

# Practical Insight Meditation



Venerable  
Chanmyay Sayadaw



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Printed by:  
Swel Taw Color Offset Printing  
No. 115, 51st Street (Middle), No. 1 Block  
Pazundaung Township,  
Yangon  
Manymar  
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# The Four Noble Truths

## Preface

Late Sunday afternoon July 11, 2004 in Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA, was immersed in balmy summer weather. It was on this fine New England evening that the Venerable Chanmyay Sayadaw from Burma (Myanmar) delivered his Dhamma talk on the Four Noble Truths. In spite of outside temptation, the Meditation Hall at Cambridge Insight Meditation Centre (CIMC) was full to capacity. The audience was treated to an insightful and eloquent discourse on the Buddha's first sermon.

The Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta, in which Buddha expounds the Four Noble Truths, is perhaps one of the most elegant treatises on the human condition ever put forward. Within its clear and simple structure four irrefutable Truths are posited. It contains a concise statement of the quandary faced by humanity and all sentient beings for that matter. The reason(s) and cause(s) for this condition are outlined unambiguously. The solution or path through life's turmoil is clearly laid out. And finally, the sublime result and benefits of following this path are explained simply and understandably. Few, if any, expositions on the subject of human frailty could withstand the close, rational, intuitive and experiential scrutiny over time as this Sutta has.

Chanmyay Sayadaw combines a doctoral level grasp of Buddhist scriptures with an unmistakable experiential understanding of what he teaches. He has a gift for making the teachings of

the Buddha easy to understand, useful and vibrantly alive. This rare talent was in full bloom throughout his talk.

Sayadaw discusses the practicality offered by the Buddha in his first and foundational sermon to those seeking liberation. One of the fine nuances of this Sutta is the dual nature of its message. It can be read both as an ethical blueprint for a respectful and honourable lay life as well as a clear road map for those meditators seeking the freedom of Nibbāna. The former must ultimately serve as a foundation for the latter to occur.

In consideration of the roomful of practitioners, Sayadaw tailored his talk to elucidate on why the Buddha delivered the Sutta in the first place. That is, as guidance for the meditative path leading to the supermundane yet attainable wisdom of the Third Noble Truth (*nirodha sacca*).

Sayadaw explains how in sequence the Noble Truths must be realised, abandoned, experienced or developed in the context of *vipassanā* meditation practise. It becomes apparent throughout the discussion that Sayadaw is not talking about some “pie in the sky” faith based transformation. Clearly he is revealing a practical, methodical, step wise progression of ever deepening wisdom and insight leading to liberation.

This is probably the most appealing and heartening aspect of the Buddha’s teaching.

Freedom and relief from the incessant burdens of life is a real possibility. These are the very burdens that we all, at some stage in our existence unfortunately come to believe are inescapable.

Sayadaw’s words cannot help but inspire any listener or reader regardless of his or her level of understanding or practise. There is a real path. With diligent effort it will yield ever-increasing benefits almost immediately.

*May all of you enjoy the sublime benefits and fruit of the teaching of the Buddha in this very Sasana.*

**The Venerable Ashin Vamsarakkhita  
(Student and Disciple).**

# Vipassanā Meditation and the Four Noble Truths

## *Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammasambuddhassa*

We are very glad to meet all of you who take interest in *vipassanā* meditation. This meditation is based on the Four Noble Truths, which the Buddha teaches in his first sermon, the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta, the “Discourse of the Wheel of the Dhamma”. All the teachings of the Buddha are based on the Four Noble Truths. So *vipassanā* meditation, insight meditation or mindfulness meditation is also based on the Four Noble Truths.

The Four Noble Truths, as you know, are:

*dukkhasacca*—The Truth of Suffering

*samudayasacca*—The Truth of the Cause of Suffering

*nirodhasacca*—The Truth of the Cessation of Suffering

*maggasacca*—The Truth of the Way leading to the Cessation of Suffering

I believe you have a good knowledge of these Four Noble Truths.

In his first discourse, the Buddha mentions *dukkhasacca*, the Truth of Suffering, as *parinneya*, the truth that must be thoroughly realised; *samudayasacca*, the Truth of the Cause of Suffering, as *pahatabba*, the truth that must be completely abandoned; *nirodhasacca*, the Truth of the Cessation of Suffering as *sacchikatabba*, the truth that must be experienced; *maggasacca*, the Truth of the Way leading to the Cessation of Suffering, as *bhavetabba*, the truth that must be fully developed.

The Truth of Suffering refers to mental and physical phenomena, *nāma* and *rūpa* in Pāli. The Truth of the Cause of Suffering refers to attachment, *taṇha* in Pāli. The Truth of the Cessation of Suffering refers to Nibbāna. The Truth of the Way Leading to the Cessation of Suffering refers to the Noble Eightfold Path.

## Dukkhasacca: The Truth of Suffering

*Dukkhasacca* is *nāma* and *rūpa*, mental and physical phenomena. Both *nāma* and *rūpa* arise dependent on their conditions and, therefore, are called conditioned mentality and conditioned physicality. For example, take the consciousness of seeing; when you see anything that is visible, consciousness of seeing is present. It arises dependent on four conditions: the eyes, a visible thing, light and attention (*manisikara* in Pāli). These four conditions cause the consciousness of seeing to arise.

All of these conditions must be present for any seeing to arise. Although you have eyes, and the eye comes in contact with a visible thing—if there is no light, you can not see. The consciousness of seeing won't arise. If you have eyes, eye contact, a visible thing, and light, but no attention to the object or visible thing, you simply won't see it. The consciousness of seeing will only arise when there is attention.

Because the consciousness of seeing has four conditions, it is known as conditioned. In Pāli, anything conditioned is called *saṅkhata*. Any consciousness is conditioned, as are all other mental and physical phenomena. They arise dependent on their conditions.

But, the Cessation of Suffering, Nibbāna, is not conditioned because it does not arise nor depend on any condition. So there are no conditions or causes for the Cessation of Suffering, Nibbāna. It is unconditioned. That which is unconditioned is called *asaṅkhata*, while the conditioned is called *saṅkhata*.

In our example, the consciousness of seeing arises dependent on the eye, a visible thing, light and attention. It arises, and then it passes away. Why does it pass away? Because it arises. All conditioned things—*saṅkhata*—have the nature of arising and passing away and therefore have the characteristic of impermanence (*aniccā*).

Whereas, the cessation of suffering, Nibbāna, is unconditioned, it always exists. Because it does not arise, it does not

pass away. So, the cessation of suffering, Nibbāna, is not impermanent. Because it is unconditioned, and does not arise dependent on any conditions, there are no conditioned causes. So, this cessation of suffering, Nibbāna, is known as *akarana*. “*Karana*” means condition, “a-” is a negation, so *akarana* means “unconditioned”

When you can extinguish all mental and physical phenomena which are conditioned, the cessation of suffering is experienced. The cessation of suffering stands on its own. It is there already. It doesn’t arise, so it doesn’t pass away, it is permanent. It is called both *akarana* and *asaṅkhata*, as it has no conditions.

The Lord Buddha said in his first sermon, that *dukkhasacca* (i.e. mental and physical phenomena) is *parinneya*. It is the truth that must be thoroughly realised. All mental phenomena and physical phenomena arise and then pass away. They are impermanent. What is impermanent is suffering, *dukkha*. That is why the Buddha said that both *nāma* and *rūpa*, mental and physical phenomena are suffering, the Truth of Suffering. This must he fully understood and realised

### Three Kinds of Dukkha

Here we should mention very briefly the three general kinds of *dukkha*, suffering, according to the Buddhist Abhidhamma.

The first is *dukkha dukkha*.

The second is *viparinama dukkha*.

The third is *saṅkhāra dukkha*.

*Dukkha dukkha* is a very common suffering. A few examples would be such things as pain, stiffness, itching, numbness, any illness or physical suffering. Others might be unhappiness, sadness, sorrow, worry or any other mental suffering. These states of suffering are very conspicuous and common to all living beings. So they are called *dukkha dukkha*. Suffering of suffering.

The second type is *viparinama dukkha*, the suffering of change. The Buddha regards so-called happiness as *viparinama dukkha* because it doesn't last very long. It arises and then passes away changing into unhappiness and suffering. Due to this nature of changing into suffering, the Buddha said happiness is *viparinama dukkha*. This change can occur suddenly or slowly.

Finally, there is *saṅkhāra dukkha*. *Saṅkhāra* in this case has the same meaning or sense as *saṅkhata*. That is, something that arises due to a condition or cause. So, all mental and physical phenomena are *sankhata* and *saṅkhāra*. They are the effects of their causes, their conditions. They arise and very instantly pass away and so are unsatisfactory. Why do they pass away? Again it is because they arise, that they are subject to passing away. This suffering of incessant arising and passing away, *saṅkhāra dukkha* is common to everything that is conditioned.

Thus *nāma* and *rūpa*, mental and physical phenomena, which are conditioned things, are *dukkhasacca*. This Truth of Suffering must be thoroughly realised by a meditator who wants to get rid of suffering.

The other two kinds of suffering—*dukkha dukkha* and *viparinama dukkha*—can be experienced and readily understood by us in daily life even without the practise of meditation. Yet, unless we practise *vipassanā* meditation, insight meditation, we are unable to thoroughly realise *saṅkhāra dukkha*, the suffering of arising and passing away. *Saṅkhāra dukkha* is very profound, too deep to be realised through theoretical knowledge or analysis. Only with practical, experiential knowledge of the Dhamma, acquired by *vipassanā* meditation, are we able to realise it as the suffering of arising and passing away. As the Buddha said “A person who wishes to attain the cessation of suffering, Nibbāna, must rightly understand and realise the true nature of mental and physical phenomena (*nāma* and *rūpa*)”.

This is why we practise insight meditation. The primary purpose of *vipassanā* meditation is to realise the impermanence or the arising and passing away of mental and physical phenomena,

*saṅkhāra dukkha*. When we are unable to realise this, we mistakenly take these phenomena to be permanent. Based on this belief in the permanence of mind and body, we foster the idea of an “I” or a “you”, a person or being, a self or a soul. Because we do not thoroughly realise the true nature of the arising and passing away of mental and physical phenomena, we take them to be a person, a being, a self or a soul, and so on.

When we cling to the idea of a person, a being, based on the ignorance of the true nature of the body-mind process, we then develop desire or a wanting to get something. We may want to be a Prime Minister, a President, or a wealthy person. This desire arises dependent on the idea that there is a person, a self or a soul. This desire or greed causes many kinds of suffering. When one has a desire to be President, one has to strive for it in so many different ways. Then there is suffering. When one does become President, there is more suffering. There are so very many more things one must now deal with.

## **Samudayasacca: The Truth of the Cause of Suffering**

In this way, that desire and greed to be President is the cause of suffering. Similarly when one has other desires—to have a good house, a good car, or good looks—one has to work to acquire them in so many different ways, both wholesome and unwholesome. Again, there is suffering. Plainly, desire, attachment and greed are the causes of suffering. They are called *samuduyasacca* in Pāli, the Truth of the Cause of Suffering.

This *samudayasacca* arises dependent on ignorance of *dukkhasacca*, the true nature of *nāma* and *rūpa*. When one is unable to thoroughly realise the true nature of mental and physical phenomena, *dukkhasacca*, one is sure to have many negative mental states (*kilesas*). Some examples are desire, attachment, craving, greed, anger, hatred, conceit and so on. Accord-

ing to the Buddha, when one has *taṇha* in the mind, suffering will surely follow. The word *taṇha* in Pāli is conveyed in English by such terms as greed, desire, craving, attachment, grasping, clinging, and so on.

*Taṇha* is *samudayasacca*, the Truth of the Cause of Suffering. It arises dependent on ignorance of *dukkhasacca*, mental and physical phenomena. If one rightly understands the true nature of *dukkhasacca*, one is able to remove the idea of a person, a being, a self or a soul. So in losing this idea of a personal entity, desire, greed, craving or any of the other *kilesas* do not arise. One has abandoned *samudayasacca*. Then suffering is gone; it has ceased to exist.

In experiencing the cessation of suffering, one then understands directly *Nirodhasacca*, Nibbāna. To experience the cessation of suffering, *samudayasacca* i.e. *taṇha*, attachment or desire needs to be uprooted and eliminated. By uprooting *taṇha*—the cause, suffering—the effect, won't arise at all. When there is no cause, there is no effect. One will then experientially understand the cessation of suffering, *Nirodhasacca*, the truth that must be experienced.

As The Buddha said in his first discourse, *samudayasacca* is *pahatabba*. It is the truth that must be completely removed or abandoned. In completely removing *taṇha*, one is able to experience the cessation of suffering because its cause has been completely destroyed. Therefore no result or effect will arise at all.

## **Nirodhasacca: The Truth of the Cessation of Suffering**

The Buddha mentions Nibbāna, *nirodhasacca* as *sacchikulabba*. This term means The Truth of the Cessation of Suffering, which must be experienced. When this happens, one leads a happy and peaceful life. To experience the cessation of suffering, Nibbāna, *nirodhasacca*, one needs to completely uproot *taṇha*,

*samudayasacca*. To accomplish this, one needs to rightly understand and thoroughly realise *dukkhasacca*, the Truth of Suffering of mental and physical phenomena.

Then, how can one do this? To rightly understand mental and physical phenomena they need to be observed and seen as they really occur. Only when realizing these dual processes as they really are will their true nature and right understanding be realised. Awareness and mindfulness of whatever arises in the body and mind are essential.

If one is able to develop this awareness, gradually the mindfulness becomes continuous, constant, sharp and powerful. This then causes the mind to deeply concentrate on all mental states or physical process as they arise. Constant and continuously powerful mindfulness is the cause of deep concentration. When the mind is deeply concentrated on all that is observed, insight knowledge (*vipassanā ñāna*) will arise. This *ñāna* realises and rightly understands the true nature of the observed mental states and physical processes.

When that insight realises the true nature of mental and physical phenomena, attachment to them is lost. Desire or greed for them does not arise. *Taṇha* is uprooted by rightly understanding this true nature. One will then experience the cessation of suffering because the cause has been destroyed.

That's why mindfulness of whatever arises in our body and mind as it really occurs is important. This is in accordance with the Discourse of the Mahasatipattana Sutta, the Four Foundations of Mindfulness as expounded by the Buddha. By observing and being aware of all mental states and physical processes, the mindfulness of *maggasacca*, the Truth of the Way Leading to the Cessation of Suffering arises. Because of this mindfulness the Noble Eightfold Path becomes well developed.

## Maggasacca: The Truth of the Way Leading to the Cessation of Suffering

As you know, *maggasacca* is none other than the Noble Eightfold Path which consists of eight factors. These are:

*samma ditṭhi*—right understanding  
*samma sankhappa*—right thought  
*samma vaca*—right speech  
*samma kammanta*—right deed  
*samma ajiva*—right livelihood  
*samma vayama*—right effort  
*samma sati*—right mindfulness  
*samma samadhi*—right concentration

All these eight factors of the path combined are called *maggasacca*, the Truth of the Way Leading to the Cessation of Suffering. It must be fully developed (*bhavatabba*).

So, you must be mindful of whatever arises in your body and mind. When that mindfulness becomes constant, continuous and sustained, it is concentrated deeply on the object. But to achieve this mindfulness, effort must be made. Only by putting forth strong mental effort, is one able to gain awareness of whatever arises in the mind and body. That necessary effort is right effort (*samma vāyama*). Being continuously mindful is *samma sati*. Because of this powerful and constant mindfulness, right concentration (*samma samādhi*) develops. As you can see, these three factors are causally linked. Right effort leads to right mindfulness, which, in turn, causes right concentration to arise.

But sometimes, the mind doesn't stay with the object—either a mental state or physical process. It may wander or think about something else. Then one of the mental factors, *samma sankhappa* (right thought), arises together with mindfulness to keep the mind on the object. In this way, the mind is brought to a deeper concentration on any object it observes.

There are three other factors of the path that enhance and help the above mentioned mental factors to properly perform their functions. They are: *samma vāca*, *samma kammantā* and *samma ājīva* (right speech, right deed and right livelihood). Before starting meditation one has to observe precepts. One observes the five, eight, nine or ten precepts, or the 227 rules of the *vinaya* for monks. By observing these precepts, one refrains from unwholesome speech, unwholesome deeds and improper livelihood. In this way, by fully observing the precepts, one is endowed with the three factors of morality, *silā*.

Because morality is purified, the mind is clear, free of all mental hindrances. One can develop deep concentration and feel happy. Rapture and tranquillity are experienced. With this state of mind, concentration on any object of meditation comes easily and deeply. So these three factors of *silā*—right speech, right deed, right livelihood—help the mind to focus and to concentrate deeply on the objects at hand. They form an important foundation from which right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration arise.

## **Vipassanā Ñāna: Dukkha, Aniccā & Anattā Revealed**

In this way, the observing mind becomes more and more deeply concentrated on mental states or physical processes. Then right understanding arises—*samma ditthi*. We call this *vipassanā ñāna*—insight knowledge. This insight penetrates into and reveals the true nature of mental and physical phenomena—*dukkhasacca*. This true nature is the impermanent, unsatisfactory and impersonal nature of all phenomena. These three characteristics, *aniccā*—impermanence, *dukkhā*—suffering or dissatisfaction, and *anattā*—no soul, no self, no person, no being, are understood directly and experientially by an insight meditator.

When the mind is deeply concentrated on any object of physicality or mentality, then many stages of *vipassanā ñāna* (insight knowledge) arise. This progressive realization is the process by which right understanding of the true nature of phenomena matures.

Then the meditator realises: “This is just a natural process of mentality and physicality. It is not a person, a soul, a self nor a being”. The meditator uproots the idea of a person, a being, a self or a soul, which is the cause of all mental defilements (*kilesas*). When he or she has completely removed the idea of a person, a being, a self or a soul (*sakaya diṭṭhi* or *atta diṭṭhi*), then suffering won’t arise at all and will cease to exist.

We cultivate and develop the Noble Eightfold Path, *maggāsacca*, by being mindful of all mental states and physical processes as they really occur. Mindfulness is the key. Because of it, we are able to fully develop this Noble Eightfold Path. We come to realise and rightly understand *dukkhasacca*, the Truth of Suffering. We are able to remove the attachment (*taṇha*) to *samudayasacca*, the Truth of the Cause of Suffering.

## Summary

As I said earlier, every teaching of the Buddha is based on the Four Noble Truths. The path to freedom is found in these Four Noble Truths. The development by meditators of *maggāsacca*, insight meditation, will lead to the thorough realization of *dukkhasacca*, the Truth of Suffering. This realization will in turn bring one to abandon *samudayasacca*, the Truth of the Cause of Suffering. When there is no *samudayasacca*, no cause, there is no effect, suffering. Suffering ceases to exist. We then discover and directly experience the cessation of suffering, *nirodhasacca*, Nibbāna, for ourselves. This is how meditators have to understand and apply the Four Noble Truths to their *vipassanā* meditation practise.

May all of you be able to rightly understand how you can attain and experience the cessation of suffering. May you strive with your best effort to do that noble work: the noble task of insight meditation which leads you to achieve your goal of Nibbāna.

**Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!**

C.I.M.C., July 11, 2004



# Development of Insight

## Preface

This Dhamma book on the Development of Insight consists of excerpts of different Dhamma talks given by the Venerable Chanmyay Sayadaw during *vipassanā* retreats in Australia and Thailand.

A Thai yogi, Montatip Khunwattana, took the excerpts from the talks and compiled them into book form for the benefit of those who are interested in *vipassanā* meditation.

The development of insight in accordance with the Mahasatipatthana Sutta is the only way for purification of a meditator and leads him to the cessation of suffering, Nibbāna.

## Purification of Sila

When a meditator is about to develop the insight to attain Nibbāna, first of all he needs to purify his morality (*sila*) which is the basic requirement for a meditator. To purify his morality he must fully observe some precepts, such as the five precepts.

## Purification of Mind

He should start to practise his meditation based on purification of morality, *sila-visuddhi*. It is very conducive to attain deep concentration in meditation when the morality is purified. When the mind is deeply concentrated on the object of meditation, it will be free from hindrances and defilements.

When the meditator attains purification of mind, *cittā-visuddhi*, there arises insight that realises the true nature of *nāma* and *rūpa*, mental and physical phenomena.

## Namarupa-Pariccheda-Ñāna Discerning Mental and Physical Phenomena

When a meditator realises the specific characteristics of body and mind (mental and physical phenomena), it means that he realises *nāma* and *rūpa*. If he experiences hardness and softness of the body without being conscious of the bodily form, then he realises the specific characteristics of the earth element (*pathavi-dhatu*). This is the insight knowledge of discerning mental and physical phenomena. Then he does not identify hardness or softness with a person, a being, a self or a soul. He removes the idea of a person, a being, a self or a soul regarding this hardness or softness. Thus he purifies his wrong view because he does not take hardness or softness to be a soul or a self, a person or a being but just a natural process of physical phenomena. So he has

no wrong view of a person, a being, a self or a soul: *sakaya-diṭṭhi* or *atta-diṭṭhi*.

The realisation of *nāma* and *rūpa* (mental and physical phenomena) in their true nature purifies the view; the meditator then attains purification of view, *diṭṭhi-visuddhi*.

In daily activities, too, when he mindfully observes the stretching or bending of a hand or a leg, putting down a hand or a leg, or sitting down or getting up from the seat, there are many actions and movements involved in these activities. If he is able to observe these actions and movements attentively and precisely, then he realises that these are the movements of a stretching process. Then he realises his noting mind just as a mental process. In this way he differentiates between the process of the movement and the mind that notes it. This is also the insight knowledge of *nāma* and *rūpa*.

When he distinguishes between stretching movements and the noting mind, more and more clearly, more and more deeply, he then realises that these are just movements and the mind that notes them and that apart from these dual processes of mental and physical phenomena there is no person, no being, no soul or no self. In this way, he removes the wrong view of a person, a being, a self or a soul, regarding these movements of the body.

Because he experiences natural processes of the stretching movement and the mind that notes it, he does not identify either stretching movement or the noting mind with a person, a being, a self or a soul. So, he has no wrong view of a person, a being, a self or a soul. He removes *sakaya-diṭṭhi* and *atta-diṭṭhi* (the wrong view of a person, a being and the wrong view of a self or a soul). Hence he has purified his view (*diṭṭhi*). He has no wrong view, so it is called *diṭṭhi-visuddhi*, purification of view.

Sometimes he experiences the process of the rising movement and the mind that notes it. He realises only these dual processes of mental and physical phenomena. Apart from this pair of subject and object—the noting mind and the physical object—he does not see anything that is an everlasting so called soul or

self. Hence he also removes the idea of a wrong view of a person, a being, a self or a soul. This is also the purification of view—*ditṭhi-visuddhi*.

*(From a Dhamma Talk at Dhammodaya, Nakorn Pathom, Thailand,  
on March 10, 2005.)*

## **Paccaya-Pariggaha-Ñāna** **Knowledge of Conditionality**

The second stage of insight, *paccaya-pariggaha-ñāna*, means the insight knowledge of cause and effect. In other words, it is the insight knowledge of causality or insight knowledge of conditionality. When a meditator strives his best and attains deeper and deeper concentration, he realises the cause and effect of *nāma* and *rūpa* (mental and physical phenomena). He is called a person who has attained *paccaya-pariggaha-ñāna*—the insight knowledge of causality or insight knowledge of conditionality.

*(From a Dhamma Talk at Dhammodaya, Nakorn Pathom, Thailand,  
on March 10, 2005.)*

It is in this stage that you realise that the whole world arises dependent on its conditions. This stage is called *kankhavitarana-visuddhi*, purification of insight by overcoming doubt because you have thoroughly realised cause and effect of mental and physical phenomena through your personal experience and overcome the doubt and realised the absence of an everlasting soul or self.

*(From a Dhamma Talk at Blue Mountains, Sydney, Australia,  
on September 30, 1992.)*

In sitting meditation, a meditator observes the rising movement and the falling movement of the abdomen, making mental notes “rising ... falling ... rising ... falling”, perceiving actual movements of the rising process and the falling process.

When the abdomen rises, he notes “rising”, he is aware of the rising movement. When the abdomen falls, he notes “falling” and is aware of the falling movement. When concentration is deep enough, he realises that because there is a rising movement, there arises the mind that notes it and because there is a falling movement, there arises the mind that notes it. In this way he realises that the rising movement—the object—is the cause and the noting mind—the subject—is the effect. In this way he perceives cause and effect. He realises that the movement is the cause and the mind that notes it, is the effect.

While he is contemplating on the rising and falling movements, occasionally his breath becomes weaker and weaker and gradually fades away. He cannot feel them. Then he gets puzzled, thinking: “There are no rising and falling movements. What should I do, what shall I observe?” But he realises that, because there is no rising and falling movement, there is no mind that notes them. Here also, he experiences cause and effect—the absence of the object is the cause, and the absence of the noting mind is the effect.

When the rising and falling movements do not appear, the meditator may think there is nothing to observe. He could not observe anything, he does not notice anything, because he thinks there is no object to observe. This is also the realisation of cause and effect, but not very clearly. Then, the meditation teacher instructs him: “If you do not find the rising and falling, you have the sitting posture and touching points to note as an alternative”. Then, whenever a meditator does not find rising-falling very well, he notes: “Sitting ... touching, touching”. He finds the objects—sitting posture and the touching points—so he notes them. The objects—sitting and touching points—are the cause, the noting mind is the effect. This is also the insight knowledge of causality.

In the same way, while he observes the rising and falling movements, sometimes there arises a thought about something. When he realises that there is a thought he notes: “Thinking ...

thinking ... thinking”. The thinking process is the object, the mind that notes it, is the subject. Then he notes thinking attentively and energetically. Suddenly the thinking stops. Then the meditator does not find any object to note and he gets puzzled about what to do. According to the principle of *vipassanā* meditation, if there is no thought to note, the meditator must observe the rising and falling movements of the abdomen as the primary object. Then he notes: “Rising ... falling”. He realises that the thinking process is the cause and the mind that notes it is the effect. When there is no thinking process, there is also no noting mind. Here also, he realises the cause and the effect.

When he practises walking meditation, noticing “intention ... lifting ... pushing ... dropping ... touching ... pressing”, and his concentration is deep enough, he very clearly knows the intention and the lifting of the foot. Then he feels that the foot is lifted by itself. In this way, repeatedly he experiences this nature—whenever he notes an intention, the foot is lifted by itself. In the beginning he feels surprised by his own experience because he has never experienced it before. But later on, when he experiences it repeatedly, he realises that an intention is the cause and the lifting of the foot is the effect. Without an intention, there is no lifting movement. Without an intention, there is no pushing movement. Without an intention, there is no dropping movement.

Because of an intention, the lifting movement arises. In this way, gradually he realises that an intention is the cause and the lifting movement, the pushing movement and the like are the effects. The more he experiences this, the clearer he understands cause and effect.

Sometimes a meditator may feel his body is like a robot while walking. Sometimes he feels his body is like a puppet. He experiences that there is no person, no being, or no “me” who is walking. But it is intention that causes the movements of the feet and so the body is pushed forward. Initially he does not know that

there is intention. That is why he initially feels that his body is like a robot or a puppet.

When his noting mind is more and more deeply concentrated on each movement of the feet, then it is very clear to him that it is intention that causes the movement of the feet and that intention is the cause and the movement is the effect. In this way, he realises cause and effect, conditionality of *nāma* and *rūpa* (mental and physical phenomena). In the same way, he gradually realises that intention is the cause, the pushing movement is the effect, and intention is the cause, the dropping movement is the effect.

In the same way, in daily activities he notes intention, getting up, intention, sitting down, intention, stretching, intention, bending and so on, then he realises that intention is the cause, the movements are the effects. Whenever his concentration is deep enough, he realises cause and effect clearly. This is *paccaya-pariggaha-ñāna*, the insight knowledge of cause and effect or the insight knowledge of conditionality.

*(From a Dhamma Talk at Dhammodaya, Nakorn Pathom, Thailand,  
on March 10, 2005.)*

Because this meditator realises the nature of cause and effect, he believes in *Kamma* and its result. *Kamma* is the action or the cause, its result is *kammaphala*. If you do an evil action, it will produce a bad effect for you. If you do a meritorious deed, it will produce a good effect for you. In this way, he believes in cause and effect. Since he believes in cause and effect through his own personal experiences of Dhamma, he will never do any evil deed which will produce a bad effect for him. As he does not do any bad action or evil deed, he will not be reborn in the four *apaya* worlds (the four woeful states) in the next existence.

So the meditator who has attained *paccaya-pariggaha-ñāna* (who has realised cause and effect) is known as *cula-sotāpanna* and will not be reborn in the four *apaya* worlds (the four woeful states) in the next existence. The person who has attained

the first stage of enlightenment, *sotāpatti-maggā-ñāna*, will also not be reborn in *apaya* worlds in future existences. So the person who has attained *paccaya-pariggahañāna* is similar to a person who is a *sotāpanna ariyapuggala*. This is why he is called *cula-sotāpanna*.

The *sotāpanna* who has attained the first stage of enlightenment will never be reborn in the four *apaya* worlds in all future existences. But the meditator who has attained *paccaya-pariggaha-ñāna*, who is called *cula-sotāpanna*, will not be reborn in the four *apaya* worlds (the four woeful states of existence) only in his next existence. For the third existence, he is not sure if he will be reborn in the four *apaya* worlds or not.

To attain *paccaya-pariggaha-ñāna*, (the second stage of insight) is not very difficult. If a meditator puts forth enough effort in his practise and strives to have continuity of his mindfulness, his concentration will be deeper and deeper. Then he can realise cause and effect of mental and physical phenomena. When a meditator who has attained *nāmarūpa-pariccheda-ñāna*, the first stage of insight knowledge, proceeds with his practise intensively, in a short time he will be able to attain the second stage of insight knowledge, *paccaya-pariggaha-ñāna*. In this retreat also there are many meditators who have attained *paccaya-pariggaha-ñāna*, the insight knowledge of the conditionality. So, the person who has attained *paccaya-pariggaha-ñāna*, has attained *kankhavitārana visuddhi*, purification by overcoming doubt about the so-called everlasting soul or self.

As it is not difficult to attain the second stage of the insight knowledge of conditionality, please strive your best to be aware of whatever arises in your body and mind so that you have continuous mindfulness, deep concentration and clear insight into cause and effect and eventually attain the cessation of the suffering, *Nibbāna*.

(From a Dhamma Talk at Dhammodaya, Nakorn Pathom, Thailand,  
on March 10, 2005.)

## **Sammasana-Ñana**

### **Knowledge of Clear Comprehension**

When a meditator puts more effort in the practise, observing the process of the stretching movements more attentively and precisely, he realises the stretching movements as a series of tiny broken movements arising and passing away one after another. Then he realises not only specific characteristic of the wind element but also general or common characteristics of the wind element—*aniccā, dukkhā, anattā*.

If he realises these *samanna-lakkhaṇa* (common characteristics—impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and impersonal nature) of this process of movements, he attains the insight knowledge of clear comprehension, experiencing *aniccā, dukkhā* and *anattā* of mental and physical phenomena. This meditator comprehends all the three characteristics of existence.

When the meditator proceeds with his practise, gradually mindfulness becomes more powerful and more continuous and concentration becomes deeper. Then he realises the common or general characteristics of body-mind processes in this third stage of insight knowledge. In the two previous stages of insight he realised the specific or individual characteristics of the body-mind process together with its cause. In this third stage of insight knowledge, he realises the general or common characteristics of mental or physical phenomena more clearly. But in this stage he has a lot of pain; he suffers a great deal of pain, physical discomfort, such as aching, stiffening and numbness.

When pain arises he should observe it attentively. If possible, his noting-mind should get into the centre of the pain and observe it. Then the pain becomes more and more severe. Before the first pain disappears, another pain arises. Then he notices it energetically and attentively. He must deal with it with utmost energy, getting into the centre of the pain as much as possi-

ble. Before this pain has disappeared, another discomfort comes up. This stage of insight knowledge is called *sammasana-ñāna*, insight knowledge of clear comprehension. The insight knowledge that clearly comprehends all three characteristics of mental and physical phenomena.

What he knows here is suffering. When he sees the mental and physical processes more deeply and more clearly, he sees the pain as explosion or disappearing or gradually disintegrating. After the first pain has gone there is another pain or discomfort. Then he notices it, he deals with it energetically, observing it precisely. Gradually discomfort decreases and then it passes away. Sometimes it abruptly disappears; sometimes it gradually disappears; sometimes it disintegrates gradually; sometimes it is dispersing, but what he knows is that the pain has gone. It is not everlasting. It is also subject to impermanence (*aniccā*).

Then he realises the impermanence of both unpleasant physical and mental sensations. He also realises *dukkhā*, suffering in the sense of unsatisfactoriness. When we clearly see the very swift arising and passing away of the unpleasant sensation in the pain, which is very precisely and attentively observed, we realise suffering, *dukkhā*, in the sense of being constantly oppressed by arising and passing away. Then we do not have any idea of a person, a being, a self or a soul regarding the pain and we realise *anattā*. There is no everlasting self or soul, person or being. What really exists is the process of mental and physical phenomena which are arising and passing away one after another.

In this stage of insight knowledge, *sammasana-ñāna*, we have to be patient with physical discomfort such as pain, aching, stiffening and numbness. Unless we are patient with it, we do not see their inner nature, i.e. their common characteristics. When we have thoroughly realised *dukkhā* in the sense of impermanence, suffering and impersonal nature, then gradually physical discomfort decreases and subsides. We do not have any unbearable painful sensations towards the end of this third stage and

our mind becomes fresh and energetic because there is no pain at all or only little pain which is not very severe or strong. We can concentrate our mind well on each mental state or physical process which is arising at that moment.

(From a Dhamma Talk at Blue Mountains, Sydney, Australia,  
on September 30, 1992.)

When you are able to comprehend all the three characteristics of impermanence, suffering and impersonal nature of mental and physical phenomena, you attain *sammasana-ñāna*, insight knowledge of clear comprehension. At this stage of insight knowledge your mind becomes concentrated to a large extent. There are thoughts arising occasionally, but you can observe them.

Because of deep concentration you can experience many different kinds of physical discomfort, *kayika dukkhā*, such as pain, aching, stiffness, numbness and so on, but you are able to realise every object which is noticed in three parts or three phases. You are able to realise the initial, the middle and the final phase. The movement may be soft, but however soft or weak the movement may be, you are able to realise the initial, the middle and the final phase of the movement.

The same goes with pain, aching, itching and the like. So you have a lot of pain in this stage of insight, but you are able to deal with it. You can deal with it very successfully. It means that though the pain and physical discomfort may be severe, you are able to observe it. You are able to handle it and realise its initial, middle and final phase. You stay with it for some time, for some seconds or minutes. Before this first pain disappears, another physical discomfort such as stiffness or itchiness arises. Then you have to observe this other physical discomfort. Before it disappears, another pain or discomfort arises. You are realising the initial, middle and final phase of the painful sensation whenever it arises. But before you completely realise the final phase of

the painful sensation, your mind shifts to another painful sensation and observe it. Then it occurs to your mind that before one object has stopped, another object arises. In this way the noting mind changes its object from one to another and observes it. Then there are many occurrences of physical discomfort which are arising and passing away.

In this way you realise the impermanence of any mental or physical process or sensation which is noted. When you observe a series of many different painful sensations one after another, you experience suffering, *dukkhā* in the sense of being oppressed by constant arising and passing away, *dukkhā*. Sensations do not obey the individual's wish. Though the meditator wishes them not to arise, they arise. They are uncontrollable, they have an impersonal nature, *anattā*. In this way you realise a mental or physical process which you are very attentively mindful of. This insight knowledge which realises impermanence, suffering and impersonal nature of mental and physical processes is called comprehension by direct experience, *paccakkha-sammasana-ñāna* because you directly experience it.

But here *sammasana-ñāna* has also another meaning: Insight knowledge by inference. When you directly experience the arising and passing away of mental and physical phenomena which are observed, sometimes you reflect upon the actual experience and realise the impermanence, suffering and impersonal nature of the other mental and physical processes which are not observed, by inference from what you have actually experienced.

You come to understand that just as this mental or physical process which is currently observed is subject to impermanence, so are other mental and physical processes which are not currently observed subject to impermanence in the same manner. All the mental states or physical processes in the past, present and future, far or near, internal or external, coarse or smooth—all these mental states and physical processes are subject to impermanence in the same manner. This knowledge is knowledge by inference, *anumañāna* in Pāli. Sometimes we say

*naya-vipassanā*, knowledge by inference from the actual experience of mental and physical phenomena, which are presently observed.

*(From a Dhamma Talk at Blue Mountain, Sydney, Australia, on October 7, 1992.)*

*(From a Dhamma Talk at Blue Mountains, Sydney, Australia, on October 5, 1992.)*

## **Udayabbaya-Ñana**

### **Knowledge of Arising and Passing Away**

When the third insight is well developed you comprehend the three characteristics of mental and physical phenomena which are observed and not observed as well. Then, gradually, your concentration becomes deeper and deeper. So the painful sensations decrease and eventually disappear. Then you feel happy and delight in the noting of any mental state or physical process. Concentration becomes deeper and the mind becomes calmer and more serene. Then you feel a very sublime feeling of tenderness and happiness, you feel rapture and tranquillity. Your mind is not disturbed by anything, so your mindfulness is very good, sharp, agile and pliant, always ready to note any object very easily. Effort also becomes steady, neither tense nor lax, neither strong nor weak. Steady and moderate effort naturally arises, helping mindfulness to note every object very readily at the moment of its occurrence.

It is at this stage of insight knowledge that you see some light. Sometimes a brilliant light, sometimes a faint light, sometimes a light like a fluorescent light, sometimes you may see a light similar to the head light of a car and so on. But usually none of these lights last very long. It comes, you note it and it goes. But there may be some light which lasts for ten to twenty seconds or so. If you take delight in seeing these lights and are

attached to them, the light will come very often and very brilliantly. It may last for some time. You note, “seeing, seeing ...”, but it comes again and lasts for some time. You note “seeing, seeing”. Though you observe it, subconsciously you may like it, you may be even attached to it. Then the light may last long.

One of the lady meditators who was about thirty years old saw some lights. Gradually the light became brighter and brighter. She felt delighted at it. But when she was instructed to note, she noted it. When she noted it the light went away. Then very instantly it came again and she noted it. But subconsciously she was attached to it. The light lasted for about twenty days. She was disappointed with this light. She couldn’t get over it. This is called *nikanti*, very subtle attachment. It is like a desire or craving but not so strong. Very stealthily it comes into your mind. Unconsciously it is attached to the object. It is called *nikanti* and is one of the ten corruptions of insight knowledge.

In the Buddha’s time there was a monk who practised *samatha* meditation and attained deep concentration. When he had attained *jhāna* concentration he switched his practise to *vipassanā* meditation, observing bodily and mental processes. He attained the third stage of the path knowledge but after some time he felt delighted in the attainment of *jhāna* concentration and he developed *nikanti*, a very subtle attachment to *jhāna* concentration. His insight knowledge went up one after another, then again came down because of that attachment to *jhāna* concentration. Even after he had attained the lower three stages of path knowledge, again he was attached to *jhāna*, so he couldn’t attain Arahantship. The Buddha said that it was Dhamma *raga*, Dhamma *nandi*. Dhamma *raga* means attachment to Dhamma and Dhamma *nandi* means delight in the Dhamma that is *jhāna* concentration. In this case both Dhamma *raga* and Dhamma *nandi* are *nikanti*. That monk himself did not know it. Only the Buddha knew it and explained to Venerable Ananda that this monk was unable to attain Arahantship.

When you have passed over the third stage of insight knowledge of clear comprehension, you get into very “bad” good experience in the early part of the fourth stage of insight knowledge of arising and passing away of mental and physical phenomena, *udayabhaya-ñāna*. Because you have passed through a very difficult stage - the painful stage - gradually the mind becomes clear, concentrated, light, happy and rapturous. There are many good experiences in this stage. Because your concentration is very good, you feel tranquil and calm. The mind is very agile, pliant and subtle. The whole body is suffused with a very tender feeling of rapture and happiness. Then the meditator becomes attached to it. He feels delight in these “bad” good experiences. These are called *vipassanupakkilesa*, the corruptions of insight.

*Upakkilesa* can be translated literally as defilement. These good experiences defile your insight knowledge a great deal so that you cannot proceed to the higher stages of insight. So you remain stagnant here. You are in a dilemma. The Venerable Nyanaponika Thera translated *upakkilesa* as corruption, the ten corruptions. Actually there are ten defilements of insight. The lady meditator I mentioned earlier wasted about twenty days because of the light, which is one of the defilements, *upakkilesa*.

The meditator is taught by his teacher that these are good experiences, but they are hindrances to his meditation, so he must not get attached to them. What he should do is to just notice them. Then you can get over these good experiences. They are trivial things compared to the bliss of Nibbāna. Then he proceeds with his practise. But he does not feel happy, rapturous or tranquil. His mind is still concentrated, it becomes sharp and insight becomes more and more penetrating.

Whatever object he observes, he sees it disappearing. Whatever feeling or sensation he notes, he sees it disappearing. Everything he notes is disappearing, disappearing. Then he concludes: “Whatever arises is subject to passing away”. When he notes lifting movements of the foot in the walking, he experiences many broken movements of the foot, arising and passing

away incessantly. Here he realises the constant appearance and disappearance of physical phenomena. When a thought arises and he notes it, then the thought disappears. Then another thought and another thought comes and goes, appearing and disappearing.

He comes to the conclusion: “Oh! These thoughts are subject to impermanence. None of these thoughts is everlasting. They are arising and instantly passing away”. It is somewhat difficult to realise appearance and disappearance of thoughts. To realise appearance and disappearance of physical processes—such as rising movements, falling movements, lifting, pushing and dropping—is not so difficult. This stage of knowledge is called insight knowledge of arising and passing away of mental and physical phenomena, *udayabhaya-ñāna*.

## **Padhaniyanga**

### **The five Mental Faculties**

The Buddha teaches us that there are five factors (*padhaniyanga*) for successful meditation.

1. The first factor is *saddha*, firm faith in the Triple Gem, especially in the technique of meditation.
2. The second is healthiness. You should be healthy. Unless you are healthy you cannot be successful. If you are healthy you can strive your best the whole day and night. Sometimes, without sleeping for about seven days you can continuously practise because of good health. If your health is fragile or if you are frail, you cannot succeed in meditation.
3. The third is honesty. You must be honest and straightforward. You must not tell lies about your experience to your teacher or your co-meditators. You must be frank, open and straightforward about your experience in meditation.
4. The fourth is *vīriya*, strenuous effort. When the Buddha explained this strenuous effort, the Buddha used three

words which should be well remembered. One word is *parakkama*, ever increasing effort. The other word is *dahla vīriya* which means firm effort. It means you must have ever-increasing and firm effort in your practise. Then you are sure to attain enlightenment. Everyone who has this ever-increasing firm effort, is sure to attain Nibbāna, liberation. The Buddha also mentioned *anikkhitta dhuro*. *Nikkhitta* means to put down, *dhuro* means task or responsibility. You have responsibility to proceed with your practise until you have attained Arahantship. You must not put it down. If you have a firm and ever-increasing effort, you do not put down your responsibility, your task. You always shoulder it until you have attained Arahantship.

5. The fifth is the insight knowledge of arising and passing away of phenomena. Here a question may arise: “How can a meditator realise arising and passing away of mental and physical phenomena in the beginning?” No meditator realises arising and passing away of phenomena in the beginning of the practise. The teaching of the Buddha implies that if he strives he must be able to attain the insight knowledge of arising and passing away of mental and physical phenomena. In other words, he must have the ability to realise the appearance and disappearance of phenomena.

Now I have explained the fourth insight knowledge of arising and passing away of mental and physical phenomena. Some of you have experienced this knowledge very well. Even the severe pain gives you this knowledge. When you make an attempt to get into the centre of the pain attentively and energetically, the mind gradually gets into the centre of the pain. Then the pain cannot stay still, so it explodes or disintegrates. Some of you experienced it. Sometimes the pain disperses gradually. Sometimes the pain explodes when your noting mind goes into it. That means you are realising arising and passing away of feeling or sensation, *vedāna khandā*, the aggregate of feeling or sensa-

tion. Now that you have experienced arising and passing away of mental states or physical processes or both, you are endowed with the fifth factor of a meditator. You are sure to attain enlightenment if you proceed with your practise intensively.

*(From a Dhamma Talk at Blue Mountains, Sydney, Australia,  
on October 5, 1992.)*

Now you realise appearance and disappearance of mental states or physical processes which are observed very clearly. So you have attained the fourth insight knowledge of arising and passing away of *nāma* and *rūpa*, *udayabbaya-ñāna*.

*(From a Dhamma Talk at Blue Mountains, Sydney, Australia,  
on October , 1992.)*

When a meditator is endowed with these five factors (firm faith, healthiness, straightforwardness, strenuous effort and insight knowledge of arising and passing away of phenomena) he is sure to attain path knowledge and fruition knowledge if he proceeds with his intensive practise.

## **Bhaṅga-Ñāna** **Knowledge of Dissolution**

When his knowledge of arising and passing away of mental and physical phenomena becomes clear and mature, whatever is noted is realised as impermanent, arising and passing away. When he notes any pain, stiffening, itching or aching, he sees the appearance and disappearance of painful sensation one after another very clearly. Sometimes he sees it as the appearance and disappearance of waves of unpleasant sensation one after another. When he notes the rising and falling movements, he sees many broken movements of rising and falling processes very clearly, arising and passing away one after another. Later

on he comes to see very swift appearance and disappearance of the object which is noted.

Eventually the meditator rarely sees the arising or appearing. Most of the time he sees the disappearance, passing away or dissolution more than appearance or arising.

So he feels that all mental states and physical processes are very instantly passing away, very instantly vanishing. Sometimes he feels very swift disappearance, dissolution of the object which is noticed. Then he could hardly see the appearance of the object. Most of the time he sees very swift disappearance and vanishing of the object.

In this stage of knowledge mostly you do not see the form of the hand or the form of the body. All forms are lost. You have lost the sense of the form of the body—the hand, the leg, and so on. What you are realising is just disappearance, dissolution and the very swift vanishing of phenomena. Sometimes you feel that you are unconscious for a second or two, and lose your mindfulness. Both object and subject are very swiftly disappearing. Occasionally you experience the subconscious mind. You may see the subconscious mind in between the conscious minds. When the concentration is good enough, you are able to see very swift disappearance of the process of consciousness.

This is the insight knowledge of dissolution, *bhaṅga-ñāna*.

But a meditator does not easily get over this insight knowledge because he needs to see the dissolution of mental and physical phenomena very well; so he stays in this stage of insight knowledge for some time. It is very good as there is no painful sensation, no itching and no aching. Although you sit for a very long time you have no tendency to get up. You can sit for three or four hours very easily and comfortably, seeing successive disappearance and dissolution of all mental and physical phenomena which are observed. Occasionally you lose your sense of your bodily form. What you are realising is just disappearance and dissolution of mental and physical phenomena.

(From a Dhamma Talk at Blue Mountains, Sydney, Australia,  
on October 7, 1992.)

## **Bhaya-Ñana** **Knowledge of Fearfulness**

Gradually you feel and realise that constant dissolution of mental and physical phenomena are fearful. Whenever you observe any mental state or physical process, what you see is just disappearing, dissolution, passing away very swiftly. So you come to feel that these things are very fearful. There is nothing that lasts even a moment or a second. All phenomena, compounded things, *saṅkhāra*, are subject to dissolution, ever passing away, so they are fearful. Sometimes a meditator feels fear, but he does not know what he fears, but actually his mind sees the dissolution and the disappearance of the mental and physical phenomena. When the meditator's insight knowledge is very clear and sharp he realises that these mental and physical phenomena are ever passing away, dissolving, and that they are fearful. This insight knowledge is called knowledge of fearfulness, *bhaya-ñana*.

This fear is different from the fear you have when you see a tiger or a lion. When you see a tiger, you have aversion to it and fear arises out of aversion. That fear is *dosā*. *Dosā* is *akusalā*, an unwholesome mental state. But this fear in *vipassanā* (insight) is not like *dosā*. Though the meditator takes all mental and physical phenomena as fearful, he does not have any aversion to them. He just perceives fear, that's all. This fear is not *dosā*. It is not *akusalā*. It is *kusalā*, a kind of insight knowledge that realises the mental and physical phenomena as just fearful.

## **Adinava-Ñana**

### **Knowledge of Misery**

When you proceed with your intensive practise, distractions are very few. Thoughts are very few. Even though it arises, you observe it, it disappears very instantly. Sometimes you come to know the thought about to arise. Then when you observe it, it does not arise at all. In this way your concentration becomes deeper and deeper.

Then you are disgusted with the fearful mental and physical phenomena which are ever disappearing, ever vanishing when they are noticed. As you are disgusted with it you do not feel delight in them which are instantly arising and passing away. You feel miserable about these mental formations and physical processes. This is the insight knowledge of misery. You are not happy with your meditational experience even though you do not have much distractions or thoughts. Most of the time the concentration is good enough but you are not happy with your meditational experience. You are in a depressed mood, reluctant to do something as if you were disinterested in meditational experience, but actually you take interest in it though your facial expression is gloomy.

Sometimes you think your meditation has gone down; sometimes you think it is hopeless to go on with your practise. If you observe whatever you feel very attentively, it is not very difficult to get over it. You can pass over it easily when you observe the situation you are presently in.

## **Nibbida-Ñana—Knowledge of Disgust and Muccitukamyata-Ñana—Knowledge of Desire for Deliverance**

Then you feel bored about the formations, also about your life and the world. You cannot find any place where you can live happily and comfortably. Sometimes you feel you should go out of the meditation retreat and run away. Sometimes you want to throw yourself into the sea or a ravine because you do not find anything satisfactory in the world. Sometimes in spite of good concentration you have a tendency to get up after thirty minute's sitting. You do not have any painful sensation or aching. Concentration is good, meditation is good, but you have the desire to get up because you feel sitting meditation is unsatisfactory.

Sometimes a meditator feels boredom without rhyme or reason and wants to go back home. So he goes to his room and packs his things and comes to his meditation teacher to ask for permission to go back. When the teacher says, “Yes, you can go back. Please wait one more day, just observe what you feel”. Because the teacher is respected and beloved, he obeys the teacher and says, “Yes, venerable Sir, I'll stay one more day”. Then he continues the practise, observing what he feels: “Boring, boring”, “unhappy, unhappy” and so on. Only one night passes. The next day the teacher calls him, “Are you going home today?”—“I won't go back. Now my meditation is very good” he says. That stage of insight knowledge is very tricky. It is called *nibbida-ñana* and also *muccitukamyata-ñana*. Two stages which are very tricky—*nibbida-ñana*, knowledge of disgust and *muccitakamyata-ñana*, knowledge of desire for deliverance.

When you proceed with the practise, you experience various physical discomforts such as pain, aching and stiffening. You were patient with them in the earlier stages of insight knowl-

edge, say the first, second and third stage of insight and observed them.

Now you have this pain, you notice it, but you have a tendency to change your postures very often with no patience at all. You want to get up, but actually you do not get up or change the position. You proceed with the practise. When the teacher explains and instructs you to observe what you are experiencing, you do it very well and pass over this insight knowledge of desire for deliverance.

## **Patisankha-Ñana** **Knowledge of Re-observation**

As the meditator wants to get rid of these mental and physical phenomena which are ever arising and passing away, attentively noticing, he strives his best to notice whatever object arises. The more he puts forth effort in his practise, the deeper his concentration becomes. The deeper his concentration becomes, the more severe painful sensation he experiences. This is the tenth stage of insight knowledge. But he is not reluctant to observe it, because he knows that unless he observes it, he will not be able to get over this stage of insight. Sometimes he feels the painful sensation very intense and severe. But he is not reluctant, he strives his best, observing it. Then, it disappears instantly. So, he experiences more deeply the three characteristics of impermanence, suffering and non-self. This is the insight knowledge of re-observation, *patisankha-ñana*.

## **Sankharupekkha-Ñana** **Knowledge of Equanimity**

Later on the meditator passes beyond the tenth stage. All painful sensations are gone. He does not experience any discomfort. He

feels tranquil and peaceful. Concentration becomes deep and stable. But he does not feel happy any longer. He realises every object arising and passing away. What he experiences is the arising and passing away of the object which is observed all the time. The mind is concentrated on it. In this stage of insight knowledge, even though he sends his mind out to another object which he likes most, the mind does not go out to the object and it becomes elastic. This is the eleventh stage of insight knowledge. Because of deep concentration, insight is penetrating, sharp and clear. Whatever object he observes, he sees its appearance and disappearance. There is no object which is not realised as appearance and disappearance by the noting mind. Every object that is noted is seen as appearing and disappearing. Also his noting becomes stable. He feels comfortable, tranquil and serene but he is neither happy nor unhappy about formations.

In this stage he may experience this knowledge for about five to ten days, sometimes one month. But it is very near to the goal. I think it is natural for meditators to enjoy such a good stage of insight knowledge before they reach the goal. Some meditators stay in this stage for even one and a half months. This is the insight knowledge of equanimity about formations, *sankharupekkha-ñāna*, the eleventh stage of *vipassanā-ñāna*.

In this stage, he has to observe more attentively and energetically so that he will not stay there for a long time. If he observes the object normally and steadily, his meditation will get stuck in this stage for one or two months. So he should observe more attentively and energetically, then he comes to experience very swift arising and passing away of mentality and physicality which are observed.

## **Anuloma-Ñana**

### **Knowledge of Adaptation**

Then he experiences the insight knowledge of adaptation, *anuloma-ñana*. This knowledge is in conformity with the previous insight knowledge and the following insight and enlightenments, so it is called insight knowledge of adaptation. In this stage of insight the meditator experiences very smooth and rapid appearance and disappearance of *nāma* and *rūpa* most of the time.

## **Gotrabhu-Ñana**

### **The Insight Knowledge of Maturity**

Immediately after it has been experienced, the noticing mind first of all gets into the cessation of compounded things, *saṅkhāra*, for a conscious moment. This is the insight knowledge of maturity, *gotrabhu-ñana*.

Now the meditator reaches the border. The border between ordinary ones (*puthujjana*) and Noble Ones (*Ariyapuggala*). This borderline *ñana* is called insight knowledge of maturity, *gotrabhu-ñana*. When he stands on the border, it is sure that he will go forward. Since he wants to go forward he is striving along this very difficult and very long course of practise. As soon as he makes an effort, he will get into the other province, the province of the Noble Ones, *Ariyapuggala*.

## **Maggā-Ñana—Path Knowledge and**

### **Phāla-Ñana—Fruition Knowledge**

After maturity knowledge has passed away, *maggā-ñana* and *phāla-ñana* arise in the same state of the cessation of all formations, realising the Four Noble Truths.

## Paccavekkhana-Ñana Knowledge of Reviewing

After *gotrabhu-ñana* the meditator attains path knowledge, *maggā-ñana*, and fruition knowledge, *phāla-ñana*. After that he attains the knowledge of reviewing, *paccavekkhana-ñana*, which reviews what he has experienced in his meditative practise.

## Patipadañānadassana- and Ñānadassana-Visuddhi

From the fourth *ñana*, insight knowledge of arising and passing away, up to the insight knowledge of maturity, all of these insights are known as purification of knowledge and vision of the course of the practise, *patipadañānadassana visuddhi*. When you have reached the first path knowledge, this is purification of knowledge and vision, *ñānadassana visuddhi*.

## Seven Stages of Purification (Satta-Visuddhi)

There are seven stages of purification we have to go through until we have attained our goal. The first, purification of *sila*, or moral conduct; the second, purification of mind; the third, purification of view; the fourth, purification by overcoming doubt; the fifth, purification of knowledge and vision of what is path and not path; the sixth, purification of knowledge and vision of the course of practise and the seventh, purification of knowledge and vision, *maggā-ñana*.

(From a Dhamma Talk at Blue Mountains, Sydney, Australia,  
on October 7, 1992.)

Path knowledge (*maggā-ñana*) and fruition knowledge (*phāla-ñana*), are supra-mundane knowledges or supra-mundane wisdom (*lokuttarañana*). The other thirteen stages of knowledge are

mundane knowledge or mundane wisdom (*lokiyañāna*). If a meditator has enough effort and enough time, he can attain *maggā-ñāna* and *phāla-ñāna*.

Nowadays, the world is full of mental defilements, *kilesas*, such as *lobha*, *dosā*, *moha*. So, it's not easy to attain supra-mundane knowledge, *lokuttarañāna*, within seven or ten days or a month. Only if a meditator has enough time, say, one month, three months or one year, and puts forth enough effort in the practise, he may be able to attain supra-mundane wisdom, path and fruition knowledge (*lokuttarañāna*).

## Eradication of Defilements

If a meditator has attained at least *sotāpatti-maggā-ñāna*, the lowest stage of the enlightenment, he uproots *sakaya-dit̥ṭhi* (the wrong view of a person, a being, a self or a soul) and *vicikiccha* (sceptical doubt about the Triple Gem). Also, he can uproot *silabbataparamasa dit̥ṭhi*, the wrong view that rites and rituals can lead him to the cessation of suffering—Nibbāna. Some people hold that these rites and ritual can lead a person to Nibbāna—the cessation of suffering. Such an idea is called *silabbataparamasa dit̥ṭhi*, the wrong view of rites and rituals.

A meditator who has attained *sotāpatti-maggā-ñāna*, the first of path knowledges, will never kill any beings; he'll never take what is not given by the owner; he always refrain from all sexual misconduct such as adultery; he abstains from telling lies all the time and he never takes any intoxicants. These five precepts are spontaneously observed by the *sotāpanna-ariyapuggala*. So they are called *ariyakantasila*. That is why a *sotāpanna* will never be reborn in the four woeful states when he has died.

## Some Important Points

### Cula-Sotāpanna

Some people mistakenly hold the view that *sotāpanna* are of two kinds—one is senior *sotāpanna*, the other is junior *sotāpanna*. Because in *visuddhimagga* and other commentaries it is mentioned that a meditator who has attained *paccaya-pariggahañāna*, the second stage of the insight knowledge, is a *cula-sotāpanna*. The word *cula* in some cases, refers to “junior” or “small”, that’s why some people take “*cula-sotāpanna*” as a “junior *sotāpanna*” or “small *sotāpanna*”. Of course, in this case, in the word *cula-sotāpanna*, “*cula*” does not mean “junior” or “small”. The meaning of “*cula*” in the word *cula-sotāpanna* means “similar to a *sotāpanna*”. A *sotāpannapuggala* will never be reborn in the four *apaya* worlds (the four woeful states); in the same way one has attained *paccaya-pariggaha-ñāna*, the insight knowledge of conditionality, will not be reborn in any of the four *apaya* worlds in the next existence. That’s why the person who has attained *paccaya-pariggaha ñāna* is called *cula-sotāpanna*. The meaning is “a person who is similar to a *sotāpanna*”.

### Observing Daily Activities is very Important

When a meditator’s insight becomes more and more powerful, more and more penetrating, he experiences the higher stages of insight knowledge. Sometimes he may be able to attain enlightenment, too, by observing daily activities attentively, precisely.

In this case, we should mention the story of Venerable Ananda and his attainment of the final enlightenment, *arahatta maggā* and *phāla ñāna*.

The Venerable Ananda was practising walking meditation very mindfully at night, observing each movement of the feet very well. Then, after walking meditation, he went to his room, observing each step in more and more detail. He was mindful of all his actions and movements when he opened the door, when

he pulled the door, when he pushed the door and so on. Until he has settled on his bed, he was mindful of all actions and movements attentively and precisely.

While he was sitting down on the bed, he was mindful of the movements of sitting down and the touching sensation of the bed. Before he started his sitting meditation, he wanted to take a rest for a while by lying down on the bed for relaxation. He then started to lie down towards the pillow, being mindful of all movements very attentively, making mental note as “lying down ... lying down ... lying down ...” Before his head touched the pillow, while his two feet were just lifted from the ground, he attained three higher stages of enlightenment, *sakadagamimaggañana*, *anagamimaggañana* and *arahattamaggañana*. Then he attained Arahantship, the final stage of enlightenment before his head touched the pillow.

He attained Arahantship, not while standing, sitting, walking or lying. His attainment of Arahantship was out of all the four postures. What I want to point out is that the Venerable Ananda, the pious attendant of the Buddha, attained Arahantship by being aware of all actions and movements in the daily activities.

In the same way a famous Bhikkhuni, Patacara Theri, also attained Arahantship by being aware of daily activities attentively. She was practising walking meditation very mindfully during the night. She attained deep concentration and clear insight into the movements of the feet. Then she wanted to sit in her room. She went to her room by being aware of all actions and movements in the daily activities. When she sat on her bed, she was also aware of the sitting down movements, touching sensation and so on. In the room there was an oil lamp with a flame. She wanted to extinguish the flame so that she could save the oil and could sit in the dark with deep concentration. She picked up a piece of bamboo stick and gradually stretched her arm towards the oil lamp, observing each movement of stretching. When the hand reached near the flame, she pressed the wick with the piece

of the stick into the oil, noting each movement of the pressing. At the moment when the wick had sunk into the oil completely and the flame was extinguished, she attained Arahantship, uprooting all the *kilesas*, mental defilements.

In this way a meditator can attain Arahantship if he takes awareness of daily activities seriously and strives his best to have continuity of mindfulness by being constantly aware of each action and movement very well.

Attentive and detailed awareness of daily activities is very important because it can help the meditator to attain any stage of enlightenment—path and fruition knowledge. In the teaching of the Buddha, the practise of *vipassanā* meditation is likened to the rubbing of two pieces of wood or bamboo. In the ancient time, people in the forest had to rub two pieces of bamboo or wood against each other constantly and continuously without a break to have fire. Heat is generated on the piece of bamboo after some time. Gradually the heat is increasing and the bamboo becomes hotter and hotter. If he stops rubbing, then the heat becomes cold. If he rubs again, he begins to get the heat again. If he stops again, the heat becomes cold again. He does not get the fire because he does not continuously rub the pieces.

If he rubs the pieces of bamboo continuously and constantly without a break, the heat grows and grows and eventually it becomes a flame; then he gets fire.

That is why the teachers said, “The Yogi should be constantly and continuously mindful of whatever arises in his body and mind as it really is”. Mindfulness must be constant and continuous so that it becomes sharper and more powerful. Then it makes concentration deeper. When concentration becomes deeper, there arises the insight which penetrates into the true nature of mental and physical phenomena, *nāma* and *rūpa*.

After the meditator is mindful of any mental and physical processes that arise for about fifteen or twenty minutes, he takes rest for about five minutes without being mindful of any physical and mental phenomena. Then again, he picks up his *vīriya* and

is aware of some movements which arise. In this way he practises meditation off and on. He is not able to have continuous and constant mindfulness and his concentration also cannot be deep enough. He will not have the insight knowledge that realises the true nature of mental and physical phenomena. He cannot remove the wrong view of a person, a being, a self or a soul, *sakaya-diṭṭhi* and *atta-diṭṭhi*.

If a meditator rightly understands the value of continuous mindfulness and deep concentration, he will observe all actions and movements in sitting, walking and daily activities. Then his mindfulness becomes continuous and constant. His concentration becomes deeper and deeper. He is like a person who rubs the two pieces of wood constantly and continuously without a break. Eventually, insight arises. He realises the true nature of mental and physical phenomena and he is hopeful to attain the cessation of suffering, Nibbāna.

So, the awareness of daily activities is so very important that the Buddha taught us *sampajanna pabba*, the chapter on clear comprehension, in Mahasatipatthana Sutta to rightly understand the value of daily activities. The meditator should strive to have continuous and constant mindfulness by being mindful of all activities for the whole day, realise all mental and physical phenomena and attain the cessation of suffering, Nibbāna.

*(From a Dhamma Talk at Dhammodaya, Nakorn Pathom, Thailand,  
on March 10, 2005.)*



# Vipassanā Meditation Guidelines

## Preface

This collection of “sayings” by Chanmyay Sayadaw is from his teachings given during the 1983 retreat he led at the Malaysian Buddhist Meditation Centre in Penang. They were originally compiled by Venerable Sujiva, partly from evening Dhamma talks, but mainly from the daily interviews with the meditators at the retreat.

As the context of these “sayings” was mostly the interview situation between the teacher and the individual student, it would therefore be most useful to read them as if they were personal instruction and advice from the meditation master.

The original (1983) booklet was revised by Venerable Pannavaro for the benefit of meditators who took part in Chanmyay Sayadaw’s 1989 *vipassanā* meditation retreats in Australia.

It was revised again by Bhikkhu Pesala in 1999, and reprinted by U Rewata, U Khemissara and U Nyanaramsi of Chanmyay Yeiktha for free distribution.

## The Practise

*Vipassanā*—or insight meditation—is, above all, an experiential practise, based on the systematic and balanced development of a precise and focused awareness. By observing one’s moment-to-moment mind-body processes from a place of investigative attention, insight into the true nature of life and experience arises. Through the wisdom acquired by practising insight meditation one is able to live more freely and relate to the world around with less clinging, fear and confusion. Thus one’s life becomes increasingly directed by consideration, compassion and clarity.

## Mental Noting

- Mental noting is a technique of directing the attention to the mind-body phenomena in order to understand their true nature correctly.
- The guiding principle in *vipassanā* practise is to observe whatever arises at the moment of its occurrence—by noting the present, one lives in the present.
- Note attentively and precisely. Superficial noting may make the mind more distracted. When concentration is weak, the tendency to skip over things can be checked by using the device of “labelling”. Labelling is not meditation and so it is not really necessary, but it is helpful in the beginning. It helps the noting mind to concentrate on the object deeply and precisely. Do persist with the labelling until mindfulness becomes very attentive and sharp, concentration deep, and insight penetrating naturally. Then you may drop it.
- The meditator will get an appreciation of the purpose of *vipassanā* meditation by bringing an investigative quality to the “noting practise”. This exploration can lead to the discovery of the true nature of the mind-body process.

## Sitting Meditation

- To prepare for sitting meditation, let body and mind relax as much as possible. Maintain the body in a well-balanced posture. Do not change the posture abruptly or unmindfully during the sitting. If you are about to move, note the intention to move before actually moving.
- To give balance to the practise, every sitting should be preceded by an hour of walking meditation.
- In the changeover from walking to sitting practise, or vice versa, be careful to keep your mindfulness and concentration continuous.
- The starting point in the sitting practise is to establish the attention on the sensations of the abdomen caused by the rising and falling movement. This is done by synchronizing the mental noting or labelling of the movement with the actual experience of those sensation.
- As the movement of the abdomen becomes steady and clear, increase the number of notings. If the movements are complicated, note them in a general way.
- If there is a gap between the rising and falling movement of the abdomen, insert the noting of “sitting” and/or “touching” (noting “sitting” is awareness of the characteristic of support of the wind element).
- Do not disturb the natural breathing by taking sharp or deep breaths. This will make you tired. The breathing should be just normal.
- When secondary objects predominate, such as sounds, thoughts, sensations, etc., note “hearing, hearing”, “thinking, thinking”, “feeling, feeling” and so on. At first, it is not easy to note such a variety of objects, but with increased mindfulness one is able to do so. When the secondary objects have passed, one goes back to the noting of the primary object, i.e. the rising and falling movement of the abdomen.

- Although one is taught to begin with watching the rising and falling movement of the abdomen, one must not get attached to it. For it is not the only object, but one of the many varieties of objects in *vipassanā* meditation.
- Mindfulness of the movement of the abdomen leads to the direct experience of the wind element. That is, to its specific characteristics of motion, vibration and support. It is then that one can rightly know the real nature of the wind element, thereby destroying the false view of self.

## Walking Meditation

- Take the walking meditation seriously. By merely doing the walking meditation alone, it is possible to attain the highest enlightenment (*Arahantship*).
- Begin this practise by bringing your attention to the feet. Then note the steps part by part as you follow the movement with sharp attention, mentally noting “right, left” as you make the steps while walking.
- Keep the eyes half-closed and fixed on the ground about 6 feet ahead of you. Avoid looking at the feet during walking, or you will become distracted by it.
- Do not let the head bend too low because this will very quickly cause strain and tension in your posture.
- The objects to be noted are increased gradually. That is, the number of parts of the step observed is gradually increased. At the beginning of a walking meditation period, note one part only for about 10 minutes: “left, right” and so on. Then note your walking in 3 parts, “lifting, pushing, dropping”, etc. Finally, increase the noting to, “intending, lifting, pushing, dropping, touching, pressing”.
- Please consider this: The mind is sure to wander off quite a few times during a walking period of one hour. So do not look around here and there during walking meditation. You have had, and will have, many more years to look

around. If you do it during the retreat, you cannot attain deep concentration. The wandering eye is a difficult problem for the meditator. So notice the desire to look around until it has disappeared.

- For the practise to be effective, at least 6 hours of walking and 6 hours of sitting meditation with 6 hours of observing general activities each day is recommended.

## **Mindfulness of Daily Activities**

- Awareness of daily activities is the very life of a meditator. Once one fails to observe an activity, one loses one's life, as it were. That is, one ceases to be a meditator, being devoid of mindfulness, concentration and wisdom.
- The faculty of mindfulness becomes powerful by constant and uninterrupted awareness of every activity throughout the day's practise.
- Constant mindfulness gives rise to deep concentration, and it is only through deep concentration that one can realise the intrinsic nature of mental and physical phenomena. This then leads one to the cessation of suffering.
- Failing to note daily activities creates wide gaps in mindfulness. Continuity of noting is needed to carry the awareness forward from one moment to the next. With this kind of practise there are many new things to discover every day.
- During retreat, all you need to do is to be mindful. There is no need to hurry. The Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw compared a *vipassanā* meditator to a weak invalid, who by necessity moves about very slowly.
- Doing things very slowly helps to make the mind concentrated. If you want the meditation to develop, you must get accustomed to slowing down.
- When a fan is turning fast, you cannot see it as it really is, but when it is turning slowly, then you can see it as it really

is. Likewise you need to slow down significantly to see the mental and physical processes as they really are.

- When you are surrounded by people who are doing things in a hurry, be oblivious of your surroundings. Instead, note your own mental and physical activities energetically. Talking is a great danger to the progress of insight. A five minute talk can wreck a meditator's concentration for the whole day.

## **Pain and Patience**

- Pain is the friend of the meditator. Do not evade it. It can lead you to Nibbāna.
- Pain does not have to inform you of its coming. It may not disappear, but if it does, you may cry over it, for your friend has gone away.
- Pain is observed not to make it go away, but to realise its true nature.
- Pain is the key to the door of Nibbāna.
- When concentration is good, pain is not a problem. It is a natural process. If you observe it attentively, the mind will be absorbed in it, and discover its true nature.
- When pain comes, note it directly. Ignore it only if it becomes overpoweringly persistent. It can be overcome by deep concentration brought about by continuous mindfulness.
- If intense pain arises during walking meditation, stop occasionally and observe it.
- Be patient with anything and everything that stimulates your mind.
- Patience leads to Nibbāna—impatience leads to hell.

## Noting Mental States

- When you are noting mental or emotional states, do it quickly, energetically and precisely so that the noting mind is continuous and powerful. Then thinking stops by itself.
- Unless you can note the wandering thoughts, you are already defeated when attempting to concentrate the mind. If your mind is inclined to wander, it indicates that you are not really noting thoughts energetically enough. The acquired ability to do this is indispensable.
- If you are aware of the contents of thoughts, they will tend to go on. If you are aware of the thought itself, thinking will cease.
- Do not be attached to thinking and theory. Meditation is beyond time and space. So do not be caught up with thinking and theory. Insight will arise with deep concentration, but logical and philosophical thinking comes with shallow concentration.
- Drowsiness can be overcome by putting in more effort. Labelling activities vigorously is helpful. Note sleepiness energetically. If you accept laziness, you will go on half-asleep.
- Actually, the energy to note is always there. The trouble is that you are reluctant to do it. The mental attitude is very important. So, do not be pessimistic, if you are optimistic, you offer yourself an opportunity. Then there is satisfaction in every situation and there will be less distraction.
- A human being has a great variety of abilities and the strength to do many things. If you want to develop this meditation to its ultimate goal of liberation, you have to put a determined effort into the practise. If you put in this all-out effort, you will achieve the final liberation from habitual clinging, fear, confusion and all kinds of suffering.

## Guidance for Interviews

- All meditators report daily to the meditation teacher. They report on what they have noted and experienced during that day's practise. The teacher will suggest any corrections, give further instructions and try to inspire the meditator onto further progress.

During interviews try to describe:

- what was noticed of the rising and falling movement
- feelings/sensations
- imagination/ideas
- mindfulness of daily activities

Describe each of these in detail. Try to be concise and to the point.

- During the interview do not pause to wait for remarks from the teacher. Only after you have reported all your experiences will any remarks be made.
- Please listen carefully to all the instructions from the teacher and follow them diligently. If there is any doubt, please ask the teacher.
- When asked a question, answer it directly. Please do not speak about something else.
- Report all experiences even if they seem unimportant to you.
- Many meditators find it helpful to make short written notes immediately after each meditation session. But one should not try to make mental notes while meditating, because this will disturb concentration.

# About the author

The venerable Chanmyay Sayadaw U Janakābhivaṃsa, born 24 July 1928, is a Theravada Buddhist monk from Myanmar.

He was born in Pynma village, Taungdwingyi Township, British Burma, on Tuesday, 24 July 1928. His parents were U Phyu Min and Daw Shwe Yee. He started to study the Buddhist scriptures at the age of fifteen as a novice monk. He received the higher upasampada ordination in 1947 and continued advanced studies of Buddhist scriptures. He practised Vipassana meditation under the instruction of the most Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw from 1953 to 1954. He was then invited by the State Buddha Sasana Organization to be an editor of the Buddhist scriptures in Pali for reciting Buddhist scriptures at the Sixth Buddhist Council in Myanmar.

Starting from 1957, the Venerable Sayadaw spent six years in Colombo, Sri Lanka, where he continued his studies of English, Sanskrit, Hindi and Sinhalese languages. He returned to Myanmar in June 1963. At the invitation of the state Buddha Sasana Organisation, he took up residence at Kaba-Aye where he edited the publications of Pali Texts.

In 1967, he was appointed by the Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw as a meditation teacher at Mahasi Sasana Yeiktha, Yangon. In 1977 Sayadaw Ashin Janakabhivamsa took up residence at Chanmyay Yeiktha Meditation Center which was donated to him by some devotees and became the abbot of the center. He has been since then well known as Chanmyay Sayadaw.

In 1979 - 1980 Chanmyay Sayadaw accompanied the Most Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw's Dhamma Mission to Europe and the U.S.A. He has undertaken many Dhamma missions to countries in Asia, Europe, and the United States. As recently as July 2015, at the age of 87, he travelled to the UK, Ireland, and Canada giving Dhamma Talks.

