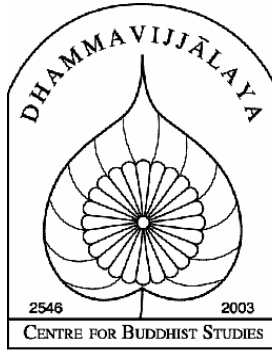


Samatha and Vipassanā

**Concentration and
insight meditation**



Ashin Dr. Nandamālābhivamsa

English version:
Sagaing, 02/2013

Samatha and Vipassanā

Concentration and insight meditation

Today, meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*) is a well-known practice all over the world. Due to many people's interest, a lot of meditation centres appeared. People regardless of religion go to the meditation centres. But in their meditation practice they have different intentions: For reduction of stress and to have a peaceful mind, or for liberation from the suffering of *Samsāra* and to attain path (*magga*), fruition (*phala*) and *Nibbāna*.

The meaning of *kammaṭṭhāna* is the object of mental development or the process of mind practice. *Kammaṭṭhāna* is of two kinds: *Samatha* and *vipassanā*. Whoever wishes to follow, should know the technique and differences of the two clearly, so that one will realize if one's practice belongs to *samatha* or *vipassanā*.

What is *Samatha*?

If you are asked, what *samatha* is: *Samatha* is a concentration that tranquillizes the opposite mental states like *kāmacchanda*, etc. *Samādhi* that removes evil emotions and stress is to be called *Samatha*.

The human mind becomes unstable when meeting sensual objects. You see! If on perceiving an object, craving for it arises, there is mental instability and restlessness. If hatred arises, there is mental instability and restlessness. If delusion arises, there is mental instability. Such mental instability is tranquillized and removed by the meditation practice called *samatha*.

Besides that, the energy of concentration obtained through *samatha* practice removes those mental instabilities, therefore *samādhi* really is *samatha*. You should note, meditation practice and *samādhi* both are *samatha*.

In the texts the meaning of *samatha* is explained: “*Paccanīkadhamme same-tīti samatho*”, meaning, the *dhamma* which tranquillizes and removes the opposite *dhamma*, is called *samatha*.

What is *Vipassanā*?

If you are asked, what *vipassanā* is: *Vipassanā* is seeing things with knowledge in different ways. “*Vi*” means various or different aspect; “*passanā*” means knowledge that sees. In other words, *vipassanā* means a knowledge that sees in extraordinary ways. How it sees in extraordinary ways?

Commonly, people see life as a happiness or their own property. Contradictory, a knowledge which sees life as impermanent, suffering and uncontrollable, is called *vipassanā*.

In the texts it is explained: “*Aniccā divasena vividhehi ākārehi dhamme passatīti vipassanā*”, meaning, the knowledge that sees *sāṅkhāra-dhammas* in various ways as impermanent, etc., is *vipassanā*.

The *dhammas* to be practised

These two *dhammas*, *samatha* and *vipassanā*, are the *dhammas* to be developed (*bhāvetabba*) and to be practised.

In order to make the unstable mind stable, *samatha* should be practised. Without concentration and without insight knowledge, *Nibbāna* is unattainable. Therefore, to have mental concentration and excellent insight knowledge, *vipassanā* should be followed. However, these two practices, *samatha* and *vipassanā*, have different objects.

***Samatha* practice**

The object of *samatha* generally is a concept (*paññatti*), because a concept is a consensus accepted by many people, but it does not exist in reality.

For example, if people accept a colour as white, it becomes white; if red, it becomes red; if yellow, it becomes yellow. These are only concepts.

On such a concept object one tries to focus one's mind to concentrate on it. The practice of *samatha* generally is based on concept objects. However, some practice like *buddhānussati* (recalling the qualities of the Buddha) and *catudhātu-vavaṭṭhāna* (analysis the four elements), are based on the object of nature or ultimate reality (*paramattha*). They are also *samatha*.

In *samatha* practice, there are two kinds of concentration, access concentration (*upacāra samādhi*) and *jhāna* concentration (*appanā samādhi*). Herein, the concept objects which lead to *appanā samādhi* are 28.

Kasiṇa paññatti

If you follow *samatha* practice, you need to be based on one of the concept objects. The objects possible are the four elements, earth, water, fire and air; or the colour concepts dark blue, yellow, red and white; or the space (*ākāsa*) or light object (*āloka*). Such objects are called *kasiṇa* device. Based on such *kasiṇa* device, you should practice *samatha*.

Ānāpāna paññatti

Besides it, you can take the *ānāpāna* concept, breathe in - breathe out, as *samatha* object. Everybody breathes 24 hours a day without stopping. You should try to develop concentration based on such a breathing air.

The Buddha's virtues

If asked, if *samatha* practice is possible focusing on the virtues of the Buddha: Yes, it is possible! However, the concentration based on the Buddha's virtues does not lead to the stage of *jhāna* or *appanā samādhi*. Why? The Buddha's virtues are very deep qualities, a kind of reality (*paramattha*). Therefore, the *samādhi* based on the Buddha's qualities cannot reach up to *jhāna*.

If you wish to practice *samatha* on the Buddha's virtues, you firstly have to understand the meaning of the virtues. For example, *Araham*, the Buddha, who has totally eradicated mental defilements. Comparative contemplation is more helpful: "I have craving (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), delusion (*moha*), conceit (*māna*), but the Buddha does not. All mental defilements are no more in the Buddha's mind." Such a comparative contemplation clarifies the meaning. One's mental process will be fixed on the virtues of the Buddha, so that it will be real *buddhānussati* practice.

But using rosary, counting the Buddha's virtues and reciting the words without concentrated mind, cannot be called real *buddhānussati*. Actually, you must focus on Buddha's real virtues, so that delight (*pāmojja*) and joy (*pīti*) will come into being.

Method of Samatha

If you wish to follow the *samatha* practice systematically, you have to choose either *kaṣiṇa* or "in and out breathing" as

object of meditation. Before beginning to practice *samatha* or *vipassanā*, you firstly have to purify your morality (*sīla*) by re-observing it. If anyone without morality focuses on a meditation object, various objects will invade his mind. In order to avoid such objects to invade the mind, you have to restore your *sīla*. Considering your *sīla* should bring happiness to your mind.

It is said: “*Sīlaṃ adhippaṭissarāya*”, meaning, *sīla* leads to a state free of worry, it leads to delight, joy, physical and mental tranquillity, happiness, concentration and knowledge which sees what really is. Therefore, firstly you have to purify your morality.

As a lay-person, restore the five precepts, then consider your morality: “Since now, I never commit to killing any being, I abstain from killing. I fulfil this morality.” Considering it, you will be happy. “I never take other’s property intentionally. This morality is also pure. I never commit sexual misconduct. I never tell a lie, only the truth. I never take any intoxicant drink or drug.” Regarding your morality, you will become happy whenever you consider it.

If you put your happy mind on the *samatha* object, you can cultivate concentration quickly. Otherwise, if you practice meditation without morality, past shadows will invade the mind based on immorality. The mind cannot be stable. With an unstable mind under the influence of restlessness (*uddhacca*), one cannot obtain mental concentration. Therefore, the Buddha said: “*Sīlaṃ adhippaṭissarāya*”, morality leads to freedom from remorse. To be free from remorse is very important. The

Buddha encouraged us to base on morality, whatever meditation we practice, *samatha* or *vipassanā*.

A person, who has renounced family life, must purify the monk's morality regarding to 227 principles, making sure he is without offence then. If he breaks any discipline, he has to restore it. Then, he considers his own morality to obtain happiness. With a happy mind he focuses on the *samatha* object.

If you follow the meditation practice without preliminary purification of morality, it is not easy to succeed. Needless to say, that if you want to cook rice, it is necessary to prepare. If you sow a seed, you must prepare the soil, where you want to sow. Preliminaries are necessary in every work.

On being about to meditate, you must clean your body and mind, then morality. After that, consider your morality, which makes your mind happy.

If an obstacle occurs during meditation practice, what should be done to protect from it? First you should relinquish your life to the Buddha – that is an advice of commentators.

On facing obstacles, fear arises. When fear comes into being, the practice cannot be continued. One dares not to continue one's practice. If one relinquishes one's body to the Buddha, one may consider: "I have relinquished my body to the Buddha; it does not concern me." In this way one can restore fearlessness and courage comes into being. The mind is in a different state depending on thinking. Such right thought can reload mental power.

Before meditation, what should be done? Sometimes one may accuse noble persons without restraining one's mouth. Such an accusation becomes an obstacle in meditation practice. Therefore one must apologize towards a noble person, if one committed accusation. By apologizing, doubt and mental stress cannot remain in one's mind. There is no mental tension. One feels happiness considering: "I have done everything. There is nothing doubtful or fearful and no tension." To release such a mental tension, preliminary work is important and should be done.

Regarding the *ānāpāna* object, people are breathing for 24 hours a day. The breathing air is plentiful for all. Focusing on the breathing air, *samatha* should be practised. If you follow this practice, you may attain the first *jhāna* stage. You can upgrade to the second, third and fourth *jhāna* stage on that object. It means, you can attain all *jhānas* through this method.

The Bodhisatta renounced and followed the austere practice, but there was no benefit. In the end he found the right path, followed it and finally attained omniscience knowledge. Which meditation technique did the Bodhisatta follow? It was only *ānāpāna* meditation. To become the Buddha, the Bodhisatta used the breathing air as his meditation object. This meditation technique causes one to become an Arahant. If you wish to attain *jhāna* or *magga-phala*, you must focus on your breathing air. The breathing air is of great value. The breathing air is important for everybody to live long. Everyday and every time you inhale and exhale. If you do not make use of your breath, it will be useless.

In this world there are some people called “*bāla*” (fool). The Pāḷi word *bāla* means a person who just breathes but cannot attain any knowledge on this breath. Such a person can be called *bāla*. Not only human beings, almost all animals too, breathe for their survival but for nothing more. The noble persons used this breathing air as meditation object but not to live longer. Therefore, they attained *jhāna* and *magga-phala* up to *Nibbāna*, if they had *pāramī* conditions, effort and the wish to attain them.

The Bodhisatta attained *jhāna* focusing on the breathing air. After that he changed his technique and used *jhāna* as *vipassanā* object. Through *vipassanā* practice he became the Buddha, attaining the four paths step by step. The Bodhisatta’s meditation technique was based on *ānāpāna*.

Body posture

If you follow *ānāpāna* as *samatha*, which physical posture is suitable for you? You must choose one of the physical postures. If you choose walking, there is motion, therefore, your mind will be on various work. You have to know in- and out breathing and you have to look on the way. The mind cannot be stable. If you are not looking on the path, you may stumble and slip. Therefore, the walking posture is not suitable for *ānāpāna*.

If you chose standing, you may retain your body not to fall down. Your mind has to work more. If you practice on lying down, before soon you will sleep. There is no effort. You feel luxurious. Therefore, the lying body posture is not suitable too.

In brief, to follow *ānāpāna* practice, walking, standing and lying down are not good; only the sitting posture, keeping upright, is good and stable.

Therefore, whoever wishes to follow this *ānāpāna* practice should follow the instruction the Buddha gives: “*Pallaṅkaṃ ābhujitvā*”, sit in cross-legged posture, and “*ujuṃ kāyaṃ paṇidhāya*”, keep the body upright. If you sit cross-legged, the body becomes motionless and more stable, neither luxurious and sleepy, nor with too much effort like in walking or standing. Men sit cross-legged and women may sit half cross-legged, which keeps the body upright.

Why should one keep the body upright? In the back there are about 18 bones and joints which one has to straighten up. If you bend and bunch the joints, they will press to one another and backache comes into being. Therefore, the body including the head must be kept upright. In the text it is instructed in detail how to sit.

Focussing on the breath

Then focus on the object with your mind. You must be mindful of the object at the nostrils, where the breathing air touches. There are different persons. For a person whose upper lip is shorter, the breathing air touches the tip of the nose, while for a person with protruding upper lip the breathing air touches the tip of the upper lip. It means, wherever the breathing air touches, you must be mindful.

According to *samatha* practice on *ānāpāna* object, you should keep inhalation and exhalation regularly. Some meditation masters give instructions to cultivate *samādhi* quickly by breathing forcefully and fast. Such a method is not mentioned in the text. But some follow it according to their wish. Breathing hard and quickly causes to tiredness. Therefore, you should breathe in and out in a regular and normal way. Relax your mind and body. Don't keep tensions. Focus your mind on the object and keep calm. There should not be any tension. The mind has to be kept wherever the breathing air touches.

While we concentrate on it, the first focusing on the breathing object is called preliminary sign (*parikamma nimitta*). When that object appears clearly in the mind, it is called abstract sign (*uggaha nimitta*). In the end the breathing object changes its form in the mind; the resembled sign (*paṭibhāga nimitta*) appears. Mental perception produces such a sign. For some people the breathing air looks like two lines of smoke. For some others it looks like a pearl rosary; for some as a small ball in motion on the tip of the nose. It is various. One can see in mind a smoking line or the lines of light. Such a sign appears in different ways in different persons because their perception is different.

Focusing on this *nimitta*, one must continue the meditation practice and increase the power of mental concentration. Within one, the mental hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*) are suppressed, are subjugated. Sensual desires become calm. Hatred on the object is removed. Mental restlessness and worry do not appear. Sloth

and torpor are abandoned. On that object, there is no more doubt. Such a mental state is called a state where mental hindrances are kept away. By which are they kept away? It is the power of concentration which keeps them away. Concentration removes the other mental states that are hindrances. In one's mind, no impurities come up, no *nīvaraṇas* come into being. The mind remains only with that sign (*nimitta*), the line of light or smoke.

After that, what continuously happens? Keeping on that *nimitta*, mental application (*vitakka*) works with that *nimitta* object. Application means the *dhamma* which puts the mind onto the object. If the mind is in touch with the object, has joined the object, it is called *vitakka*. Such a mental state clearly appears. It works very well. The mind continuously is in contact with that *nimitta* object.

Another mental state is sustained application (*vicāra*). It looks like the bind of the mind to the object. It keeps the mind not to be off the object, to be joined; that is the power of *vicāra*. The next state is enjoyment of that *nimitta* object, which is called *pīti*. By means of *pīti*, the mind is happy with the object. Then a comfortable experience appears. One feels comfortable physically and mentally. One feels happiness. It is *sukha*. There is no tension in body or mind. Just happiness continuously appears.

Attainment of *jhāna*

Through the power of *samādhi*, the mind has only one object. All mental states concentrate on the *nimitta* object only.

In such an attainment, to apply the mind on the object is *vitakka*; to keep the mind on the object is *vicāra*; to enjoy the object is *pīti*; to be happy with the object is *sukha*. Concentrating upon one object is *ekaggatā* or *samādhi*. These five factors are called *jhāna* factors. They work harmoniously with the object. This is the state of the attainment of the first *jhāna*.

Having attained the first *jhāna*, the mind is far from sensual objects. It does not join with these sense objects, enjoyable visible objects, sounds, smells, tastes and tangible objects. The mind never turns to those objects. The mind is far from sensual objects and keeps them away.

Jhāna attainment is possible when there is no desire for sensual pleasure. If the mind joins these sense objects, *jhāna* attainment is impossible. For example, a person who wishes to be on next bank must abandon this bank. Without abandoning this bank, he cannot reach the other bank. So, whoever wants to attain *jhāna* must abandon sensual pleasure. In the text it is said: “*Vivicceva kāmehi*”, you must keep sensual pleasure away.

“*Vivicceva akusalehi dhammehi*”, you must keep all types of unwholesome states away. On a *jhāna* stage they become quiet. Hatred (*dosa*) quietens, conceit (*māna*), jealousy (*issā*), stinginess (*macchariya*), all mental states become quiet. What has happened on that stage?

One feels rejoice and happiness produced by keeping sensual pleasure away. It is called “*vivekaja pītisukha*”, the joy and happiness produced by keeping sensual pleasure away.

In the world the enjoyment of the majority of people is with sensual pleasure, seeing beautiful visible objects, listening pleasant sounds, smelling sweet smells, enjoying tasting by tongue, touching with the body tangible objects – such an enjoyment is called the enjoyment of sensual pleasure. But the enjoyment of *jhāna* is not like that. It overcomes all sensual pleasures and abandons them. The enjoyment appeared with the *nimitta* object, like the line of light, the line of smoke, etc. Such a state is called the state of *paṭhama jhāna*, first *jhāna*.

Herein, some may think, if they attain *jhāna*, they can fly. *Jhāna* is flying. Actually, *jhāna* cannot fly. The word *jhāna* has two meanings: Burning down and firm concentration. When one attained the first *jhāna*, it burns mental impurities and hindrances down like fire. For example, if you burn paper, the fire burns down the paper. Like that, the *jhāna* burns down the desire for sensual pleasure. The state of firm concentration is called *jhāna*. *Jhāna* is composed of the five factors initial application (*vitakka*), sustained application (*vicāra*), joy (*pīti*), happiness (*sukha*) and one-pointedness (*ekaggatā*).

After that, in the stage of the second *jhāna*, what factors are overcome? *Vitakka* and *vicāra* are overcome. Herein, *vitakka* does not apply the mind onto the object; through the power of *samādhi* the mind automatically applies onto the object. Therefore, in the second *jhāna*, the mind remains with joy, happiness and concentration. When seeing the fault of joy that it is emotion, joy is removed and the third *jhāna* stage is attained. In the third *jhāna* stage the mind remains with two factors, happiness and concentration.

Then, one dislikes any kind of emotion. Therefore, one removes happiness. Instead of happiness (*sukha*), equanimity or indifferent feeling (*upekkhā*) comes into being. It is the attainment of the fourth *jhāna* stage. In that stage, the mind remains with two factors, indifferent feeling and concentration. When the fourth *jhāna* is attained, the mental power has reached its highest level.

Supernormal knowledge

Through this power, what do we create? One can create different kinds of higher knowledge or supernormal powers (*abhiññā*) like flying in the sky.

Various *abhiññā* are possible only in the fourth *jhāna* stage. To attain such a stage, one must work hard. Repeated practice is necessary. With *abhiññā* one can get down into the earth or fly in the sky. However, the creation must not be contradictory to the nature, it must be according to nature.

For example: If one walks on the surface of water, before walking one must create the surface to be solid, then one can walk on the path. Otherwise, if one walks on normal water surface, one will sink down. This is nature. If one tries to enter the underground, one firstly has to create a hole in the earth, after that only one can enter. If one walks on the sky, one firstly has to create a walking path, then it's possible to walk. Nothing can be done contradictory to the nature.

Therefore, such a power is supernormal power, but not supernatural power. You cannot overcome the nature. Creation

must follow the nature. If one succeeds in *samatha* practice, such a state can be experienced.

According to *samatha* practice, one can live the whole day focusing only one object. Not only one day, two days, three days – one can remain in that state according to one's wish. The mental power protects the material body. Therefore, suffering never appears in the physical body. The whole physical body is light and in peace. Therefore, *jhāna* attainment is for living happily in the present life. The Buddha and the Arahats lived happily in their present lives through this attainment.

This *samatha* practice is true and should not be blamed. But you must not follow *samatha*, because through *samatha* you cannot attain *Nibbāna*. Even the Buddha followed the *samatha* practice, and Arahats also followed it and attained *jhāna* repeatedly, therefore *samatha* should be practised.

What is the destination of *samatha* practice? Its destination is *abhiññā* as effect. If one does not loose *jhāna*, one will be born in Brahma world. The first *jhāna* leads to the first *jhāna* plane, the second to the second *jhāna* plane, the third to the third, and the fourth to the fourth *jhāna* plane, accordingly.

Vipassanā practice

As person who succeeds in *samatha* practice must change his technique, if he wants to attain *magga*, *phala* and *Nibbāna*. Without remaining on the *nimitta* object, he changes to *vipassanā*.

How to change from *samatha* to *vipassanā*? At first one tries to attain *jhāna* on that *nimitta*, then one withdraws from the *jhāna* stage. Then, one focuses on the concentrated mind itself which had the *nimitta* as its object. The subject, the *jhāna* mind focussed on *nimitta*, becomes the object of contemplation. For example, one is angry; then one thinks about one's anger. Like that it's possible. When one withdraws from *jhāna*, the mental state of *jhāna* still can be observed. Focusing on these *jhāna* mental states as object, one practises *vipassanā* meditation. *Vipassanā* is impossible on a concept object like the line of light. But the mind which perceives the line of light must be the object of *vipassanā*.

In the beginning of *vipassanā* there are two steps. The first step is, the meditator has to note mind and matter (*nāma-rūpa*) by means of individual characteristic (*sabhāva lakkhaṇa*). That means one must note the object through its individual characteristic. For example, if initial application (*vitakka*) is the object of *vipassanā*, one must note *vitakka* from the point of its own individual characteristic. *Vitakka* is a mental state that puts the mind onto the object.

If you note sustained application (*vicāra*), *vicāra* keeps the mind on the object. If you note joy (*pīti*), it is a mental state

which rejoices the object. If you note happiness (*sukha*), it is with the nature of happiness. If you note concentration (*samādhi*), it causes the mental states to concentrate on the object. These mental states have different individual characteristics.

As soon as it changes to *vipassanā* technique, the ultimate reality (*paramattha*) should be noted by means of its individual characteristic. For example, focusing on hatred, one realizes the hatred: It is a mental state that burns the mind and destroys mental tranquillity. It's true, hatred (*dosa*) is a mental state that destroys the peaceful mind. Noting its nature, one realizes *dosa*.

If craving (*lobha*) appears, one focuses on *lobha*. It's a mental state, which attaches to the mental object. In this way one notes *lobha*. Each *dhamma* has its individual characteristic, called *sabhāva lakkhaṇa*. This is the first step.

In the second step, seeing conditioned things, *nāma-rūpa*, through their individual characteristic, one sees them through their universal characteristic moreover. The universal characteristic is the nature of impermanence (*anicca*), the nature of suffering (*dukkha*) and the nature of uncontrollability (*anatta*). When seeing *nāma-rūpa* as *anicca*, *dukkha*, *anatta*, it really becomes *vipassanā*.

Whoever follows this technique of first *samatha*, then *vipassanā*, needs to start with *nāma*. On seeing *nāma* clearly, then contemplate where the *nāma* appeared. On contemplation, the base of *nāma* comes into appearance. Focusing on the mental base matter, almost all matter can be perceived clearly. *Nāma* and *rūpa* both can be noted by the mind. One

understands, *nāma* is different from *rūpa*, *rūpa* is different from *nāma*.

One clearly sees *nāma* and *rūpa* both are impermanent. After arising, they fall. Depending on conditions they appear and disappear. The disappearance is forever, it never comes up again. The next appearance is depending on the next cause. In this way, this process of mentality and materiality runs continuously. Dependent on conditions it appears, then, it totally disappears. It is impermanent (*anicca*). This nature of appearance and disappearance runs forever.

All *nāma* and *rūpa* are instable. Due to instability, *nāma-rūpa* are unsatisfactory (*dukkha*). One has no power to control such changeability and suffering; it is *anatta*. Seeing *nāma-rūpa* in this way, is called *vipassanā*.

Development of *Vipassanā*

Vipassanā develops in different steps.

- (1) The very first step is the knowledge that analyzes *nāma-rūpa* (*nāmarūpa pariccheda ñāṇa*).
- (2) The second step is the knowledge that sees *nāma-rūpa* together with its cause and conditions (*paccaya parigaha ñāṇa*).
- (3) The third step is the knowledge that sees *nāma-rūpa* and examines it as permanent or impermanent, as suffering or happiness, as controllable or uncontrollable. This repeated contemplation is called *sammasana ñāṇa*.

- (4) In the fourth step, one sees *nāma-rūpa* rising and falling at the present moment (*udayabbaya ñāṇa*).
- (5) In the fifth step, one sees *nāma-rūpa* presently only falling (*bhaṅga ñāṇa*). This is the highest level of seeing *anicca*.
After that, one's vision changes in different ways.
- (6) These *nāma-rūpa* are fearful (*bhaya ñāṇa*).
- (7) They are dangerous (*ādīnava ñāṇa*).
- (8) There is nothing to be enjoyed in *nāma-rūpa* (*nibbidā ñāṇa*).
- (9) One wants to abandon *nāma-rūpa* (*muñcitu-kamyatā ñāṇa*).
- (10) Then one is reflecting about the way how to abandon *nāma-rūpa* (*paṭisaṅkhā ñāṇa*).
- (11) The last step is, one has equanimity seeing *saṅkhāra* (*saṅkhār'upekkhā ñāṇa*).

Saṅkhār'upekkhā ñāṇa is the highest *vipassanā* knowledge. Step by step it can be attained.

Herein, *vipassanā* leads to *magga*, *phala* and *Nibbāna*. But *samatha* leads only to *abhiññā* and after death to be born in the Brahma world.

Two vehicles

There are two techniques: *Samatha* comes first, then one changes to *vipassanā*. Or, without approaching *samatha* one follows directly *vipassanā*. There are two vehicles (*yāna*), you can use either the *samatha*- or the *vipassanā*-vehicle. Whatever you like, you can use: *Samatha* first, *vipassanā* second; or directly *vipassanā* without preceding *samatha*. Both these techniques are true. Whatever you like, you can choose.

For example, if you want to see Shwedagon pagoda, you can access from the Southern stairs, from the Northern, Eastern or Western stairs to reach it.

Samatha practice concentrates the mind on one object, then it attains higher knowledge (*abhiññā*). *Vipassanā* practice leads to see *nāma-rūpa* as *anicca*, *dukkha*, *anatta*.

“*Dve me bhikkhave dhammā vijjā bhāgiyā*”, o Bhikkhus, these two *dhammas* can approach the attainment of *vijjā*, *magga-ñāṇa*. Therefore, through those two techniques one can eradicate all mental defilements.

If you follow the *samatha* technique, what happens? You can remove craving, the desire for the object. That is a great benefit.

But if you follow the *vipassanā* technique you can realize the nature of *nāma-rūpa* through the characteristic *anicca*, *dukkha*, *anatta*. The knowledge increases through *vipassanā* technique. By means of that, one can remove *avijjā* that concealed the truth.

Removal of *rāga* and *avijjā*

In brief, *samatha* can remove *rāga* (lust, craving). *Rāga* causes suffering to arise. It is a mental state which desires for its object. Then *rāga* ties the mind and causes to attract. Through *samatha* practice such a *rāga* is subjugated. *Samatha* practice concentrates the mind and can increase the power of *samādhi*. Through the power of *samādhi*, *rāga* is kept away.

The *vipassanā* technique increases insight knowledge, seeing things as they really are. It removes ignorance (*avijjā*).

Rāga defiles the mind. By means of defiled mind, one cannot find liberation. Attachment is controlling one's mind. There is no escape, no exit. Most people cannot overcome *rāga*. In the world, almost all people are the prey of *rāga* or the slave of *rāga*. Nobody can overcome *rāga*, all are under the control of *rāga*. Most people cannot fight for freedom from *rāga*. Following *samatha* technique is the way you can fight against *rāga* to become free from it.

Then, let's consider *avijjā* or ignorance. When *avijjā* conceals what is happening, knowledge is unable to see the reality because *avijjā* weakens the knowledge. If *avijjā* is removed, the power of knowledge comes to increase. Through *vipassanā* technique one can increase one's knowledge.

Samatha* and *Vipassanā* on *ānāpāna

Then, I want to explain *samatha* and *vipassanā* only on *ānāpāna* object. You can use *ānāpāna* as object for *samatha* or *vipassanā*. If you want to follow directly *vipassanā* using

ānāpāna object, you must focus on the object in this way: In breathing there are three points, breathing air, sensitive body where the breathing air touches, and body-consciousness. In *vipassanā* practice you should note these three points. The breathing air is called the air tangible object that is a type of matter. The sensitive body, where the air touches, is another matter. Body-consciousness appears due to the meeting of these two, air and sensitive body.

For example: You see a visible object with your eye. Depending on eye and visible object, eye-consciousness arises. On hearing a sound, depending on ear and sound, ear-consciousness arises. On getting a smell, depending on nose and smell, nose-consciousness arises. On tasting, depending on tongue and taste, tongue-consciousness appears. In the same way on touching, depending on body and tangible object, body-consciousness arises. In this *ānāpāna* object, the breathing air is the tangible object and the sensitive body is where the air touches. Due to the meeting of the two, body-consciousness arises.

The Buddha said: “*Kāyañca paṭicca phoṭṭhabbesa uppajjati kāyaviññāṇam*”, depending on body and tangible object body-consciousness arises.

In this teaching, first you should note the breathing air as tangible object. There is the sensitive body where the air touches. These two are material qualities. Depending on these two material qualities, body-consciousness has to arise. In these three points, breathing air and sensitive body are matter (*rūpa*), they don't have the nature of knowing an object, they are never

aware of the object. It is body-consciousness that alone is mind (*nāma*). It is aware of the object.

For example, there is a gas lighter. There are at least three conditions: Inside the lighter, the gas and iron wheel, and the striking by someone. Due to the meeting of the three, the flame appears. In this way, mind is like a flame, it appears depending on base and object. Therefore, the mind cannot arise by itself like the flame cannot appear by itself, only through the meeting of three things, gas, wheel and the striking finger.

Another example. Let us say, there is a harp. There are three conditions that produce the sound: Harp body, string and the finger that plays. Due to the meeting of the three, the sound appears. The sound cannot appear by itself; depending on three conditions it appears.

In the same way in *ānāpāna*, the breathing air is matter that touches the nostrils. The nostrils are sensitive body. Depending on these two, body-consciousness appears. In that case, the breathing air and the sensitive body are material qualities (*rūpa*), body-consciousness that is aware of the touching, is mind (*nāma*).

At that moment, only *nāma-rūpa* arise. One sees only *nāma-rūpa* as they really are. Such a seeing is called analytical knowledge of mind and matter (*nāmarūpa pariccheda ñāṇa*). This is the first knowledge.

Then the knowledge increases step by step. One understands it more and more. Body-consciousness does not appear before the meeting of these two, breathing air and

nostrils. As soon as these two meet, body-consciousness comes into being. In that case, the breathing air and the sensitive body are the cause, body-consciousness is the effect. In the case of playing the harp, the harp body, string and the playing fingers are the cause, the sound that appears is the effect. One can comprehend *nāma-rūpa* with their causes. This knowledge is called “knowledge of causality (*paccaya pariggaha ñāṇa*)”.

These two knowledges, analytical knowledge and knowledge of causality, are the foundation of *vipassanā*.

Becoming a small *sotāpanna*

If you attain these two *ñāṇas*, analytical knowledge of mind-matter and knowledge of causality, you become a true Buddhist. In *Visuddhimagga* it is said, you must try to attain these two knowledges. If you attain them, you will become a small stream-winner (*cūḷa sotāpanna*).

Why are you to be called small *sotāpanna*? You have not had a misperception. In ultimate sense there is no being, only *nāma-rūpa* exists. This *nāma-rūpa* also has to arise depending on conditions. On seeing this, you have no doubt, you see clearly and truly, therefore you are called *cūḷa sotāpanna*.

When you are born as a human being while the Buddha’s teachings remain, you must try to attain these two knowledges. Then, by increasing your knowledge, you can attain *saṅkhār’upekkhā ñāṇa*, the highest level of *vipassanā*. If *saṅkhār’upekkhā ñāṇa* becomes mature, you can find *Nibbāna* where all conditioned things (*saṅkhāra*) totally cease. People

say, if the path ends, you will find a village. Like that, if your *vipassanā* practice ends tracing on *saṅkhāra*, you will find *Nibbāna*, the end of *saṅkhāra*.

Two essential practices

Let me say, the two techniques, *samatha* and *vipassanā*, are essential practices in the Buddha's teaching. It is important to follow them systematically and rightly. You can practice these two at your home, wherever you are, and whatever you are, lay or renounced person. As far you follow, the effect will be. Don't look too much for the next life. If you follow the practice in this life, you can experience *jhāna* or *Nibbāna* respectively.

The Dhamma taught by the Buddha can be seen by oneself (*sandiṭṭhiko*), has immediate effect (*akāliko*), there is no waiting list. But you may attain as far as your quality (*pāramī*) permits.

In conclusion: *Samatha* subjugates the mental hindrances and makes the mind calm and tranquil. *Vipassanā* causes to attain special seeing and knowledge. Therefore, while the Buddha's teachings are shining you should try to follow these two techniques with understanding and confidence. May you try successfully!

Sādhu - sādhu - sādhu!