesome states is what Buddhists call wisdom or discernment.*

*Just as if one were freed from debt,  
Freed from illness,  
Freed from jail,  
Freed from slavery,  
Having come upon a haven on this earth;*

*This is how, a seeker perceives  
the letting go of the five hindrances within oneself.<sup>59 60</sup>*

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<sup>59</sup> The selfish mind grasps at everything it touches. It is taken up, blinded, tainted and obsessed by selfish desire. This mind cannot be relied on. It is unstable, biased and deluded. It does not see what is for its own benefit, nor for the benefit of others.

The angry mind burns everything it touches. It is taken up, blinded, tainted, obstructed and obsessed by anger. [...]

The lazy mind drops everything it touches. It is taken up, blinded, obstructed and obscured by laziness. [...]

The restless mind unsettles everything it touches. It is taken up, blinded, tainted, obstructed, obsessed by agitation. [...]

The perplexed mind confuses everything it touches. It is taken up, blinded, tainted, obscured and tangled by confusion. [...]

<sup>60</sup> The Buddha's teaching is about letting go, opening up, releasing, relaxing and enjoying a happy collected mind. In this practice, we move away from tension, away from resistance. Letting go of the hindrances that clutter the mind to allow true mental development. This mental freedom comes with great happiness and relief.

## [BOUNDLESS LOVE]

*(Saṅkhadhama Sutta<sup>61</sup>)*

*Then, a virtuous seeker,  
Void of longing,  
Void of impatience,  
Void of arrogance,  
Fully conscious and continually present,*

*Meditates,  
With a heart filled with Love;*

*Suffusing one direction,  
a second,  
a third,  
and a fourth.*

*Above, below  
And everywhere across.  
To all living beings  
In this boundless universe.*

*One meditates with a heart filled with Love,  
Vast, expansive, measureless,  
Free from anger and impatience.<sup>62</sup>*

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<sup>61</sup> SN IV 42.8 Saṅkhadhama Sutta - The Conch Blower

<sup>62</sup> This is True Love. It is unconditioned. All-inclusive. When there is pride, arrogance, conceit, anger jealousy, envy, infatuation, selfish desires, then there is no Love. Then, there are only unwholesome states. There is no room for True Love. It is either one or the other. Love is happiness. Being able to feel

[SIMILE OF THE CONCH BLOWER]

*Imagine a mighty conch blower  
Who could effortlessly,  
Let his sound be known  
To the four directions.*

*In the same way,  
When the release of mind  
By Boundless Love  
is developed and cultivated,*

*If any selfish<sup>63</sup> mental state  
Was previously acquired  
None can settle there,  
None can stay.<sup>64</sup>*

---

*Love for all living beings in fact, directly supports our own and happiness.*

<sup>63</sup> *Pamāṇakataṃ kammaṃ. Limited Kamma here means any mental states included in selfishness, impatience and negligence. (Lobha, dosa, moha). The mind is “limited”, or constricted by the hindrances. To speak properly, it is when hindrances reign over the mind that it is “concentrated”, shrunk down and shriveled up, full of tension. Cultivating Boundless Love will break it open and liberate it.*

<sup>64</sup> *This is the magnificence of the practice of Boundless Love. There can only be Love. If a distraction comes in, the love fades away. It is then easier to discern if the mind slips into unwholesome states because of the powerful nature of Boundless Love. (See section on Sutta References for different variations of the whole path with the Brāhmvihāras).*



## [WISE SAMĀDHI]

### [THE SAMĀDHI BORN OF HAPPINESS]

*Realizing<sup>65</sup> these five hindrances have been abandoned,  
Gladness arises;  
From that gladness, bliss<sup>66</sup> arises in the mind;  
With a blissful mind, the body becomes calm;  
With a calm body, one experiences happiness;  
With a happy mind comes Samādhī.<sup>67</sup>*



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<sup>65</sup> This is called *Dhamma Samādhī*. “Natural collectedness” of the mind, as opposed to “forceful one-pointedness”. This sequence is perhaps one of the most important teachings of the Buddha on the nature of the mind and meditation. It illustrates very clearly how the Buddha taught meditation and how to enter the proper kind of *Samādhī*. It is discussed in many suttas throughout the Pāli Canon. This is the *Dhamma*. This is “How it works”. It is the nature of the mind. When the mind is rid of the hindrances, it becomes happy. When the mind is happy, it becomes collected and clear. When craving is abandoned, happiness is bound to take its place, naturally.

<sup>66</sup> This particular kind of bliss or delight is unique in the sense that it emerges from mental development. It is the bliss of the wholesome mind, a blameless bliss, the bliss of the holy life, the bliss of meditation, the same bliss that also derives from virtue, generosity and performing meritorious deeds that are beneficial for all living beings.

<sup>67</sup> Mental collectedness.

## [FIRST STAGE OF MEDITATION]

(First Jhāna)

*Letting go of all outward desires,  
And letting go of unwholesome mental states,<sup>68</sup>  
Still attended by thinking and imagining,<sup>69</sup>  
With blissful happiness born of letting go.*

*One understands and abides in the first level of  
meditation.<sup>70</sup>*



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<sup>68</sup> *Akusala dhamma: These are the hindrances discussed earlier.*

<sup>69</sup> *Savitkka savicāra: The mind has started to unwind, by letting go of tension, though thinking and imagining are still present. This means any visualized object, like bringing up a person, repeating an uplifting sentence is still possible. Thoughts and reflections are now completely wholesome. Otherwise, it is not “Buddha’s Jhāna”. As these thoughts and reflections are slowly abandoned, one enters the second jhāna.*

<sup>70</sup> *Jhāna: This means meditation, a level of meditation or a level of understanding or a level of insight. This is not the “absorption” kind of Jhāna like it is taught by many schools and teachers. These are “aware” Jhānas or levels of meditation. As it was originally taught by the Buddha. These are to be understood through direct experience and practice, not through philosophical debates. This sequence does work, exactly in this way. Nothing needs to be added nor subtracted. By relaxing the tension in body and mind, (craving) awareness opens up, it becomes clear and established, no forcing required. And such a mind is naturally joyful and uplifted. Being uplifted, it is ever more content, therefore, it is not running outwards to the senses. It is fully content, here and now. Calm and happy.*

[Instructions]

*One immerses, permeates,  
Suffuses and pervades one's body  
With this blissful happiness born of letting go.*

*And nowhere, in one's entire body is left untouched  
By this blissful happiness born of letting go.<sup>71</sup>*



[SIMILE OF THE SOAP]

*Imagine a skilled soap-maker  
who would throw some soap powder into a copper bowl.  
He would sprinkle it with water  
and knead it thoroughly.*

*Then after some time,  
The lump of soap would be filled  
And suffused by moisture, through and through,  
Everywhere, touched by the moisture,  
Yet it would not leak.<sup>72</sup>*

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<sup>71</sup> Dhṛ 290. "If by renouncing a lesser happiness one may realize a greater happiness, let the wise man renounce the lesser, having regard for the greater." The insight here is the blissful happiness that arises from letting go, itself. The Happiness of disengaging.

<sup>72</sup> The mind is in "Viveka" now, seclusion or detachment, it is not "leaking" outwards anymore. This is the beginning of Mental Composure, or the Stilling of the mind (Samādhi).

*In the same way,  
One immerses, permeates,  
Suffuses and pervades one's body,  
With this blissful happiness born of letting go,*

*And nowhere in one's entire body is left untouched  
By this blissful happiness born of letting go.<sup>7374</sup>*

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*This is a visible fruit of the truth-seeking life,  
Beyond and more exalted than the previous ones.<sup>75</sup>*

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<sup>73</sup> Here, in the Buddha's original instructions, no mentions are made of any preliminary step called access concentration (Upacāra Samādhi) or Temporary concentration, (Khanika Samādhi) or any comment on "nimittas," a light inside the mind, or objects of "focus." These are from later commentaries. Instead, we find the words, letting go, bliss or joy, tranquility, happiness and collectedness in a natural, flowing sequence.

<sup>74</sup> As the Buddha said himself, when there is Love in the heart, there is jhāna, it is quite simple: "If, even for the time of a finger snap, a monk practices to have a Loving mind, then I say, that monk is one who lives practicing jhāna, one who practices the teacher's teaching, one who applies his instructions, one who eats the country's alms undeluded. What to say then of one who would cultivate it." – AN I 53 Finger snap Love Discourse.

<sup>75</sup> This is what the Buddha taught. This is how he taught meditation. It could not be clearer. A profound and marvelous teaching, as it is.

## [SECOND STAGE OF MEDITATION]

(Second Jhāna)

*With the calming of thinking and reflection,  
With inner tranquilization,  
One's mind becoming unified,  
Without thinking and reflection,<sup>76</sup>  
With the blissful happiness born of mental harmony,<sup>77</sup>*

*One understands and dwells in the second level of  
meditation.*



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<sup>76</sup> *Avitakka avicāra: Thinking and reflection fades away. The mental collectedness becomes more defined. This is also called “self-confidence”. At this stage, mental verbalizing or imagining anything becomes a hindrance to the mind. The Buddha also called this level of meditation “Noble Silence” because of the fading of mental chatter. The inner mob finally quiets down which is a great relief! Any kind of wholesome recollection that was previously used to uplift the mind is, at this point abandoned. Leaving only the blissful happiness of collectedness.*

<sup>77</sup> *Samādhijaṃ pītisukhaṃ. One of the salient features of the second jhāna. Samādhi here is meant as mental collectedness, harmony, stillness or unity of mind, literally: calm-seeing. A keen observer of the Dhamma will notice here that the way to samādhi is to develop happiness and that the way to happiness is to develop samādhi. The happiness of the Higher Mind, to which nothing in this world can compare.*

[Instructions]

*One immerses, permeates,  
Suffuses and pervades one's body,  
With this blissful happiness born of mental harmony,*

*And nowhere in one's entire body is left untouched  
By this blissful happiness born of mental harmony.*



[SIMILE OF THE LAKE]

*Imagine, a deep lake,  
With water, only welling up from within,  
With no other source flowing in,  
from the East or from the West,  
from the North or from the South.  
With no proper rain at any time.*

*From that cool water spring gushing up from within,<sup>78</sup>  
That lake would become immersed, permeated,  
Suffused and pervaded by this fresh and cool water.*

*And nowhere in this entire lake  
Would be left untouched by this cool spring water.*

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<sup>78</sup> This is in India, a very hot country, where the temperature ranges are high most of the year, making this simile much more attractive and gives it a very soothing appeal, which offers a good insight on how the meditation should feel.

*In the same way,  
One immerses, permeates,  
Suffuses and pervades one's body,  
With this blissful happiness born of mental harmony,  
  
So that nowhere in one's entire body is left untouched  
by this blissful happiness born of mental harmony.*

*This is a visible fruit of the truth-seeking life,  
Beyond and more exalted than the previous ones.<sup>79</sup>*

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<sup>79</sup> *The feeling of Boundless Love is not a "thought," it is a wholesome, uplifting feeling which is felt in the body, and therefore can remain up to the fourth jhāna. The feeling itself will change as it calms down, moving forward in tranquility and becomes more subtle, more sustained, lighter, clearer and brighter, closer to pure Joy.*

## [THIRD STAGE OF MEDITATION]

*(Third Jhāna)*

*With the calming of bliss,<sup>80</sup>  
One abides in mental steadiness,  
Present and fully aware,  
Experiencing happiness within his body,  
A state which the awakened ones describe as:  
“Steady presence of mind:  
This is a pleasant abiding.”<sup>81</sup>*

*One understands and abides in the third level of  
meditation.*



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<sup>80</sup> *Pīti: Excited bliss or joy at this point becomes too coarse of a feeling for the mind, it is naturally calming down. If practicing the Boundless Love meditation, the feeling of love here softens as it becomes more stable and sustained.*

<sup>81</sup> *Calm steadiness of mind cultivated in this natural way, by letting go of tension and developing meditative joy is far better than the previous kinds of Joy, which were coarser. At this point, one is clearly aware of body and steady happiness.*

[Instructions]

*One immerses, permeates,  
suffuses and pervades one's body,  
with that happiness beyond bliss.*

*And nowhere in one's entire body is left untouched  
by the happiness beyond bliss.*



[SIMILE OF THE LOTUSES]

*Imagine water lilies,  
Indian lotuses and white lotuses...*

*Some of these water lilies,  
Indian lotuses and white lotuses are born in the water,  
grown in the water, not risen above the water,  
nourished while completely immersed.*

*From their very tip down to their roots,  
submerged, permeated,  
suffused and pervaded by this cool water,  
so that no part of those Water Lilies,  
Indian Lotuses and White Lotuses is left untouched  
by cool water.*

\*\*\*

*In the same way,  
one immerses, permeates,  
suffuses and pervades one's body,  
with that happiness beyond bliss.*

*And nowhere in one's entire body is left untouched  
by this happiness beyond bliss.*

*This is a visible fruit of the truth-seeking life,  
beyond and more exalted than the previous ones.<sup>82</sup>*

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<sup>82</sup> *This kind of meditation continually gets better.*

## [FOURTH STAGE OF MEDITATION]

(Fourth Jhāna)

*Leaving behind happiness and unhappiness.<sup>83</sup>  
With the settling of mental gladness and affliction,  
With neither pain nor pleasure,  
Purified by unmoving presence,*

*One understands and abides in the fourth level of  
meditation.<sup>84</sup>*



[Instructions]

*One sits, with one's body suffused  
With the bright purity of one's own spotless mind.*

*And nowhere in one's body is left untouched  
By this bright purity of one's own spotless mind.*



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<sup>83</sup> Any kind of judgements are abandoned as the mind becomes very steady and composed, which feel too coarse for this brilliant state of mind.

<sup>84</sup> The Buddha called the fourth jhāna “the Beautiful”. He also said that this was the limit of Mettā-Bhāvanā, Boundless Love.

[SIMILE OF THE CLOTH]

*Imagine a man was sitting  
Wrapped up to the head  
With a sparkling white cloth*

*So that nowhere on his entire body  
Would be left untouched  
By this sparkling white cloth.*

\*\*\*

*In the same way,  
One sits, with one's body suffused  
With that bright purity  
Of one's own spotless mind,*

*And nowhere in one's entire body is left untouched  
By this bright purity of one's own spotless mind.<sup>85</sup>*

*This is another visible fruit of the truth-seeking life,<sup>86</sup>  
Beyond this and more exalted than the previous ones.*

---

<sup>85</sup> Presence of mind results from wise practice; which is the result of discernment; which is the result of presence of mind. These three things turn together in a circle. This is the training.

<sup>86</sup> The jhānas simply show the road of happiness by insight into the nature of the mind and by tranquility. They are the "roadmap" of meditation.

# THE TRAINING IN DISCERNMENT

*Pāṇā*



## [WISE UNDERSTANDING]

### [CALMING THE MENTAL MOVEMENTS]

*With this composed and collected mind,  
Wholly cleansed and purified,  
Clear and open, rid of imperfections,  
Having become soft and malleable,  
Straight and unwavering,*

*One directs and inclines one's mind  
To the complete calming of the mental movements.<sup>87</sup>*

---

<sup>87</sup> *Āsavakkhaya*. Conditioned tendencies are profoundly rooted in human psyche through the chain of causality (*Paṭiccasamupāda*). Conditioned, unconscious behavior in the form of likes, dislikes and negligence (*Lobha, dosa, moha*) take root in the deepest corners of the mind. Those unconscious seeds (*Saṅkhāra*) germinate into mental movements, inclinations and habitual tendencies. These are seen and understood at this level and, most importantly, relaxed, let go of, abandoned and released. These tendencies and movements are oppressing the mind, most often without us even knowing. The mind, when it is this pure, experiences nothing but the bliss of relief. It is very close to *Nibbāna*.

*One understands [mental movements] as they really are:*

*“This is unwholesome.”<sup>88</sup>*

*“This is the increase of the unwholesome.”<sup>89</sup>*

*“This is the release from the unwholesome.”*

*“This is how to release the unwholesome”.<sup>90</sup>*

---

<sup>88</sup> *Distractions allow us a genuine reflection on the true state of our minds and mental habits. If the mind starts wandering after 20 seconds of meditation, that is telling us that the mind’s attention span is roughly 20 seconds before it takes off and gets carried away. If the mind becomes angry after one minute, this is telling us that our mind’s happiness span is about one minute before it gets angry. Distractions are simply showing us the true behavior of our mind. In meditation, we can see this clearly, whereas in other life circumstances, we usually do not get a chance to see this because of our perpetual involvement in various activities.*

<sup>89</sup> *Here the word samudāya is often translated as “Origin” but it also bears another meaning as “increase” which carries a different but no less valuable perspective.*

<sup>90</sup> *This sequence is called, the Four Awakened Understandings. They are the very first fold of the path, in the training of wisdom. They literally are, what the Buddha called “wisdom”. He said that these understandings, when put into practice, are penetrative. Why? Because as we learn to see the states of our own minds that are unwholesome, our own inner difficulties, we can better let them go. Once we let them go, awareness deepens and mental clarity arises. And it is then possible to see increasingly deeper-rooted unwholesome, unconscious behavior (Saṅkhāra-bhāva). The more we learn how to use this process, the happier and more aware we become.*

*[One understands [mental movements] as they really are:*

*“This is tension.”*

*“This is the increase of tension.”*

*“This is the release from tension.”*

*“This is how to relax tension.”<sup>91</sup>*

*One understands [mental movements] as they really are:*

*“This is not samādhi.”*

*“This is the decrease of samādhi.”*

*“This is samādhi.”*

*“This is the path to samādhi.”<sup>92</sup>*

---

<sup>91</sup> I have incorporated a supplemental variation here and in the next sequence, for the sake of clarity and better understanding. Often, Pāḷi words have no real English counterpart and also too frequently lack cultural background and semantic value for western readers. This is an attempt to solve this problem by suggesting two more possible translations or outlooks on the term *Dukkha*, for our practical purpose in meditation.

<sup>92</sup> In this second addition, *samādhi* is used as a clear, balanced, composed state of mind. This *samādhi* truly is the highest form of happiness and therefore, using the sequence of the four Awakened Understandings as our investigation line, we can discern what *samādhi* is and work towards greater mental harmony. I have omitted here the word “release” simply due to the fact that *samādhi* is the “release” from non-*samādhi*.

*One understands [mental movements] as they really are:*

*“These are the mental movements.”*

*“This is the increase of the mental movements.”*

*“This is the release from the mental movement.”*

*“This is how to release the mental movements.”<sup>93</sup>*

---

<sup>93</sup> *Dhp 372 No meditation Without Discernment:*

*“There is no meditation without discernment, And no discernment for one who meditates not. But the meditative and discerning ones, Are in the presence of Nibbāna.”*

LIBERATION

*Vinatti*



## [RELEASE]

*Continually observing and understanding in this way;*<sup>94</sup>

*One's mind is released,  
From the inclination for clinging outwardly,  
From the inclination to projecting in the future,  
And from the inclination to negligence.*<sup>95</sup>

*In that release, one knows:*

*“This is Release.”*

---

<sup>94</sup> This truly is the path of practice as taught by the Buddha. That is, understanding how the mind works and abandoning unskillful, unwholesome states of mind in order to move towards greater awareness, happiness and peace. The cultivation of wisdom and release. *Samatha-Vipassanā*, Tranquility and wise observation, yoked together, supporting each other.

<sup>95</sup> The three inclinations or outflows of the mind. *Kāmāsavāpi cittaṃ vimuccati, bhavāsavāpi cittaṃ vimuccati, avijjāsavāpi cittaṃ vimuccati.*

*One directly knows:*

*[Unwholesome states] have been overcome,<sup>96</sup>  
Lived is the spiritual life,  
Done, is what should be done,  
There is no more conceit here.<sup>97</sup>*

*This is yet another visible fruit of the truth-seeking life.  
And in regards to the fruits of the truth-seeking life,  
There are none beyond or more exalted than this.*

---

<sup>96</sup> I have replaced “Rebirth or “birth” here by the more practical “unwholesome states.” For the sake of adapting these instructions to be more accessible to a broader audience. “*Khīṇā jāti, vusitaṃ brahmacariyaṃ, kataṃ karaṇīyaṃ, nāparaṃ itthattāyā”ti abbhaññāsi.*”

<sup>97</sup> No more rebirth.

## [REFUGE]

*Once this was spoken,  
The king Ajātasattu of Magadha exclaimed:*

*Excellent Bhante!  
Excellent Bhante!*

*Just as if what had fallen over had been set upright,  
or as what had been hidden was uncovered,  
or as if the way was shown to someone who was lost,  
or as if a light was shone in the darkness, thinking:*

*“Let those with vision see!”*

*In the same way Bhante,  
The Awakened One Has brought forth  
And elucidated the Dhamma in countless ways.*

*Bhante,  
I go to the Awakened One as a refuge to the Dhamma  
and to the bhikkhu saṅgha. May the Awakened One  
count me as a lay follower from now on, who has gone  
for refuge for life.*

# Part II

## OPENING THE GATES

TO AWAKENING



## JUST AS ISLANDS

*[The Buddha taught that we are responsible for the things that are happening to us. That we only, can change ourselves and become better, happier people. The Buddha taught the Dhamma for personal awakening, for personal development, for personal mastery. We are the ones responsible for taking the power to grow and change. Excuses and faultfinding only impede us from taking this power, our own power.]*

*He taught the law of cause and effect. Wholesome deeds bring about goodness; unskillful deeds, on the other hand, bring about sorrow. Beings reap what they sow. The decision is up to each of us. Each of us being the masters of their own destinies.]*



*“With determination and careful attention,  
Self-mastery and inner composure,  
Let the sages make an island onto themselves  
That no flood can sweep away.”<sup>98</sup>*



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<sup>98</sup> *Dhp 25 The Island*



*"Seekers,*

*Live as islands onto yourselves,  
As shelters onto yourselves,  
With no other shelter.*

*Live with the Dhamma as your island,  
The Dhamma as your shelter,  
With no other shelter."*

[...]

*"The accumulation of wholesome states is the cause  
for goodness<sup>99</sup> to grow."<sup>100</sup>*



*[The Buddha continually advised those who valued  
goodness, and sought for happiness and liberation to be  
"Islands upon themselves". Not to wait for an external  
savior. Not to wait to do good deeds. And not to expect  
liberation or happiness to come from outside.]*

---

<sup>99</sup> *Puñña: Merit*

<sup>100</sup> *DN 26 Cakkavatti Sutta – Discourse on the Wheel Turner*



*Only by one's own self is one saved,  
Who else could the savior be?  
By mastering oneself,  
One helps oneself gain what is hard to gain.<sup>101</sup>*



*[The responsibility for our lives  
lies within our own hands.*

*Actions from the past build our present.  
Actions in the present build our future.*

*There is no fault-finding, no "blame-game" in the way of  
the Awakened,<sup>102</sup> all is Kamma-Vipāka, cause and effect.]*

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<sup>101</sup> *Dhp 160. Saved by One's Own Self*

<sup>102</sup> *Ariya*



*By one's own self is harm done,  
By one's own self is one defiled,  
By one's own self is harm undone,  
By one's own self is one purified.  
Mental clarity or mental havoc,  
All depend on one's own self.  
No one can purify another.<sup>103</sup>*



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<sup>103</sup> *Dhp 165. No One Can Purify Another.*

## RESPECT

*[Since wise understanding is mainly acquired through the voice of a wise person, a sincere seeker should understand how to generate the necessary causes and conditions in order to come into contact with the voice of wisdom. Then, one can skillfully gain access to the Dhamma and attune to its frequency of goodness.]*



*" Seekers,*

*There are two grounds  
for the arising of wise understanding:*

*The voice of another  
and  
Careful attention."<sup>104</sup>*



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<sup>104</sup> AN II 126 Parato Ghoso Sutta

*[Before any teaching can even take place, a respectful and receiving mind is necessary. This is a very important part of the Teaching. Listening carefully, not interrupting. Maintaining a respectful amount of mental composure at all times. This means, being present, being mindful, being respectful.]*



*“An attitude of proper respect is a sign of intelligence.”<sup>105</sup>*



*A*t one time,

*Some Devatā<sup>106</sup> of exceeding beauty,  
At the waning of the night  
Illuminating the whole of Jeta’s grove with her radiance  
Went to the Awakened One,  
Paid loving respects,  
And stood to the side.*

*Then she said to the Awakened One:*

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<sup>105</sup> Respect. BMC Buddhist Monastic Code third edition, revised: 2013 Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu

<sup>106</sup> Female Deva

**[The Devatā]**

*“Bhante, there are seven things  
That lead a seeker to growth.”*

*What seven?*

- One has respect for the Teacher, (1)*
- One has respect for the Dhamma, (2)*
- One has respect for the Saṅgha, (3)*
- One has respect for the training, (4)*
- One has respect for meditation, (5)*
- One has respect for heedfulness, (6)*
- One has respect for showing respect, (7)*

*[One has respect for modesty, (6)]  
[One has respect for moral conscience (7)]*

*[One easily accepts instructions, (6)]  
[One has virtuous friends (7)]<sup>107</sup>*

*Bhante, these are the seven things  
That lead a bhikkhu to growth*

*Thus she spoke.  
The teacher approved.*

*Then she thought:  
“The teacher approves of me.”*

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<sup>107</sup> *Satthugāravatā, dhammagāravatā, saṅghagāravatā,  
sikkhāgāravatā, samādhigāravatā, appamādagāravatā,  
paṭisanthāragāravatā. hirigāravatā, ottappagāravatā,  
sovacassatā, kalyāṇamittatā.*

*And paying loving homage to the Awakened One,  
She disappeared right there and left.*

[...]

*One who esteems the Teacher and esteems the Dhamma,  
Who sincerely esteems the saṅgha too,  
Who is wide awake, and esteems Samādhi,  
And who sincerely esteems the Training.*

*A bhikkhu who esteems heedfulness,  
And who esteems showing respect,*

*[Endowed with modesty and moral conscience,]  
[Having virtuous friends, being easily spoken to,]  
[Respectful and reverential]*

*That person is incapable of falling away,  
And is in the presence of Nibbāna.<sup>108</sup>*



*[What could mindfulness mean, if not “to care”? What  
could “caring” mean if not at least to “show respect”?  
The Buddha’s teaching is about being truly caring.]*

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<sup>108</sup> This is taken from three different suttas which have the exact same body to the exception of two “things that lead to growth”.  
AN VII 32 Appamādagāraṇa Sutta - Respect for Heedfulness  
AN VII 33 Hirigāraṇa Sutta - Respect for Conscience.  
AN VII 34 Paṭhama Sōvacassatā Sutta - First Discourse on Accepting Instructions

*When respect is lacking,  
Negligence is showing.*

*Without presence of mind or mindfulness, it is hard to act out of respectful consideration. This Dhamma is about respect, to neglect respect is to neglect the Dhamma.]*



*[Here is what the Buddha thought for himself, after reaching awakening on his own, without the help of a teacher:]*

*"Truly, it is disagreeable to live*

*without reverence and esteem [for a teacher].<sup>109</sup>*

*Now is there any sāmaṇa or brāhmaṇa, which,  
Having revered and respected,  
I could live in dependence on?*

*[...]*

*[Not finding anyone that could equal him in any regard,  
He turned to the Dhamma.]<sup>110</sup>*

*[...]*

---

<sup>109</sup> He said this even after having awakened!

<sup>110</sup> Since to live without reverence would simply be a distasteful way to live.

*“Instead, there is this Dhamma  
That I have directly awakened to,  
Which, having revered and respected,  
I could live in dependence on.”<sup>111</sup>*



*[Disrespectful and ungrateful people cannot be taught. Why? Because they are not listening. Pride and arrogance are taking the entire space in the mind. Teaching such a people bears very little fruit if any. The flow of the Dhamma stops when carelessness and disrespect arise.*

*One could even say:*

*“The path begins with respect,  
and it ends with respect.”]*

---

<sup>111</sup> SN I 6.2 Gāraṇa Sutta



*"Standing on five grounds,*

*Students should represent and honor their teacher,  
[Which represent] the southern direction:*

- By rising for them, (1)*
- By looking after them, (2)*
- By listening carefully, (3)*
- By attending on them with respect, (4)*
- By accepting their teaching. (5)*

*Standing in these five grounds,  
Student represent and honor their teacher,  
[Which represent] the southern direction.*

*Then, teachers are kind to their students thus:*

- They guide them well in what requires guidance, (1)*
- They [make sure that they]*  
*understand well what should be understood, (2)*
- They [Make sure that they]*  
*learn the whole art, as it should be, (3)*
- They present them to their friends and colleagues, (4)*  
*and they protect them from all sides. (5)*

*Standing on five grounds  
Student represent and honor their teachers,  
[Which represent] the southern direction.*

*When students stand on these five grounds,  
Teachers are kind to their students.*

*In this way,  
The southern direction is revered,  
Safe and free from danger.<sup>112</sup>*



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<sup>112</sup> DN 31 Siṅgāla Sutta – To Siṅgāla, the family man.



[The Process of Awakening]

"  
Seekers,

*I do not say that Awakening is accomplished all at once.*

*Rather, I say that it is accomplished by  
a progressive training,  
a progressive practice,  
a progressive path.*

*How?*

*When faith arises, one draws near, (1)  
Drawing near, one attends with respect (2)  
Attending with respect, one gives ear and listens (3)  
Lending an ear and listening, one hears the Dhamma (4)  
Having heard the Dhamma, one bears it in mind, (5)  
Bearing it in mind, one experiences its meaning, (6)  
Experiencing its meaning,  
one understands and accepts the teachings, (7)*

*Aware that the teachings are understood and accepted,  
determination arises, (8)*

*With the arising of determination, one explores, (9)*

*By exploring, one compares, (10)*

*By comparing, one practices, (11)*

*By practicing, wholeheartedly, body and mind,*

*One realizes the Ultimate Truth, (12)*

*And by means of discernment,*

*One breaks through by seeing.” (13)<sup>113</sup>*

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<sup>113</sup> MN 70 Kīṭāgiri Sutta

## LISTENING

*[The ability to listen is the foundation for learning anything. How can there be teaching and learning when there is no listening? Mindfulness is cultivated through mindfulness. Before he spoke on important matters, the Buddha often reminded his listener:]*



*“Taṃ suṇātha, sādhukaṃ manasi karotha, bhāssissāmī.”  
Listen and apply your mind carefully to what I will say.*



*[He did not say this for nothing.<sup>114</sup> Learning to cultivate one’s ability to listen is wisdom in action. This directly leads to one’s welfare and learning. For one’s own good.]*

---

<sup>114</sup> Like everything that he said.



*"Possessing [certain] qualities,*

*Even if someone were to listen to the True Dhamma,  
That person is unable to understand the practice,  
of righteous [development in] wholesome states.*

*What [qualities]?*

*One denigrates the talk,  
One denigrates the speaker,  
One denigrates himself,  
One has a restless mind,  
One's mind is not calm,  
One does not carefully apply one's mind,  
One is unwise, foolish and dull,  
One thinks he has understood what he has not,  
One is enraged, immersed in anger,  
One has a reproaching mind,  
bent on finding faults,  
One is stubborn and despises the teacher.<sup>115</sup>*



*[This wise advice is also applicable to many spheres of our  
lives, not only to the Dhamma.]*

---

<sup>115</sup> AN V 151-153 *Sammattaniyāma Sutta Series*

## GRATITUDE



*"P*erforming four things,

*One who is foolish, immature,  
Not a person of Good,  
And one keeps oneself severed  
And uprooted [from the Dhamma]*

*That person is blameworthy, and blamable,  
And generates much demerit:*

*Physical misconduct,  
Verbal misconduct,  
Mental misconduct,  
Ingratitude and non-appreciation*

*Performing four things,*

*One who is wise, mature,  
A person of Good,  
And one keeps oneself connected  
And firmly planted [in the Dhamma],*

*That person is blameless and unblameable,  
And generates much goodness:*

*Physical good conduct,  
Verbal good conduct,  
Mental good conduct,  
Gratitude and appreciation.*<sup>116</sup>



*[Gratitude is another word for happiness. Those who fail to feel grateful pass by their own happiness. Gratitude is the doorway of the Dhamma.]*

*Appreciation and gratitude are uplifted, wholesome states of mind to be cultivated. Gratitude, contentment and happiness, follow and support each other. These states should be cultivated at all times, even in harder situations, with people who are causing us difficulty.*

*The grateful is content.  
The content is happy.  
The happy is grateful.*

*Arrogance and negligence are imbalances of the mind. They prevent one from gaining access to the Dhamma. Strong attachment to one's own opinions, views and concepts is unwise, and inevitably lead to strife and quarrels.*

*Even when "one is right" and "the other one is wrong."]*

---

<sup>116</sup> AN IV 223 Akataññutā - Ingratitude



*"The apparition of three things*

*is hard to witness in this world.*

*What are the three?*

*A Truth-Finder,  
Genuinely worthy  
and Perfectly All-Awakened; (1)*

*One who teaches the Dhamma and Vinaya  
Awoken-to by a Truth-Finder; (2)*

*A grateful, appreciative person. (3)<sup>117</sup>*



*[Knowing how to put one's attachments aside for the  
greater good, is truly wise. And it is a sign of righteous  
practice.]*

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<sup>117</sup> AN III 114 *Hard to Come by*

## BEAUTIFUL FRIENDSHIP

*[The Buddha himself taught that wise or beautiful friendship<sup>118</sup> was the whole of the path. Wise association is a necessary condition for learning and growing in wisdom. Choosing wisely the people we surround ourselves with helps us stay on the right path.]*



*“Not associating with the careless,  
Associating with the wise,  
Revering those worthy of esteem:  
This is the highest blessing.”<sup>119</sup>*



*[Wise company is the whole of the path. Starting from the Buddha and extending down through the saṅgha of monks who are dedicating their lives to goodness and to all virtuous and devoted upasakas and upasikas<sup>120</sup> who practice the same path amongst their families.]*

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<sup>118</sup> *Kalyāṇa mittāta*

<sup>119</sup> *Khṇ 5 Maṅgala Sutta – Discourse on the Blessings*

<sup>120</sup> *Lay practitioners*



*Thus I have heard,*

*One time,  
The Awakened One was living with the Sakyans,  
in Nagaraka, a Sakyan town.*

*Then, the Elder Ānanda went to the Awakened One,  
Paid loving respects and sat down to one side.  
Sitting thus, the Elder Ānanda exclaimed:*

**[Ānanda]**

*“Bhante,  
Surely, this is at least half of the Spiritual Life:*

*Virtuous friendship,  
Virtuous association,  
Virtuous company.”*

**[The Buddha]**

*“Surely not Ānanda, surely not...”*

*“That is the whole of the Spiritual Life, Ānanda, namely:*

*Virtuous friendship,  
Virtuous association,  
Virtuous company.”*

*It is by seeking out virtuous friendship, virtuous  
association, virtuous company;*

*That a seeker will develop this Awakened  
Eight-Spoked Path.*

*That he will cultivate this Awakened  
Eight-Spoked Path.*

*How?  
[..]*

*Here Ānanda, a seeker*

*Develops Wise Understanding, which comes  
From letting go, relaxing, and releasing,  
And which culminates in complete surrender.<sup>121</sup>*

*He develops Wise Attitude which comes  
From letting go, relaxing, and releasing,  
And which culminates in complete surrender.*

*He develops Wise Speech which comes  
From letting go, relaxing, and releasing,  
And which culminates in complete surrender.*

*He develops Wise Action which comes  
From letting go, relaxing, and releasing,*

---

<sup>121</sup> *Vivekanissitaṃ virāganissitaṃ nirodhanissitaṃ  
vossaggapariṇāmiṃ;  
Vossagga: relinquishing, relaxation; handing over, donation,  
gift -pariṇāmi, maturity of surrender*

*And which culminates in complete surrender.*

*He develops Wise Living which comes  
From letting go, relaxing, and releasing,  
And which culminates in complete surrender.*

*He develops Wise Practice which comes  
From letting go, relaxing, and releasing,  
And which culminates in complete surrender.*

*He develops Wise Presence which comes  
From letting go, relaxing, and releasing,  
And which culminates in complete surrender.*

*He develops Wise Meditation which comes  
From letting go, relaxing, and releasing,  
And which culminates in complete surrender.*

[...]

*From my help Ānanda,  
Beings [...become...] completely liberated. [...]*

*In this way Ānanda, it should be understood,  
That this is the whole of the Spiritual Life, namely:*

*Virtuous friendship,  
Virtuous association,  
Virtuous company.<sup>122</sup>*



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<sup>122</sup> SN V 45.2 *Upaddha Sutta* - Discourse on Half of the Spiritual Life

*[Often, he would compare the difference between a person who did not seek the company of the wise and a person who did, in his discourses:]*



*“A person who is not learned  
One who does not visit wise people,  
Who is unaware of the Virtuous Dhamma,  
Who is untrained in the Virtuous Dhamma  
Who does not visit the peaceful ones  
Who is unaware of the peaceful ones’ Dhamma,  
Who is untrained in the peaceful ones’ Dhamma”*

*[Cannot hope to see and understand things in the proper  
light]*

*“But a person who is learned  
One who visits wise people,  
Who is aware of the Virtuous Dhamma,  
Who is trained in the Virtuous Dhamma  
Who visits the peaceful ones  
Who is aware of the peaceful ones’ Dhamma,  
Who is trained in the peaceful ones’ Dhamma.”<sup>123</sup>*

*[Can hope to see and understand things in the proper  
light]*



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<sup>123</sup> Taken from MN 1 Mūlapariyāya Sutta. But the Buddha used this framework to teach the monks quite often, to show the difference between someone who did not know the Dhamma and others who knew. Revealing each time, the importance of wise association. This is found throughout the suttas.

## WISE ATTENTION

*[Yoniso Manasikhāra or wise attention. Surely, this path is for those who care! Not the careless. For those who seek the happiness and welfare of the multitude. The happiness of wholesome mental states, which carries within itself, wisdom and careful attention. Without the light of wisdom, there cannot be any inner vision into our personal behavior, let alone progress and personality development.]*



*" Seekers,*

*I say that the stilling of the mental movements is*

*For one who is  
Conscious and watchful;*

*Not for one who is  
Not conscious and not watchful.*

*Conscious and watchful of what?*

*[When there is]  
Wise attention and  
Unwise attention.<sup>124</sup>*

*Being unwise with one's attention  
Unexisting mental agitation become manifest<sup>125</sup>  
And existing mental agitation increase.<sup>126</sup>*

*Being wise with one's attention  
Unexisting mental agitation do not become manifest  
And existing mental agitation are abandoned.<sup>127</sup>*



*[There is the need for vision. This is the path of the seers,  
not of the sightless. Fortunately, this is also the path to  
cultivate this "Inner-seeing" faculty.*

*The problem lies in lack of vision. When someone does not  
see that their behavior is unwholesome and hurtful for  
themselves and others, how can there be any desire to  
change?*

*Forgetfulness is not forgiveness. To temporarily forget  
about past events does not mean that it has been*

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<sup>124</sup> Wisdom. Constantly remembering (Sati) to be wise. Remembering to be aware. Knowing and seeing the movements of the mind. Using Wise Effort. Seeing when tension (Craving) arises, and relaxing it.

<sup>125</sup> Take shape, take form

<sup>126</sup> Pavaḍḍhati [pa+vr̥dh] to grow up, to increase

<sup>127</sup> MN 2 Sabbāsava Sutta – Discourse on all of the Mental Distractions - Excerpt

*understood with wisdom, even less forgiven. This is called underlying, unconscious behavior.*

*As long as these wounds do not resurface, everything looks fine on the outside. As long as we are not faced with our own inner difficulties again, things are good and well.*

*But when we are confronted with difficulties, anger, resentment, jealousy, and the entire spectrum of unwholesome behavior arises. It might even arise without a trace of self-awareness about it. That is exactly the problem.*

*These unwholesome states are “reactive” states. They are unconscious, underlying behaviors that we hold on to. The whole field of attachments that we have developed over the time of our life.*

*Anger is not a mindful state.*

*Anxiety is not a mindful state.*

*Boasting pride is not a mindful state.*

*This is the keystone of the path: Understanding wholesome states as partaking of mindfulness, and unwholesome states as partaking of ignorance.]*

# INVESTIGATION

*[Nobody can “awaken” somebody else. Others can help and show the path, but it is up to each individual to “walk” this path. There, comes in the role of investigation, the second factor of awakening. But this does not mean “all kinds of investigations”. This means inquiring the Dhamma, taking interest in mental release and well-being. Investigation is knowing and seeing what is wholesome and what is unwholesome, when tension arises and when it does not. This means, to understand the nature of the mind. The Buddha himself constantly reminded the monk to investigate the Dhamma. Investigation is the purpose of mindfulness, it is another word for discernment or wisdom, and it is pulled forward by “Chanda” or wholesome desire and it yields into joy, bliss and liberation.]*



*[The Purpose of a Mirror]*

**[The Buddha]**

*“What do you think Rāhula,  
What is the purpose of a mirror?”*

**[Rāhula]**

*“It is for the purpose of reflection, Bhante.”*

**[The Buddha]**

*In the same way Rāhula,  
One should continually reflect upon*

*[one' own] bodily actions  
One should continually reflect upon  
[one's own] verbal actions  
One should continually reflect upon  
[one's own] mental actions.*



*[In this way, reflecting upon our actions, leads to true, lasting personality change. It is the basis for wholesome mental development, another word for "meditation".*

*When the mind becomes distracted, instead of losing patience, one should investigate. One should ask: "Why does my mind run away?"*

*The answer is simple: "Because the mind is trained in this way. And it has been for a very long time." This is the habit pattern of the mind: to run away. Or perhaps, more accurately, to run after...*

*Meditation is what allows us to slow our minds down by tranquility and joy, allowing us insight into our own mental behavior patterns.]*



***{The Buddha}***

*Good Good Anuruddhā,  
Have you, while meditating;  
Attentive, bright and intent,  
Experienced any state beyond [regular] human states?*

*A definite understanding and awareness that is completely good?*

**[Anuruddhā]**

*Here Bhante,  
While we meditate;  
Attentive, bright and intent  
The [mental] radiance appears and the [bodily] form is felt.*

*Then, not long after, the [mental] radiance,  
and the awareness of [bodily] form fade away  
We have not understood this phenomenon.*

**[The Buddha]**

*Anuruddhā,  
You should try to understand this phenomenon.*

*For even I too Anuruddhā,  
Before sambodhi, still not completely awakened,  
When I was still a person in quest of awakening<sup>128</sup>  
Similarly, the [mental] radiance appeared to me and I  
also saw [bodily] form.*

*Then, not long after, the [mental] radiance  
And the awareness of [bodily] form faded away.*

*Then I asked myself:  
“What is the cause and the reason for the [mental]  
radiance and the awareness of [bodily] form fades  
away?”*

*Then I thought to myself:*

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<sup>128</sup> Bodhisatta

*Agitation came up in my mind,  
Because of agitation,  
my mental composure started moving.*

*With the movement of mental collectedness,  
The [mental] radiance and the awareness of [bodily]  
form faded away.*

*Then, I thought: "I should practice so that further  
agitation will not come up in my mind."<sup>129</sup>*



*[This explains the process of insight or discernment by  
investigation quite clearly. Being inquisitive, asking  
ourselves: "What is the cause for that" or "How does this  
happen?"*

*When you sit in meditation, what happens? How long can  
you sit before you start wiggling? Before the mind really  
starts to "feel like doing something"? And starts to make  
reasons to justify that newly born need?*

*But really, what is that? Would that be discontent? How  
long does it take for the mind to become discontent in  
meditation? This is simply what is underlying in the  
mind. A reflection of the true state of the mind underneath  
all activities.*

*If restlessness and agitation, impatience and then longing  
for a different experience arises after 5 minutes, this is*

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<sup>129</sup> MN 138 Upakkilesa sutta

*showing that in the “normal state” of the mind, when the mind is not distracted with all kinds of activities and distractions, it only takes five minutes for the mind to become unwholesome. For no reason...*

*Is that really beneficial? Is this really happiness? Are we in any kind of position to then help others or to be a loving and supporting presence, for ourselves and those around us when, after five short minutes, the mind loses its balance?*

*Investigation is crucial. Taking interest in the states of our own mind is another word for the Buddha’s Teaching. Without investigation, there is no progress, there is no wisdom, there is no liberation.*

*One can ask oneself:*

*“Are there unwholesome states present in me? Is there Pride within me? Is there anger within me? Am I being careless or careful? Are my actions for my own good and the good of others? Am I causing hurt, to myself and others in ways that I fail to recognize?”*

*Then only, a step towards change can be taken. A step towards improvement and happiness.]*

# OBSTRUCTIONS

*To accessing the Dhamma*



*E*nce in Sāvātthi

*The Awakened One said this:  
“A complete mass of unwholesomeness seekers!”*

*If this was stated about the five hindrances,  
It would be properly stated.  
For these are a complete mass of unwholesomeness,  
That is to say; the five hindrances.*

*What five?*

*The hindrances of:*

*Selfishness,  
Anger,  
Dullness and Laziness,  
Restlessness and worry,  
And Doubt.<sup>130</sup>*



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<sup>130</sup> SN V 47.5 Akusalarāsi Sutta – Discourse on a Mass of Unwholesomeness

*[The five hindrances are unwholesome habits of the mind. They are unskillful states that impede us from growing in goodness. Habits like infatuated pride, reactive anger, dull laziness, stressful agitation and critical skepticism are a few of the prominent ones.*

*These states, as we will explore them in the next few pages, significantly reduce our chances of encountering and growing in the Dhamma.*

*It is therefore quite useful to know what they are so that we can better recognize them and understand how they work.*

*Empowered with this precious knowledge of recognition, what the Buddha called discernment,<sup>131</sup> we will then be provided with the ability to take the wholesome step of letting them go. This in turn, will allow more mental space to grow healthy behavior patterns that are beneficial to our own growth in goodness.*

*Some of these hindrances and their relation to meditation were previously discussed in the first section of this book. This chapter here is different than the first section and reveals some habitual behaviors that create “real-life” obstructions for people to encounter the Buddha’s Teaching. The intention here is to ignite the fire of wisdom within the truthful seekers and to directly apply the previously discussed factor of investigation onto one’s own life. This is also called, growing in the Dhamma.]*

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<sup>131</sup> Pañña

## PRIDE & SELFISHNESS

*[One of the first obstacles to wisdom and presence of mind is this insidious pride. A breeding ground for all unwholesome qualities. The sooner one becomes skilled at recognizing it and abating it, the sooner there will be progress and peace.]*



*One should give up anger and abolish pride,  
One should overcome all shackles.  
Not clinging to objects and concepts,  
Wherever one is, sorrow cannot follow.<sup>132</sup>*



*[The self-infatuated mind is moving away from mental presence, away from seeing clearly, away from respect. It has no real power of attention since it is constantly obsessed by “Me.” Therefore, it is keeping itself away from good qualities.*

*Pride and selfish behavior are what makes us think: “I know this already; I am better than that person.” Its verbs are: to want, to take, to argue.*

*Pride and arrogance are major obstacles for one’s own self. They keep a person blindfolded by arrogance and conceit.*

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<sup>132</sup> Dhp 221. *Pride Abolished*

*Blinded by boasting self-aggrandizement. Pride prevents people to see the hurt they are causing to themselves and to the people around them being only interested in one's own self, being is careless of others, it doesn't listen. The proud mind is in no state to learn.*

*It does not rejoice in others welfare and happiness. Therefore, it does not partake of the happiness of Dhamma. It is cutting oneself away from wholesome happiness. Finding happiness in lowering others, so that one can be at the front. Not understanding that this is the downfall of any kind of happiness. Not only is it truly unwholesome but also completely unsustainable.*

*The Dhamma does not easily come to those with a strong proud nature unless by a chance encounter from past good actions. But the wise generally avoids the proud. Who can teach a person who think they know better?*

*How can one receive and learn from someone when trying to compete? The quest for competition and being "the best" is one thing. And the quest for Dhamma is quite another. There is the constant mantra in the background: "Me, me, me, me, me, me, me, me, me..."*

*There is either competition or modesty. Pride or humbleness. These states are opposite. The humble is cool, like a still forest lake, happy and at peace within.]*



*"Bhikkhus,*

*Two kinds of people  
Are difficult to come by in this world.*

*What Two?*

*One who takes the initiative [to be kind] and  
One who is grateful and appreciative.<sup>133</sup>*



*[Pride is vanquished with the help of wise company,  
contemplation on impermanence and impersonality. It is  
allayed by relinquishing, generosity and association with  
those who are wiser than oneself. People who see the  
dangers of selfishness and who delight in selflessness.]*

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<sup>133</sup> AN II 119 Pubbakāri Sutta - Taking Initiative

## ANGER

*[Impatience, being easily prone to anger, being disrespectful and ungrateful are not mindful states. The angry only sees anger. Anger is an obsessive state. Unstable and imbalanced. The angry spits venom around them, turning the world against themselves, which naturally also makes the world turn away from them.]*



*One who consistently curbs  
The arising of anger like a swerving chariot,  
That person I call a True Charioteer,  
Others only know how to hold the reins.<sup>134</sup>*



*[The angry mind is moving away from mental presence, away from seeing clearly, away from respect. It has no real power of attention since it is constantly boiling in anger. Therefore, it is keeping itself away from good qualities.*

*Anger is also called impatience<sup>135</sup>, reactivity, emotional upheaval, bitterness, quick temperedness. It is what happens when things don't "go our way." When we come upon the unpleasant. Its verbs are: Not to want, to reject, to dislike, to hate.*

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<sup>134</sup> *Dhp 222 A True Charioteer*

<sup>135</sup> *When mixed with restlessness.*

*The wise avoids the angry because all things befalling them are simply burned and consumed, instantly, by the raging fire of hatred.]*



*"This is an ancient way Atula,  
This is not merely from today,*

*They blame those who sit in silence,  
They Blame those who speak up,  
They blame those who speak in moderation,  
None exist in this world who is not blamed."<sup>136</sup>*



*[There is no conversation with the angry. There is no friendship with the infuriated. The infuriated only sees one thing: Destruction.]*

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<sup>136</sup> *Dhp 227 None exist who is not Blamed*



*“Should a seeker not come upon  
Better or equal to oneself,  
One should continue alone and resolute,  
There is no fellowship with the careless.”<sup>137</sup>*



*[Taking everything personally, as a personal offense.  
Those people do not take advice, therefore, advice does not  
come to them. They are far from listening.]*

*Dhamma does not easily come to the angry. They are  
likely to miss any chance to learn and change, unless some  
major event comes and forces them to change.]*



*”  
Seekers,*

*If anyone should speak of me disrespectfully  
Should speak of the Dhamma disrespectfully,  
Should speak of the Saṅgha disrespectfully,*

*You should not retaliate nor lose composure,  
Nor should you harbor resentment in your heart.*

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<sup>137</sup> *Dhp 61 No Fellowship with the Careless*

*If you were to be agitated and offended,  
This would only be a hindrance to you.*

*Further, if you were to be agitated and offended,  
Could you then tell between what is well-spoken and ill-  
spoken?*

*“No Bhante”*

*Then, you should only explain  
What is untrue as being untrue thus:*

*This is not true,  
This is not the way it is,  
This is not the way we think,  
And this is not the way we understand things.*

\*\*\*

*And if anyone speaks of me respectfully,  
Or speaks of the Dhamma respectfully,  
Or speak of the Saṅgha respectfully,*

*You should not become elated or overjoyed,  
Nor should your mind be overrun by excitement.*

*For if you were to be elated, overjoyed and excited,  
This would only be a hindrance to you.*

*Then, you should only acknowledge  
What is True as being true thus:*

*That is true  
That is the way it is,  
That is the way we think,*

*That is the way we understand things.*<sup>138</sup>



*[The way to abandon anger is by forgiveness, love and compassion. By seeing with wisdom the pain we are causing to ourselves and to those around us.]*



*Never is anger appeased by anger,  
Only by non-anger is it appeased,  
This is an eternal law.*<sup>139</sup>



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<sup>138</sup> DN 1 Brahmajāla Sutta – The Net of Brahma

<sup>139</sup> Dhṛ 5 Anger by Anger

## AGITATION



*“Unsettled and unsteady is the mind,  
Hard it is to contain, hard to master.  
The wise straighten their minds,  
Like the fletchers straighten their arrows.”<sup>140</sup>*



*[The unsettled mind is moving away from mental presence, away from seeing clearly, away from respect. It has no real power of attention since it is constantly moving about. Therefore, it is also keeping itself away from good qualities.]*

*It is hard for the agitated mind to bear with what is being said. It is constantly distracted. This is the “run-away” mind, it does not stand still. There is too much happening inside, often this is hurt, therefore it is not in a position to listen. Worry is simply the combination of agitation, fear and dislike.]*

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<sup>140</sup> *Dhp 33 Wises and Fletchers*



*“Like a fish on dry land,  
Cast out of the water realm,  
Just so, the mind convulses and throbs,  
When cast out of the realm of the senses.”<sup>141</sup>*



*[Just like sitting on a burning live coal, it wiggles here and there. It is not seeing the pain inside, which is causing the agitation. It is in a state unfit to receive the Dhamma properly. It may get bits and pieces here and there but there is no power of attention.]*



*“Those with unsettled minds,  
Who do not know the True Dhamma,  
And whose faith wavers,  
Their wisdom do not come to maturity.”<sup>142</sup>*



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<sup>141</sup> Dhp 34 Like a Fish

<sup>142</sup> Dhp 38 Cannot be Fulfilled

*[Agitation keeps the Dhamma away. When restless is overpowering the mind, it does not retain what was said. This kind of mind is constantly thinking about this, or about that. Jumping from this to that. Constantly shifting. Adrift. Not paying attention. In the worst cases, it believes that it is paying attention, but it even fails to see that it is not. That is the double danger of lacking mental awareness. Like a speeding car without a driver.]*



*“Swift and hard to grasp is this mind,  
Going wherever it pleases.  
Wise is the calming of the mind,  
A peaceful mind brings happiness.”<sup>143</sup>*



*[The way to quell agitation is by cultivating inner peace. By tranquility and steady meditation practice. By developing Boundless Love or Compassion will help tremendously.]*

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<sup>143</sup> *Dhp 35 Swift and Hard to Grasp*

## COMPLACENCE & LAZINESS

*[Sometimes, we are forgetful. We forget the good fortune of health, the good fortune of a human birth, the good fortune to have food, shelter, clothing and medicine. We become complacent. Because of some past good actions of ours, perhaps, things are going well for us at the moment. But once this wholesome karmic force runs its course, what will be left? The Buddha often emphasized the need for being proactive in wholesomeness, whether by virtue, generosity or meditation, the three grounds for the generation of merit or goodness. When the monks became lazy and complacent, the Buddha would “arouse a sense of urgency” in them.]*



*“The past should not be pursued  
Nor should the future be longed for;  
For what has passed is left behind,  
And the future cannot be obtained.*

*Wisely observing all present [mental] states,  
One after the other.  
Unagitated and unshakable  
One should constantly know this.*

*Today one should be resolute,  
Who knows, tomorrow, death might come,  
There is no arguing  
With death and its army.*

*Therefore meditate, wide awake*

*Not giving up, day and night  
This person is said to have an auspicious night,  
The sage of peace has declared.”<sup>144</sup>*



*[The complacent mind is moving away from mental presence, away from seeing clearly, away from respect. It has no real power of attention since it is indulging in present comfort, consuming the fruits of previous good actions. Therefore, it is keeping itself away from growing in good qualities.*

*We forget too easily, that our life is dependent on “taking life”. And that absolutely everything that we take, must come from somewhere, some plant, some animal, some place where there is life. That is why “not taking,” the second training of virtue, is also part of generosity.*

*There is no “magic” in taking, it all comes from somewhere. For our bodies to live, plants and animals have to give their lives. And how do we honor that sacrifice? How do we spend our days? What do we give back?]*

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<sup>144</sup> MN 131 Bhaddekaratta Sutta - The Auspicious Night - Excerpt



*"I came to learn two things seekers.*

*Never to be satisfied with wholesome states,  
And unrestrained power of will.*

*Seekers, uncurbed my effort was, I went:*

*"Let only my skin, tendons and bones be left,  
And the flesh and blood in this body dry up.  
Whatever is possible by human power  
Human will, human strength,  
that, I will achieve.  
Resolve will not fall away  
But will be firmly established and developed.*



*Bhikkhus*

*By carefully attention, I came to sambodhi,<sup>145</sup>  
By careful attention, I came to the unsurpassable  
Release from the yoke.*



*You also bhikkhus, if by unrelenting effort you would  
[Practice in the same way...],*

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<sup>145</sup> *Full Awakening, Complete Understanding.*

*In no long time,  
You would attain the purpose  
For which sons of good families  
Honestly leave their home and become homeless,  
Seeking for the highest,*

*The complete perfection of the holy life.*

*And having realized it in this present life,  
By your own direct knowledge,*

*You would abide in it.*

*Thus bhikkhus, you should train:*

*With unabating resolve we will go:*

*“Let only my skin, tendons and bones be left,  
And the flesh and blood in this body dry up.  
Whatever is possible by human power  
Human will, human strength, that, I will  
achieve.  
Resolve will not fall away  
But will be firmly established and developed.”*

*Thus you should train bhikkhus.<sup>146</sup>*



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<sup>146</sup> AN II 5 Upaññāta Sutta - Came to learn

*[The highest good is of course, mental development, which means abandoning selfishness, anger and delusion. Because mind is the overseer of all that we do. Any action that we take is based upon the quality of our mind.*

*It is good to always keep in the back of our minds, that we owe our lives to plants and animals and the environment we live in. And therefore, remember to make an effort to do good, be good to all of life and to give back, help and support others as much as we can. This will in turn benefit our own happiness.*

*Remembering that we owe each of our breath to all living beings, we can remain humble and intent on striving for wholesomeness.*

*That is also the role of “sati,” what we call mindfulness in the west, in fact, literally means, “remembering”. (!) Not being forgetful.*

*Complacency and laziness are overthrown by arousing a sense of urgency. By remembering the work to be done, by calling to mind the dangers of slackening in wholesome deeds. That the actions we perform come back to us, all the time, whether good or bad.]*

## DELUSION

*[Careless attention, lacking mindfulness and wisdom. These constitute what is called delusion. Forgetfulness or lacking vision into the Four Awakened Understandings as to what is unwholesome and unbeneficial and how to move towards what is wholesome and beneficial. The illusion of selfhood and ownership can be quite strong. The five hindrances together create a deluded, distorted perception of reality.]*



*“I have sons and I have wealth”  
A confused person boasts.  
When not even possessing oneself,  
How much less sons and wealth.”<sup>147</sup>*



*[But it is the nature of delusion... to be deluded. Not to see. Not to know. Right from wrong, wholesome from unwholesome, truly wise words or mere empty words. Not knowing what is good friendship and what is bad friendship.]*

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<sup>147</sup> Dhp 62 I Have Sons



*“Those who give up what should be done,  
And will perform what should be given up;  
The careless and the proud,  
Grow in coarse mental states.”<sup>148</sup>*



*[Delusion is lacking the mindfulness to see the lack of mindfulness. There is no footing in the mind. Everything is just like anything else. There is no wisdom or seeing kamma. No difference between wholesome and unwholesome. Doing as the mind wishes, going as one goes. A victim of one's own mind, not a master of one's own mind.]*



*“The careless ones, lacking discernment,  
Behave like enemies onto themselves,  
Perpetrating unwholesome actions,  
The fruit of which ripens in bitterness.”<sup>149</sup>*



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<sup>148</sup> Dhp 292. *Growing in Coarse Mental States*

<sup>149</sup> Dhp 66 *The Careless Ones*

*[There cannot be genuine, sincere compassion nor wisdom nor learning since there is no power of attention. Mindfulness or presence of mind is “to care”. Presence of mind, Love, compassion, sympathy come together. Delusion is their opposite. There might be a “quick feeling sorry”, but once again, it is soon blown away in the wind of the mind.]*

*There is no mental steadiness, no mental composure, no solidity. Not following instructions most of the time. Which is in turn feeding delusion. This contributes to acquiring a distorted perception of how things truly are. Which in turns contributes to the inability to tell things apart, otherwise called discernment.]*



*“The careless, poor in wisdom,  
Indulges in carelessness.  
But the wise protects attentiveness,  
As his most valuable possession.”<sup>150</sup>*



*[Even if the deluded mind fails to see it, it is hurting others around them. Being careless is being selfish.]*

*The words coming from such a mind can hardly be trusted. They tend to be vain and insubstantial. There is*

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<sup>150</sup> *Dhp 26 One’s Most Valuable Possession*

*no real depth. "Eating candies and Awakening, it's all the same".]*



*Just as a beautiful flower  
Colorful but devoid of smell,  
Even so fruitless are well spoken words  
That do not come to be practiced.<sup>151</sup>*



*[Just like after smelling the beautiful fragrance of a flower for 5 minutes, the perfume vanishes. The more we indulge in this kind of sensory happiness, the more we need it, and the mind becomes extremely gross.*

*There can never be enough merits or good actions performed by a single individual. Holding the opposite view is creating ground, making excuses to get away with unwholesome actions.<sup>152</sup>*

*One would do well do heed this advice from the Buddha and the sangha. The Buddha and the monks do not speak for personal gains or personal benefits. Those who truly relinquish the world do not speak with the bias of personal gains.*

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<sup>151</sup> *Dhp 51 Without Fragrance*

<sup>152</sup> *Unless that person becomes an arahant or a Buddha. That is the highest merit, there is none beyond this.*

*What they say can be trusted. They act for the welfare and benefit of the whole. A wise person does well to pay careful attention. Making an effort to understand. Not simply rejecting or arguing. Taking it in, and taking the time to understand...*

*This Teaching of the Buddha is profound and it is wholly in line with the truth. It is hard to find cracks in it.*

*Dhamma means truth...]*



*“One who rejects the teaching of the Awakened Ones,  
And the righteous people who live by the Dhamma,  
The deluded one stands in unwholesome perspectives,  
Like a reed would produce fruit,  
Only for its own ruin.”<sup>153</sup>*



*[Delusion is also the thing which makes people believe that they have nothing to work on. No problems. No bad habits. No resentment, no anger, no selfish craving... No need for meditation. No need for forgiveness. No need for making merit. And that they never hurt anyone.]*

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<sup>153</sup> *Dhp 164 Fruit-Bearing Reed*



" Similarly seekers,

*There could be a seeker here who seems*

*Kinder than kindness,  
gentler than gentleness,  
calmer than calmness...*

*As long as he does not come upon  
disagreeable speech and contradicting opinions.*

*But it is when that seeker comes upon disagreeable  
speech and opinions that it can be known if he is truly  
kind, truly gentle and truly calm.<sup>154</sup>*



*[Delusion is conquered by wise association and wise  
attention. By meditative practice and determination.]*

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<sup>154</sup> MN 21 *Simile of the Saw*

## DOUBT

*[Doubt here is doubt in the Dhamma, doubt in the teaching, another word for confusion. There are instances where doubt can be a wholesome faculty, especially for one who has not yet entered the middle way. When it is directed by discernment to sort out what is wholesome and what is unwholesome, it is skillful doubt which we would then call investigation.*

*But the mind can easily indulge in such a pattern. Then, doubt turns into delusion, confusion and starts feeding unwholesome qualities. For one who has entered the way, doubt is no more since one sees and understands the Dhamma, the way things work. Therefore, doubt is to be overcome by practice. Doubt in the Buddha's awakening, his teaching and the saṅgha vanish through direct experience in meditation practice and witnessing for oneself, the liberation of the mind from unwholesome states.*



### [3. HAVING UNDERSTOOD & ABANDONED]

*At that time monks,*

*(1) Having understood that:*

*Clinging to selfish desires is a stain of the  
mind,<sup>155</sup>*

*It gets to be given up.<sup>156</sup>*

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<sup>155</sup> 'abhijjhāvisamalobho cittassa upakkilesō'ti—iti viditvā

<sup>156</sup> abhijjhāvisamalobho cittassa upakkilesō pahīno hoti,

- (2) *Having understood that:  
Impatience is a stain of the mind,  
It gets to be given up.*
- (3) *Having understood that:  
Anger is a stain of the mind,  
It gets to be given up.*
- (4) *Having understood that:  
Holding grudge is a stain of the mind,  
It gets to be given up.*
- (5) *Having understood that:  
Pretention is a stain of the mind,  
It gets to be given up.*
- (6) *Having understood that:  
Retaliation is a stain of the mind,  
It gets to be given up.*
- (7) *Having understood that:  
Jealousy is a stain of the mind,  
It gets to be given up.*
- (8) *Having understood that:  
Selfishness (Envy) is a stain of the mind,  
It gets to be given up.*
- (9) *Having understood that:  
Deceit is a stain of the mind,  
It gets to be given up.*

- (10) *Having understood that:  
Dishonesty is a stain of the mind,  
It gets to be given up.*
- (11) *Having understood that:  
Obstinacy is a stain of the mind,  
It gets to be given up.*
- (12) *Having understood that:  
Arrogance is a stain of the mind,  
It gets to be given up.*
- (13) *Having understood that:  
Pride is a stain of the mind,  
It gets to be given up.*
- (14) *Having understood that:  
Self-aggrandizement is a stain of the mind,  
It gets to be given up.*
- (15) *Having understood that:  
Intoxication is a stain of the mind,  
It gets to be given up.*
- (16) *Having understood that:  
Carelessness is a stain of the mind,  
It gets to be given up.*

[4. UPLIFTED UNDERSTANDING]

[1. BUDDHA]

*Then, one arrives at the joyful understanding about the  
Buddha.<sup>157</sup>*

*The Exalted One is an Arahant,  
Perfectly All-Awakened,  
Endowed with knowledge and conduct,  
Living happily,  
Knower of the worlds,  
Unsurpassed guide for those who seek self-mastery,  
Teacher of Devas and humans,  
Awakened and Blessed.*

[2. DHAMMA]

*One arrives at the joyful understanding about the  
Dhamma:*

*'The Awakened One's Teaching is:  
Well explained,  
Directly visible,  
Immediate,  
Inviting,  
Leading upwards,  
To be experienced by the wise for oneself.*

[3. SANGHA]

*One arrives at the joyful understanding about the  
saṅgha:*

*Good is the practice of the Awakened One's saṅgha,  
Straight is the practice of the Awakened One's saṅgha,*

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<sup>157</sup> *So buddhe avecca ppasādena samannāgato hoti:*

*Wise is the practice of the Awakened One's saṅgha,  
Meaningful is the practice of the Awakened One's  
saṅgha.*

*That is, the four pairs of people,  
The eight kinds of persons.*

*The saṅgha of the Awakened One is  
Worthy support,  
Worthy of hospitality,  
Worthy of generosity,  
Worthy of respect,  
An unsurpassed field of goodness for the universe.”<sup>158</sup>*



*[Primarily, doubt is not to know how things work, more specifically, not to know the law of cause and effect. It is also lacking the discernment to know what is wholesome and what is unwholesome. Therefore, ignoring the way to wholesomeness and how to cultivate wholesome, beneficial mental states and behavior.*

*Doubt, when combined with arrogance becomes critical skepticism. The constantly critical and skeptical mind is not truly attentive. It is bent on finding fault, on contradiction as we have seen in Sammattaniyāma Sutta Series, in the section on listening. It is the opposite of accepting. Therefore, it is keeping itself away from good qualities.]*

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<sup>158</sup> MN 7 Vattha Sutta - The Analogy of the Cloth



*One who has overcome this delusive Saṃsāra;  
This treacherous road filled with manifold dangers,  
One who has crossed over  
and stands on the further shore,  
A meditator, gone beyond longing,  
Unconfused, free of tension and quenched,  
That person I call "spiritual."<sup>159</sup>*



*[This does not mean to accept everything blindly. The cure for critical doubt and skepticism is the development of discernment by way of direct experience (Mainly meditation). A person of this nature will find answers through practice. If the will to practice is not there, then the fault-finding and criticizing is a mere empty waste of time without essence which then turns into nihilism.]*

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<sup>159</sup> *Dhp 414 Unconfused Meditator*

## Nihilism

*[There exists a view on life that is probably as old as the world, which existed at the time of the Buddha and still carries on today in the “modern” world: nihilism. Holding the view that everything is predetermined, that there is no kamma or action nor result from actions.<sup>160</sup>*

*The Buddha warned his students against such wrong modes of thinking. Because those people cannot be expected to behave virtuously. Why would they if there are no consequences of actions, good or bad? A straight path to wickedness and mass confusion. This is perhaps the biggest human excuse to behave selfishly.*

*Nihilism destroys faith, an essential faculty to develop. It destroys innate goodness. It destroys any meaning or purpose. It is dangerous and unwholesome.*

*What seems to be a favorite topic of nihilists is concerning after life and fatalism. Ironically, those who do not have “faith” or “believe” in any after life also say this without truly knowing if this is indeed true or not.]*

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<sup>160</sup> *Kamma-Vipaka*



*“Indeed, wicked actions are like milk,  
They do not curdle all at once.  
But they follow the witless, burning,  
Like ash-covered coals.”<sup>161</sup>*



*[Like a blind man, blind from birth, who never saw the sky, never saw the earth, never saw the stars would proclaim: “There is no sky, no earth, no stars!”  
Would that man still be right?*

*The nihilists are merely choosing to invest their faith or belief in one of the most unwholesome standpoints or mental perspective there can be. This, also, is “blind faith”. Perhaps amongst the best example of blind-faith that exist.]*

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<sup>161</sup> *Dhp 71. Unwholesome Actions are like Milk*



*“For one who has trespassed the Dhamma once,  
One given to lying openly,  
One who rejects [the idea of] future lives,  
There is no wicked deed this person could not do.”<sup>162</sup>*



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<sup>162</sup> *Dhp 176. One Who Rejects Future Lives*

## FAITH

*[Faith or conviction comes before everything that we do. Without faith or conviction or determination or confidence, no action is possible. Faith is indispensable.]*



*“Good is righteous behavior until the end  
Good is faith that is unflagging,  
Good is the growth of discernment,  
Good is the avoidance of what is harmful.”<sup>163</sup>*



*[It is an essential factor on the path to freedom. It is one of the five faculties of the mind which a meditator needs to develop.]<sup>164</sup>*



*“Constantly meditating, undistracted,  
Master of one’s sense faculties,  
Knowing the right measure in eating,  
Filled with faith, resolute and energetic,*

---

<sup>163</sup> 333 Dhp Good

<sup>164</sup> Pañc’Indriyanī: Saddha, Vīriya, Sati, Samādhi, Pañña.

*The five faculties of the mind are: Faith, enthusiasm, attention, clarity and discernment.*

*Even Māra cannot defeat such a person,  
Just as the wind cannot alter  
a mountain of solid rock.”<sup>165</sup>*



*[Some people, who have been practicing the Buddha’s Teaching for a long time and have extensively purified their minds and taken vows of only speaking the truth, including the Buddha himself, teach those who wish to hear that there is Kamma, there is action and results of action. That there is another life. That there are other realms of existence.]*



*“Just as the good horse is touched by the whip;  
Meditate, blazing like the sun, self-mastered,  
With faith, righteous behavior and determination,  
Discerning the Dhamma with samādhi,  
Endowed with rightful knowledge and conduct,  
Continually present,  
Shatter this unlimited mass of unwholesomeness.”<sup>166</sup>*



*[Even if one does not see these things directly, one is still wise to rest some confidence in the words of the seers who dedicate their entire lives to Truth.]*

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<sup>165</sup> Dhp 8 A Mountain of Solid Rock

<sup>166</sup> Dhp 144 Touched by the Whip



*“A monk lives in much joy  
And confidence in the Buddha’s Teaching,  
When he has understood the Way of Peace,  
The blissful dissolution of conditioned processes.”<sup>167</sup>*



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<sup>167</sup> *Dhp 381 Joy and Confidence*

# PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

*[Contrary to what seems to have become the norm in the modern interpretations of the Buddha's teaching, this entire path is not about mere idle acceptance. The path of the Buddhas is a path of devoted self-development, true personality change in the service of goodness. Constantly becoming better human beings. Wisdom in service of wholesome personality development.]*



*[The Purpose of a Mirror]*

**[The Buddha]**

*“What do you think Rāhula,  
What is the purpose of a mirror?”*

**[Rāhula]**

*“It is for the purpose of reflection, Bhante.”*

**[The Buddha]**

*In the same way Rāhula,  
One should continually reflect upon  
[one' own] bodily actions  
One should continually reflect upon  
[one's own] verbal actions  
One should continually reflect upon  
[one's own] mental actions.*

*[...]*

*[Purification by Reflection]*

*In the distant past Rāhula,  
whichever samaṇas or brāhmaṇas have brought to  
perfection their own physical actions, verbal actions and  
mental actions;*

*All of them did so  
by constantly reflecting upon their own physical actions,  
by constantly reflecting upon their own verbal actions,  
by constantly reflecting upon their own mental actions.*

*In the distant future Rāhula,  
whichever samaṇas or brāhmaṇas, will bring to perfection  
their own physical actions, verbal actions and mental  
actions;*

*All of them will do so  
by constantly reflecting upon their own physical actions,  
by constantly reflecting upon their own verbal actions,  
by constantly reflecting upon their own mental actions*

*At present Rāhula,  
whichever samaṇa or brāhmaṇa, are bringing to  
perfection their own physical actions, verbal actions,  
mental actions;*

*All of them are doing so  
by constantly reflecting upon their own physical actions  
by constantly reflecting upon their own verbal actions  
by constantly reflecting upon their own mental actions*

*Rāhula, you should train yourself in this way:*

*Constantly reflecting,  
I shall perfect my own physical actions,  
Constantly reflecting,  
I shall perfect my own verbal actions,  
Constantly reflecting,  
I shall perfect my own mental actions*

*This is what the Exalted One said.  
Gladdened, the Venerable Rāhula rejoiced in the Exalted  
One's words.<sup>168</sup>*



*[Someone can practice and teach the Dhamma on non-anger, Loving-Kindness and compassion. But ultimately, if that person loses its temper, becomes angry, and fails to treat those around them lovingly... What is the point?*

*This includes trying to change others or to try and force some teaching on others. Teaching is a naturally occurring phenomena which happens by display of wisdom.*

*The Buddha is the best example. The Buddha had no desire to teach. But his wisdom was of such magnitude, that people came to him, seeking his advice.*

*In the Buddha's Teaching, personality development is directly correlated with four successive stages of Liberation.]*

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<sup>168</sup> MN 61 Ambalaṭṭhikarāhulovāda Sutta

# THE STAGES OF AWAKENING

*[According to the early Buddhist texts and the direct experience and knowledge of some Dhamma practitioners, there are four stages of awakening. A person who has attained either one of these four stages is called “Ariya”.<sup>169</sup> They are Stream-Enterer, Once-Returner, Non-Returner and Arahant.*

*At each stage, certain wrong modes of thinking and behaving, which are unwholesome and cause a lot of harm around us, are abandoned, gradually:*

## *1. At Stream-Entry:*

- (1) Belief of a personal Self*
- (2) Belief that Rites and rituals lead to Nibbāna*
- (3) Doubt in the Dhamma<sup>170</sup>*

## *2. At Once-Return:*

- (4) Lessening of desire for the six senses and their objects*
- (5) Lessening of anger<sup>171</sup>*

## *3. At Non-Return:*

- (4) No more desire for the six senses and their objects*
- (5) No more anger*

---

<sup>169</sup> Ariya Puggala: Noble person, righteous person.

<sup>170</sup> Sakkāya-diṭṭhi, Sīlabbata-parāmāsa, Vicikicchā

<sup>171</sup> Kāmacchando, Byāpādo

#### 4. At Arahantship:

- (6) Desire for a physical rebirth
- (7) Desire for non-physical rebirth
- (8) Pride
- (9) Agitation
- (10) Blindness <sup>172</sup>

*These four levels, clearly defined, reveal once again that this is a gradual process, a gradual training (anupubbasikkhā). This also reveals that the direct, immediate result of practice is tangible personality change or development.*

*One might notice here that someone who claims to be “awakened”, and still commits adultery meaning that there is still sexual desire, is not awakened in the Buddha’s terms. In fact, lust for gratification of any of the six senses is strongly weakened at the second stage, which is still an early stage, and then completely uprooted at the next stage of Non-Returning.*

*True “Ariyas” do not consider the senses and their objects as attractive any longer. The mind has attained to such level of blissful purity and wisdom that this would seem like jumping into a pot of boiling red molten lead.]*

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<sup>172</sup> Rūparāgo, Arūparāgo, Māna, Uddhacca, Avijjā.

# GENEROSITY

*[The importance of generosity on the path of wisdom and happiness is the topic for a whole book in itself. But at the very least, it is wisdom in practice, and direct wholesome happiness. Generosity and helping others help us in the first place. The generous only needs to recollect previous acts of kindness to appease the mind and quickly enter samādhi or meditation. One's mind become gradually uplifted.]*



*“One should speak the truth,  
And never yield to anger,  
Giving, when one is asked,  
Even having next to nothing,  
Standing on these three things,  
One lives in the presence of the Devas.”<sup>173</sup>*



*[By supporting Dhamma  
One supports all living beings.  
By supporting all living beings,  
One supports the Dhamma.*

*Those who support the Dhamma.  
The Dhamma supports them.*

---

<sup>173</sup> Dhṛ 224 In the Presence of the Devas

*Wherever they go,  
Whatever they do.]*



*“Of all gifts, the gift of Dhamma is the highest,  
Of all tastes, the taste of Dhamma is the highest,  
Of all joys, the joy of Dhamma is the highest,  
For ending all hurt, the end of selfishness is the  
highest.”<sup>174</sup>*



*[That is also called merit.  
Or “acquired goodness”.  
It is also called wisdom.*

*It is giving,  
And giving is receiving,  
Receiving the happiness of giving.]*

---

<sup>174</sup> *Dhp 354. The Gift of Dhamma is Highest*



*“Defeat anger by non-anger,  
Wickedness by virtue,  
Stinginess by generosity,  
And deception by truth.”<sup>175</sup>*



*[The giver wins,  
The giver is wise,  
This is Wholesome happiness.*

*Money doesn't give happiness.  
Dhamma does.]*

---

<sup>175</sup> *Dhp 223 Defeat Anger by Non-Anger*



*Weeds are the ruin of fields,  
Selfish desires are the ruin of mankind,  
To those who are void of selfishness,  
What is given bears great fruits.*



*Weeds are the ruin of fields,  
Aversion is the ruin of mankind,  
To those who are void of aversion,  
What is given bears great fruits.*



*Weeds are the ruin of fields,  
Delusion is the ruin of mankind,  
To those who are void of delusion,  
What is given bears great fruits.<sup>176</sup>*



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<sup>176</sup> *Dhp 356-358 Selfish desires, Aversion and Delusion are the  
Ruin of Mankind*

## RETREATS

*[It is not easy to calm the mind when we are constantly moving and working. When we are constantly “engaging” in physical reality. Meditation starts by “disengaging”. Turning the mind away from distractions. This is why retreating is necessary.]*



*”Cultivate meditation seekers.*

*With a composed mind,  
a seeker understands things as they truly are.<sup>177</sup>*

*[...]*



*[The Buddha often urged the monks to meditate!]*

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<sup>177</sup> SN IV 35.99 *Samādhi Sutta - Cultivate Mental Clarity*



*E*nce, in Sāvatti.

*“Righteous, is this Wise meditation<sup>178</sup>  
that I will teach you, monks,  
With its supports and requirements.*

*Hear this.*

*What is this Righteous and Wise Meditation,  
With its supports and requirements<sup>179</sup>?*

*It is,  
Wise Understanding  
Wise Attitude  
Wise Speech  
Wise Action  
Wise Living  
Wise Undertaking  
Wise Presence*

*This tranquility of the mind,  
Supported by these seven components;  
That, is called Righteous and Wise Meditation,  
With its supports and requirements.<sup>180</sup>*



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<sup>178</sup> *Ariyaṃ vo, bhikkhave, sammāsamādhiṃ...*

<sup>179</sup> *Ariyo sammāsamādhi saupaniso sapaṛikkhāro*

<sup>180</sup> *SN V 45.28 Samādhi Sutta - Discourse on Wise Meditation*

*[He even said that this Righteous Eight-Spoked Path  
was "Meditation" itself.]*



*"Ānanda,*

*I have taught you development by application  
And development without application [of the mind].*

*What should be done by a teacher for his students,  
Holding their best interest at heart,  
Out of loving compassion,  
That, I have done for you Ānanda.*

*There are these roots of trees Ānanda,  
There are these empty huts;*

*Meditate Ānanda!  
Do not be neglectful.  
Lest you become remorseful  
When the time has passed.*

*This is my advice to you.<sup>181</sup>*



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<sup>181</sup> SN V 47.10 Bhikkhunupassaya Sutta - Discourse at The  
Bhikkhunis's Residence

*[Reminding us that the entire path culminates in Samādhi, cultivates in meditation, in mental development. He said that the Eight-Spoked path was the cause and condition for meditation, mental clarity, mental composure.]*



*" Seekers,*

*There are these seven things that make up<sup>182</sup> meditation.*

*What seven?*

*Wise Understanding  
Wise Attitude  
Wise Speech  
Wise Action  
Wise Living  
Wise Practice  
And Wise Presence.*

*Seekers,  
Tranquility of mind made-up of these seven supports;  
This is called Ariyan Wise meditation  
With its causes and requisites.*

---

<sup>182</sup> *"Sattime, bhikkhave, samāhiparikkhārā.*



*[And not to forget to enjoy the meditation! Delighting in the practice, because it is a delightful thing after all. To seek delight in wholesome mental development. This wonderful and uplifting process of self-liberation.]*



*" Seekers,*

*Possessing six qualities,  
A seeker abounds in happiness and mental grace here  
and now, and one is thoroughly undertaking the way to  
the stilling of the distractions.<sup>183</sup>*

*What six?*

*One  
Delights in the Dhamma, (1)  
Delights in [mental] development,<sup>184</sup> (2)*

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<sup>183</sup> *Yoni cassa āraddhā hoti āsavānaṃ khayāya. Mental Influences, currents, distractions, weaknesses of the mind.*

<sup>184</sup> *Bhāvanārāmo hoti: Mental Development, i.e. Meditation, release. From AN II 31 Samatho-Vipassanā Sutta:  
"What is the purpose of undertaking the development of Tranquility? The mind comes to be developed.*

*Delights in abandoning,*<sup>185</sup> (3)  
*Delights in solitude,*<sup>186</sup> (4)  
*Delights in non-hatred,*<sup>187</sup> (5)  
*And delights in non-proliferation.*<sup>188</sup> (6)

*Possessing these six qualities,  
A seeker abounds in happiness and mental grace here  
and now, and he is thoroughly undertaking the way to  
the stilling of the distractions.*<sup>189</sup>



*[We cultivate meditation to become better people. We cultivate meditation to be happier people. To be more patient, more loving, more accepting. The practice does not stop when we stand up from the cushion. But extended practice or retreats are necessary to release deeper states of inner tension that we otherwise would not see.]*

---

*What is the purpose of developing the mind? One's craving comes to be abandoned."*

<sup>185</sup> *Pahānārāmo hoti: Abandoning tension. Delights in the bliss of relief that springs up from releasing craving.*

<sup>186</sup> *Pavivekārāmo hoti.*

<sup>187</sup> *Abyāpajjhārāmo hoti: Loving-Kindness*

<sup>188</sup> *Nippapañcārāmo hoti: Still and collected mind*

<sup>189</sup> *AN VI 6.78 Sukhasomanassa Sutta - Happiness and mental grace*

## ENTERING THE STREAM

*[The Buddha taught four stages of awakening. Following a gradual training, a gradual process of understanding and liberation. The gradual release of craving. This is also called "seeing the Dhamma". Stream-entry is the first stage. This is mostly kept silent in the western world. Along with the true understanding of what "Awakening" means in Buddhist terms.]*



*"Compared to single rulership over the earth,  
Going to the heavens,  
And omniscience over all universes,  
The Fruit of stream-entry is truly best."<sup>190</sup>*



*"To those for who you have compassion,*

*To those you think could listen and understand--*

*Seekers, to your friends and family,  
Acquaintances and relatives,  
They should be encouraged, explained and helped  
In [acquiring] the four qualities of stream-entry*

*What four?*

---

<sup>190</sup> DhP 178. *The Fruit of Stream-Entry*

## [1. BUDDHA]

*They should be encouraged, explained and helped in [acquiring] confident understanding in the Awakened One [as it is]:*

*The Exalted One is an Arahant,  
Perfectly All-Awakened  
Endowed with knowledge and conduct,  
Blissful, Knower of the worlds  
Unsurpassed guide for those who seek self-mastery  
Teacher of Devas and humans,  
Awakened and Blessed.*

*Seekers, there could be change and alteration in the four great elements--In the earth element, the water element, the fire element and the wind element, but there cannot be change in the [mind of the] awakened meditator who has confident understanding in the Buddha.*

*And if there were alteration [of body], that this awakened meditator who has confident understanding about the Buddha could be reborn in the plane of the fallen, the plane of wild animals, or the plane of the ancestors;  
This cannot stand.*

## [2. DHAMMA]

*They should be encouraged, explained and helped in [acquiring] confident understanding in the Dhamma [as it is]:*

*'Well explained is the Awakened One's Teaching,*

*Directly visible, Immediate,  
Inviting, Leading upwards,  
To be experienced by the wise for oneself.*

*Seekers, there could be change and alteration in the four great elements-- In the earth element, the water element, the fire element and the wind element, but there cannot be change in the [mind of the] Awakened meditator who has confident understanding in the Dhamma.*

*And if there were alteration [of body], that this awakened meditator who has confident understanding about the Dhamma, could be reborn in the plane of the fallen, the plane of wild animals, or the plane of the ancestors;  
This cannot stand.*

### [3. SAṄGHA]

*One should be encouraged, explained and helped in [acquiring] confident understanding in the Saṅgha [as it is]:*

*Good is the practice of the Awakened One's saṅgha,  
Straight is the practice of the Awakened One's saṅgha,  
Wise is the practice of the Awakened One's saṅgha,  
Meaningful is the practice of the Awakened One's  
saṅgha.*

*That is, the four pairs of people,  
The eight kinds of persons.*

*The saṅgha of the Awakened One is  
Worthy support, worthy of hospitality,  
Worthy of generosity, worthy of respect,  
An unsurpassed field of goodness for the universe.*

*Seekers, there could be change and alteration in the four great elements-- In the earth element, the water element, the fire element and the wind element, but there cannot be change in the [mind of the] awakened meditator who has confident understanding in the Saṅgha.*

*And if there should be alteration [of body], that this awakened meditator who has confident understanding about the Saṅgha, could be reborn in the plane of the fallen, the plane of wild animals, the plane of the ancestors; This cannot stand.*

#### [4. VIRTUE OF THE AWAKENED]

*One should be encouraged, explained and helped in the good nature of the awakened ones that is*

*Unbroken, unflawed  
Spotless, unsullied  
Liberating, taught by the wise  
Appeasing and turns into mental clarity [Samādhi]*

*Seekers, there could be change and alteration in the four great elements-- In the earth element, the water element, the fire element and the wind element, but there cannot be change in the awakened meditator who has confident understanding in the virtue of the awakened ones.*

*And if there were alteration [of the body], that this awakened meditator who has confident understanding about the virtue of the awakened ones could be reborn in the plane of the fallen, the plane of wild animals, the plane of the ancestors; This cannot stand.*



*To those you have compassion for,  
To those you think could listen and understand--*

*Seekers, to your friends and family,  
acquaintances and relatives,*

*They should be encouraged, explained and helped  
in [acquiring] the four qualities of stream-entry<sup>191</sup>*



*[Awakening is a gradual process, a gradual training.  
Training in wisdom and discernment, to know the  
obstacles to happiness and peace and to cultivate liberated  
states of mind.]*



*"To those for who you have compassion,*

*To those you think would listen and understand--  
Bhikkhus, to your friends and family,  
Acquaintances and relatives,*

---

<sup>191</sup> SN V 55.17 *Dutiyaṃittāmacca Sutta - Second Discourse on Friends and Relatives – Stream-Entry*

*They should be encouraged, explained and helped to directly understand existence by way of the four awakened understandings.*

*What four?*

- (1) The awakened understanding of Unwholesomeness;*
- (2) The awakened understanding of the increase of unwholesomeness;*
- (3) The awakened understanding of the release from unwholesomeness;*
- (4) The awakened understanding of the practice leading to the release from unwholesomeness.*

*To those for who you have compassion for,  
To those you think would listen and understand--  
Seekers, to your friends and family,  
Acquaintances and relatives,*

*They should be encouraged, explained and helped to directly understand existence by way of the four awakened understandings.*

*Seekers,  
One should continually discern:  
'This is unwholesome'*

*One should continually discern:*

*'This is the increase of unwholesomeness'*

*One should continually discern:  
'This is the release from unwholesomeness'*

*One should continually discern:  
'This is the practice leading to the release from  
unwholesomeness'<sup>192</sup>*



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<sup>192</sup> SN V 56.26 Mitta Sutta - To Your Friends

## KING AJĀTASATTU

*Even though the King Ajātasattu was a rude and murderous individual with base ethical standards, he had enough wit and mental clarity to speak respectfully to the monks and to the Buddha.*

*His respect gained him this wonderful talk on the Dhamma from the Buddha himself,<sup>193</sup> who taught him the Dhamma out of compassion for the king's mental affliction. Previously, King Ajātasattu had deprived his father, the King Bimbisāra, of his life for the sake of the throne. Fully knowing that his father was a highly respected and virtuous man, who loved his son deeply.*

*The King Ajātasattu only learned how much his father loved him after ordering his murder, completely blinded by hatred and selfishness. The weight of his actions on his conscience must have been terrible to withstand.*

*In the complete version of this sutta, the Buddha first answers King Ajātasattu's fairly arrogant question which politely means: "What's the point of this fruitless spiritual life?"*

*Skillfully returning to him, his extreme kingly indulgence in luxury, gained from the fruit of his kingdom's workers and honest people, to which the King's initial arrogance receives a very wholesome reflection. Though patient persistence and maintained composure from the King wins him this discourse.*

---

<sup>193</sup> DN 2 Sāmaññaphala Sutta

*The Buddha explains, in the full version of this sutta, that the King's mental affliction, due to remorse, is the reason why the King did not awake to the Dhamma and entered the stream, right there, after being told such a profound discourse on the Path.*

*The mental pain was too overwhelming for him to see with clarity, the Goodness of the Dhamma.*

# THE TRUTH

*The truth is,  
Underneath all unwholesome mental states  
There is discomfort, there is tension.*

*People hurt in all sorts of ways.  
Some of us know how to run away.  
Some of us know how to bury.  
Some of us know how to ignore.  
Some of us know how to divert.*

*And whether we are aware of it... or not,  
These mental qualities are what we share with the people  
around us,*

*We never keep our mental states just to ourselves,  
We spread them around, knowingly or unknowingly.*

*When offended, we reply with offenses,  
When attacked, we attack others personally,  
We react and we retaliate,  
most of the time unconsciously,  
on a gross apparent level or on a subtle one.*

*An eye for an eye,  
A tooth for a tooth...*

*And this is our legacy, this is our gift,  
To all living beings and to future generations.*

*As the Buddha said, the worthiest gift,  
the highest good in this world is to develop wisdom,  
to learn to recognize unwholesome states  
and to let them go, and to develop a wholesome,  
loving and accepting mind:*



*“Mind precedes all things,  
All are governed by the mind,  
Created by the mind,*

*If, with an unwholesome mind,  
One speaks or acts,  
Trouble follows along the route,  
As the wheel dragged by the foot.*



*“Mind precedes all things,  
All are governed by the mind,  
Created by the mind,*

*If, with a wholesome mind,  
One speaks or acts,  
Happiness is bound to come along  
Like a one’s own shadow staying at one’s foot.”<sup>194</sup>*



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<sup>194</sup> *Dhp 1-2 Mind Precedes All*

*Fortunately, the Buddha's Teaching  
helps us to grow under the sun of Goodness.*

*It reveals to us, with the light of wisdom what lies inside  
so that we can learn to properly, lovingly heal ourselves.*

*To apply the soothing balm of virtue, Universal Love,  
serenity and discernment directly to our hearts.*



*"If, [when struck], you do not resonate,  
Just like a broken gong  
You are partaking of Nibbāna  
For vindictiveness is no longer in you."<sup>195</sup>*



*So we may all enjoy  
the magnificent Bliss of Liberation.<sup>196</sup>*

*The direct goal of the Buddha's Teaching.*

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<sup>195</sup> *Dhp 134 Like a Broken Gong*

<sup>196</sup> *Nibbāna*

## GLOSSARY

*Āsavā: Lit.: Outflow or inflow. Movements of the mind. Distractions. Conditioned state of longing embedded in the mind that have become patterns or habitual tendencies.*

*Akālika: Immediate. Not delayed in time. Timeless.*

*Ariya: Righteous, Noble, Virtuous, Wise. From the Ancient Indo-Ariyan culture that flourished in northern India thousands of years ago. People faithful to goodness and truth.*

*Bhikkhu: [Sk. bhikṣu, fr. bhikṣ] Lit.: Alms-eater, a mendicant, a Buddhist monk. The word monk is a borrowed term from ancient Greek and Latin etymology from “Monos” (Alone) and “Monakhos” (Solitary). It is close enough but not exactly fitting.*

*Bhikkhunī: Buddhist nun.*

*Brāhmaṇa: Brāhmin. From the priestly caste. Family oriented. They did not leave material possessions. Keepers and reciters of the vedic hymns or mantras.*

*Brahmāvihāra: The abode of Brahmā, the celestial or divine abidings. In ancient India, Brahmā, the creator God, was said to live in only four states, Love, Compassion, Joy and Calm.*

*Catta Ariya-Sacca: The Four Awakened Understandings. (Commonly translated as the four noble truths). The word*

*understanding here is closer to the true meaning and usage of the notions at play than the word truth. In a way, they are “truths” but what matters is that we understand them! Therefore, the word understanding is more relevant, especially in the practical and applied purpose of meditation practice. And the “Ariyas” are those who have entered upon any of the four stages of awakening, therefore making these, the four understandings of the awakened or the four awakened understanding, one who cultivates these understandings is assuredly walking on the path to awakening. They will pull the seekers out of the mud of ignorance, at least temporarily. One who has awakened, has done so by way of the four awakened understandings.*

*Jhāna: [Sk. Dhyāna]. Lit. “to understand”. Meditation. A level of meditation or a level of understanding or a level of insight.*

*Samādhi: Depending on the context, the meaning of samādhi may change and be adapted to fit the English vocabulary. There are no English equivalent or counterpart for this word. The word samādhi is perhaps even an invented word from the Buddha since it cannot be found in Pre-Buddhist Vedic literature. The word mainly means tranquility of mind, (Cittass’ekaggatā) mental collectedness or unity, meditation, mental harmony, mental coherence. In very practical terms, samādhi happens through Wise practice, with the abandonment of tension (Craving) the mind becomes spacious, clear, unified, composed and steady, this is the experience of samādhi. Also, mental potency.*

*Sāmaṇa: Wandering ascetic. From the root “Śram” meaning performing austerities / tapas. Jains and*

*Buddhist monks are foremost figures of śrāmaṇa. Spiritual wanderers who dedicated their lives to various spiritual activities and practices. They left all material possessions and “went forth” into “homelessness”. Often in combination with Brāhmaṇa.*

*Sambodhi: Full awakening.*

*Sandiṭṭhiko: Directly visible, here and now. One of the qualities of the Buddha’s Teaching. (Often in combination with Akāliko).*

*Sati: Awareness, presence (of mind), mindfulness. Lit.: Memory. This faculty of awareness is not so different than the faculty of memory. That is why, by cultivating awareness through meditation, meditators will “remember” things they thought was long forgotten. With the abandoning of mental tension (Clinging), the mind opens up and becomes more aware and remembers things very clearly.*

*Sutta: Lit.: Thread Fig.: Discourse. The Buddha’s original discourses.*

*Tathāgata: Epithet of the Buddha. The Buddha most often speaks of himself in the third person. He usually uses the word “Tathāgata” when speaking of himself. “The one who has arrived to Truth.”*

*Upasakas and upasikas: Lay practitioner of the Buddha’s Teaching.*

*Uposatha: Observance day of the full moon, new moon, and quarter moons. Time where Dhamma practitioners*

*make a special effort, for one day and night, to devote their time to meditation and taking the five or eight virtues with resolution.*

*Yoniso Manasikhāra: Wise attention, Careful attention. Attending on the mind with the four Awakened Understandings.*

## REFERENCES

*[The purpose of this brief introductory book is not to elaborate on certain points of controversies between the Early Teaching of The Buddha as it is in the original discourses (Suttas) and the manifold differences in modern meditation techniques that have evolved through time and taken shape from later commentarial and individual opinions and works. For further reference, consult the book "Natural Samādhi". All references are are rooted in the direct discourses of the Buddha.]*

## SUTTA REFERENCES

*Instructions on Cultivating awareness with the Breath:*

DN 22 *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta*,  
MN10 *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*,  
MN 118 *Ānāpānasati Sutta*,  
MN 119 *Kayāgatasati Sutta* and  
SN 54 *Ānāpāna Saṃyutta*.

*Alternative versions of the whole path with the  
Brahmāvihāras and the Jhānas:*

### **DN 13 Tevijja Sutta**

*(The Buddha Teaches the Brahmaviharas after the four  
jhānas).*

### **MN 40 Cūḷa-Assapura Sutta**

*(The Buddha teaches the Brahmaviharas on their own)*

### **DN 2 Sāmaññaphala Sutta**

*(The Buddha teaches the four jhānas on their own)*

### **DN 9 Poṭṭhapāda Sutta**

*(The Buddha teaches the jhānas on their own and the  
mental planes up to Nirodha.)*

*This is depending on the mental inclinations and  
dispositions of his listeners.*

*References for Dhamma Samādhi or Natural  
Collectedness: (The Samādhi born of Happiness)*

*“Realizing the five hindrances have been abandoned,  
Gladness arises;  
From that gladness, bliss arises in the mind;  
With a blissful mind, the body becomes calm;  
With a calm body, one experiences happiness;  
With a happy mind comes Samādhi.”*

*DN 2 – Sāmaññaphala Sutta*

*DN 3 – Ambaṭṭha Sutta*

*DN 4 – Soṇadaṇḍanta Sutta*

*DN 5 – Kūṭadanta Sutta*

*DN 6 – Mahāli Sutta*

*DN 7 – Jāliya Sutta*

*DN 8 – Maha Sīhanāda*

*DN 9 – Poṭṭhapāda Sutta*

*DN 10 – Subha Sutta*

*DN 11 – Kevaḍḍha Sutta*

*DN 12 – Lohicca Sutta*

*DN 13 – Tevijja Sutta*

*MN 7 Vaṭṭhūpama Sutta*

*SN IV 42.13 Pāṭaliya Sutta*

*AN III 70 Uposatha*

*AN V 26 Liberation*

*AN VI 10 Mahānāma Sutta*

*AN XI 2 Cetanākaraṇīya Sutta – Making a Wish*

*Vinaya*

*Mv VIII, 15.5-15.14 - Visākha’s boon*

# ABBREVIATIONS

**DN: *Dīgha Nikāya***

*Collection of Long Discourses*

**MN: *Majjhima Nikāya***

*Collection of Medium Discourses*

**SN: *Samyutta Nikāya***

*Collection of Discourses by Themes*

**AN: *Aṅguttara Nikāya***

*Collection of Discourses by Numbers*

**Dhp: *Dhammapāda***

*Verses on the Dhamma*

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*Monks owe their lives to Generosity.  
Monks owe their lives to Goodness.  
Monks owe their lives to the Dhamma.*

*Therefore, this is a collective work in skillful deeds. May all merits generated from this book naturally flow to those who have supported its coming into being. Whether by food, shelter, clothing or medicine or by any other means.*

*Those who support the Dhamma,  
Are in turn supported by the Dhamma.*

*Adding that this merit is shared with all living beings.  
Especially those who are in dire need of merit.*

*I pay my deepest respects, anumodanā and gratitude, with folded hands at the feet of my Teacher, the Awakened One, the unsurpassable Teacher of people who seek happiness, the Buddha. All credit for any of this work goes to him.*

*My deepest respects and gratitude to my upajjhāya, Bhanteji Buddhadatta at the Mahabodhi Society for his wise and beautiful friendship and mettā. A kindness and friendship worthy of the Ariyas. These respects are extended to Badabhante Buddharakkhita and all of the venerable monks at the Mahabodhi Society.*

*My deepest respects and gratitude to all of my teachers, from the beginning of my path until now.*

*Particular mention of Most Venerable Bhante Vimalaramsi Mahathera, who helped me understand the original teaching of the Buddha.*

*Homage to the entire bhikkhu saṅgha, and to the four pillars of the sāsanā; Monks, nuns, male lay practitioners and female lay practitioners.*

*To my very devoted kappiyas Koen, Marty and Grant who are actively working at making this world a better place. To all generous and wise donors and supporters. To my family and wise friends on the path.*

*Sabba satta bhavantu sukhitatta  
May all beings be happy at heart*

*Msit No'Kmaq  
All my relations*

*Ānanda  
May 2020  
Kootenays*

