

Come and See

An Introductory Theravada Buddhist Meditation Manual

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I. Introductory note.

Almost all the points stated in this book are originally mentioned in the *Tipitaka*, the three sections into which Buddha's teachings have been divided. The *Tipitaka* is comprised of the *Vinaya* (the code of disciplines for monks, nuns and lay people), the *Sutta* (discourses) and the *Abhidhamma* (deeper psycho-philosophical teaching). In the first century A.D., an eminent Buddhist scholar named Upatissa wrote the *Vimuttimagga*, in which he summarized the Buddha's teachings on meditation. In the fifth century A. D., Buddhaghosa, another great Buddhist scholar, covered the same ground in his scholastic thesis, the *Visuddhimagga*, which is the standard text on meditation even today. Modern teachers and authors of Theravada Buddhist meditation rely on the *Tipitaka*, the *Vimuttimagga* or the *Visuddhimagga* for information other than elaborating on their own experiences.

II. Definition of Theravada system of meditation.

The system of meditation that is practiced in Theravada Buddhist countries,¹ such as Burma, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Laos and Thailand, is called the Theravada Buddhist meditation. The system of meditation that is practiced in Mahayana countries,² such as China, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Nepal, Singapore, Taiwan, Tibet and Vietnam, is called the Mahayana system of meditation.³ One of the most famous Mahayana systems, practiced mainly in Japan and the United States, is known as Zen (Chinese Ch'an, Japanese Zen, Pali Jhana and Sanskrit Dhyana). The Theravada system has been divided into two parts, *Samatha* (calming or tranquilizing the mind) and *Vipassana* (insight meditation). There are forty subjects of meditation prescribed for both systems. This book is an introduction to the attainment of mindfulness through bare attention to and clear comprehension of the whole process of breathing.

III. *Why is it so important today?*

People sometimes think that we have exploited every possible area of human knowledge in order to achieve peace and happiness. We are now beginning to realize that we have developed the ability to exploit the material aspects of our existence at the expense of spirituality. Today one compulsively analyzes everything, revalues everything and tries to readjust oneself. But one is farther from the goal than ever. A person cannot make any radical changes in their pattern of life without understanding themselves, their place in the society, their function as a social being, their duties and obligations to fellow human beings, and above all their responsibility to themselves as an individual living with other individuals. Mental culture through meditation is without rival in helping the individual achieve such understanding and resulting happiness.

The main cause of all our neuroses, as are reflected in fears, tensions, frustrations, misunderstandings, angers, jealousies, etc., is attributable to the conditions of our own minds. As the *Dhammapada* said, anticipating Freud by thousands of years, "We are the results of what we were. We will be the results of what we are. Consequences of what our evil minds do will follow us like the cart that follows the cart-pulling ox. The results of what our pure minds do will follow us like our own shadows. Neither parents, nor relatives can do better than what the well-disciplined mind can do to us. A well-disciplined mind is conducive to happiness."⁴

Meditation is intended to purify the mind from psychic irritants and to calm its usual turbulence through the tranquility of mindfulness, concentration and insight. It is meditation that really teaches a person. Civilization makes a person only superficially and apparently gentle, noble and sophisticated, as river water smooths the surface of the stone that lies in the river bed. Meditation changes one inwardly through understanding of reality, as intense heat softens the stone whose surface is smoothed by water. The greater the understanding, the more flexible, the more adjustable, the more tolerant, the more compassionate a person can be. They would be ready to forgive and forget, like the most benevolent parent or teacher. Such parents and teachers

exercise great love and compassion towards their children regardless how poorly they behave. Similarly, the meditator, through profound understanding, relates to the world with love.

If one could control the whole world like a Caesar according to one's whims and fancies, presumably one would be happy. However, the practical way is to learn to control ourselves through meditation, which is the process of cultivating our minds. The former is impossible. The latter is difficult. You may prefer the difficult one to the impossible one.

Meditation is analogous to the cultivation of land. When you cultivate land, you must clear it of wild trees, till it, fertilize it, sow seeds and plant whatever you wish. Similarly, while cultivating your mind you have to destroy whatever irritates it, then reinforce it with energy and perseverance. Sow the seeds of faith,⁵ morality, mindfulness and wisdom.

In this manner, meditation changes your character and makes you aware of your thoughts, words and deeds. It composes you, eliminates your arrogance and antagonistic nature and makes your mind still and calm. Meditation prepares you to meet the vicissitudes of life. It reduces tension, fear, worry, passion and restlessness. Meditation sharpens the thinking power which influences your subconscious and intuition and precision of thought, and brings you the direct knowledge of things as they really are without any prejudice.

IV. Difficulties

Some students of meditation have become confused because of the many complicated theories that have been published and the different interpretations of these theories that have been enunciated. Also, fear has developed through the ages due to the decline of the practice of meditation. Another difficulty is the belief that a meditator

should be completely moral before he begins meditation. However, without a certain degree of concentration, one does not understand what morality is, or how and why it is important for the development of mind and mental culture.

Morality is a big question today, and many people ask what it is. This does not mean that those who ask this question are entirely ignorant of religious rules, social ethics, etc. But different interpretations of the concept make it difficult to sort out all the conflicting views of morality. Meditation accomplishes this sorting out process for the individual.

Morality, concentration and wisdom are integral and indispensable factors of meditation. A meditator, cultivating all of them together — not one after another in succession, because they grow together as one — applies oneself to meditation. Understanding generates compassion which, in turn, compels you not to commit thought, word or deed that may cause harm to yourself, to others or to both. As long as you do not understand the consequences of offensive thoughts, words, or deeds, you commit them. Therefore, if you wait until you are morally pure, holy and completely free from vices, you are like a person who waits until the ocean has become calm to take a bath.

Success in meditation or anything worthwhile cannot be achieved overnight. It requires a long, disciplined and sometimes even painful process of practice. At each sitting in meditation you gain some result. You may put yourself to the test to see for yourself how successful you are. We can understand many things abstractly but not the truth of meditation until it is practiced. It is not something to be talked about, but something to be experienced. All we can do in this short essay is to suggest some "recipes" for meditation.

V. Preparation

You must be intelligent in the choice of the right means of meditation. That is, you must choose the right place, time, subject, duration, and the number of times a day you are going to meditate, according to your daily routine.

1. *Time*: Choose your own time. It is impossible to suggest a universally acceptable time for all meditators, because it is an entirely personal matter. However, it is best to seek a regular time to meditate such as in the morning when one first wakes up and just before one retires to bed. In the morning, cleanse the mind through meditation and begin the day, and in the evening, cleanse the mind from accumulated tension during the day before retiring to bed.

2. *Place*: The same must be said about the place. A noiseless place may be preferable, but as there are few noiseless places in the world, choose the place which is most congenial for concentration.

3. *Posture*: Posture means the position of the body. You must also choose a suitable posture. One of the more commonly suggested postures is the *lotus* posture, which is known as the ascetic posture. "The right leg is crossed over the left; the feet rest upon the upper portion of the thighs, the soles turned upwards; the hands are placed just below the level of the navel, with the bend of the wrists pressed against the thighs, bracing the upper part of the body; the spinal column is straight like a pile of coins, one coin on the top of another. The diaphragm is expanded to its maximum fullness; the chin is up; one's sight is fixed on the tip of the nose, or else straight in front."⁶ One may even close the eyes. Do not exert or stiffen the body. Let it be normal, natural and supple. This is not an invariable rule of meditation. If you cannot sit on the floor in the described posture you may sit on a stool or a cushion, putting legs down and keeping the feet flat on the floor.

Sitting motionlessly with your eyes closed is essential for the gaining of concentration. Buddhist meditation masters say that the mind is analogous to a cup of muddy water.

The longer you keep a cup of muddy water, the more the mud settles down and the water will be seen clearly. Similarly, if we keep quiet without even moving our bodies, focusing our minds on the point where the breath touches, our minds settle down and experience the bliss of meditation.

You may have to sit a number of times in different postures before you select the most appropriate one for you. Do not make the seat too comfortable or too hard. If it is too comfortable you may fall asleep and if it is too hard you may develop pain. When you constantly sit in the selected posture you will be able to extend the period of sitting by a few minutes at each sitting. The extension of the period of sitting must be automatic. Do not force yourself to sit longer than you can sit comfortably.

4. *Determination*: Buddhist meditators are instructed to take the Three-Fold Guidance⁷ in order to instill confidence in the meditators. Then one must make a firm determination: "I shall be going now by the Path trodden by the Buddha and great holy disciples. But an indolent person cannot follow that Path. May my energy prevail! May I succeed!"⁸

5. *Radiate Universal Loving Friendliness*: Say the following sentences to yourself feeling the thoughts before the commencement of meditation:

"May I be well, happy and peaceful; may no harm come to me; may no difficulty come to me; may no problem come to me; may I always meet with success.

"May I also have patience, courage, understanding and determination to meet and overcome inevitable difficulties, problems and failures in life.

"May my parents, teachers, relatives, and friends be well, happy and peaceful. May no harm come to them; may no difficulty come to them; may no problem come to them; may they always meet with success.

"May they also have patience, courage, understanding and determination to meet and overcome inevitable difficulties, problems and failures in life.

"May all the persons who are indifferent to me, my enemies and all living beings be well, happy and peaceful; may no harm come to them; may no difficulty come to them; may no problem come to them; may they always meet with success.

"May they also have patience, courage, understanding and determination to meet and overcome inevitable difficulties, problems and failures in life."

The practice of Universal Loving *Friendliness* before and after meditation helps you sleep well and get up well; it prevents dreadful nightmares and helps you become pleasant to human beings as well as non-human beings. It helps you gain concentration faster.

6. *Subject*. The subject of meditation should be such that it promotes your mindfulness, is easily transportable (you should be able to take it along with you wherever you go), and is free from desire, anger and ignorance. One subject of such description is one's own BREATHING.

VI. *Commencement of the Practice of Mindfulness on Breath*

When you sit down, according to your choice, you must relax your body completely. Take deep breaths for a few minutes in order to notice the point where the breath touches. When you breathe deeply in and out, your breath can be noticed touching

either nostril or tip of the nose or upper lip. This variation of the touching sensation of the breath depends on the formation of the nose. Each individual must meditate to discover the point where the breath touches. Once you notice it, focus your mind on that spot, and breathe normally. Do not exert yourself.

Some meditation teachers instruct their pupils to notice the feeling (the simple feeling of touch, not complex feelings), then focus their minds on that feeling. Some others may instruct you to notice the touch of your body with the seat, or hand with the hand, or leg with the other leg. Some others may instruct you to notice the movements of the abdomen when you breathe in and out. But the method prescribed in the *Satipatthana Sutta*, Discourse on Mindfulness, says precisely that one must begin focusing the attention on one's breathing and then notice all other physical and mental phenomena. However, you should concentrate on what you are most comfortable with. You may begin with breath and then go on to the movement of the abdomen, feelings, thought, or consciousness; or first on movement of the abdomen, then on breathing, consciousness, thought, etc. Either way may be equally effective. All this can be done in one sitting.

Focusing the attention on the point where the breath touches is most difficult at the beginning. This is not a breathing exercise, but the exercise of mindfulness, by keeping the mind on the point where the breath touches and by noticing the natural, normal and unexerted flow of breath. Sometimes it is long and sometimes it is short. When the breath is very long, the feeling of touch remains correspondingly long. When it is short, the feeling is also short.

1. *Counting.* You may follow one method or another to gain concentration. One very effective method is counting. Take a long breath. When the lungs are full, mentally count "one" and exhale the breath completely until the lungs are empty of fresh air. Then count mentally "two." Take a long breath again and count "three" and exhale completely as before. Count mentally "four." Follow this process ten times. If you do it more than ten times, you may begin to concentrate on the counting rather than the

breathing. Repeat this between ten and fifty times until you begin to feel that your breathing is so refined and quiet or fast that you cannot notice both inhalation and exhalation separately. Then you may count both as one and only up to five. However, if you are not comfortable in counting, then you may give it up and go to the next step, which is connecting the inhaled breath with the exhaled breath. This means that you must notice the feeling of the touch of breath disregarding the concept of inhalation and exhalation.

2. *Concentration*: Observing the feeling of touch of long breath you should breathe in and breathe out; observing the feeling of touch of short breath you should breathe in and breathe out. When you continue this for some time you will feel the touch of breath as an object or a body. Then realizing the body of breath, breathe in and breathe out. In this way of focusing all your attention or mindfulness only on the feeling of the touch of the breath, ignoring its in-coming function or out-going function, your mind remains concentrated on the same point where both in-coming and out-going breaths touch.

Neither should you think, nor let your mind remain idle during the entire period you are focusing your attention on the point where the breath touches. Thinking interrupts your concentration. When you are wrapped up in your thoughts you would be easily carried away without any control. Idleness, on the other hand, puts you to sleep and simply wastes your time.

Focusing your mind on the object is a most active function which creates a situation where you enjoy freedom from psychic irritants. This clear state of mind, experienced even for a moment, is a most blissful state. Nevertheless, do not rush to experience this wonderful result overnight. Meditative experience is not a competition. Meditation is an attempt to realize the truth of life through careful observation of life through mindfulness. At the end of each session of meditation you feel the freshness of mind. Then, with that fresh mind, you may look at your problems in life. But during meditation do not think of them.

3. *Removal of distracted thought.* When an evil, unskillful thought connected with desire, hate and delusion arises in your mind through reflection on an adventitious object, you should, in order to get rid of that, reflect on a different object which is connected with skill.⁹ When evil and unskillful thoughts are eliminated, the mind stands firm, settles down, becomes unified and concentrated, just within your subject of meditation. If these thoughts continue to arise in you, then you must ponder over the disadvantages of them just like a man who feels horrified, humiliated and disgusted because of the carcass of a snake, dog or human that is hung round his neck. If they do not disappear you must apply all your effort, energy and psychological force to avoid their appearing in the mind. If hateful thoughts, for instance, arise in the mind, then you must concentrate on friendliness, compassion, equanimity and even-mindedness.

When you follow these instructions very carefully you may be able to ignore some of your external disturbances, such as noises which, during meditation, could be heard louder than at other times. You also may be able to overcome some of your internal disturbances, such as lust, anger, dissatisfaction, sloth and torpor, hallucinations, fancies, fantasies, daydreams, etc. But some of them disguise themselves and appear in the mind in different forms. This is what is called "deceiving Dhamma." If you, for instance, try not to entertain your sexual desires while meditating, your mind starts building up different types of thoughts indirectly related to this desire and begins to appear in your mind as compassion, sympathy, loving friendliness, generosity, justice, duty, obeying the nature of life or fulfillment of fundamental human needs, and so on.

Sometimes you may notice words, phrases, sentences and objects appearing in the mind. Because of their appearance at random your mind could be extremely perplexed, unsettled or restless like a banner on a mountaintop or the waves in the ocean. At such times, recall the purpose of meditation saying to yourself: "I am sitting here not to entertain these thoughts, but to focus my mind on the breath which is universal and common to all living beings." Sometimes before you complete saying this sentence your mind settles down. Sometimes you may have to repeat it several times before you are able to focus your mind on the breath.

If you are still unable to arrest these thoughts, then notice their appearance in the mind. Notice also their duration of stay in the mind. When you do this they disappear; then bring your mind back to the breath. Repeat this process each time they appear. If you relax and ignore their presence, they do not appear in the mind like unwelcome guests. It is very strange that when you try to pay more and more bare attention to any thought or disturbance it becomes weaker and weaker. However, if you try to push them away, or force them out, they become stronger and stronger.

4. *Observation of Sensation*: If there are any pains, then pay attention to them noticing not more, not less, than the degree of pain that is present. Do not divide your attention between feeling and any other object. Do not think: "My leg is hurting; my back is hurting," and so forth, or "I experience the pain," etc." This means that you should not entertain "I," "mine," or "my" consciousness identifying yourself with the pain. Simply notice the pain. It is your "I" and "mine" consciousness that notices pain, pleasure or neutral feeling. So long as it is there you are subject to suffering because any time your "I" and "mine" consciousness is hurt, you are unhappy. When you entertain "I" and "mine" consciousness you will have no time to realize reality because you are building a conceptual bridge to approach reality, which is to be experienced directly. If you begin to formulate words, such as "pain" or "ache," you also may wonder which is the most appropriate word, its etymology, sound, usage, origin, meaning, why it is and why it is not another, etc., and you will involve yourself in conceptions and ideas.

You can forget pain temporarily though; mindful observation of it enables you to gain full knowledge of it, its duration, its disappearance and how it disappears. The pain that is experienced during meditation is not a result of any sickness, but a result of wrong sitting position. Even when you sit in a selected position, you may still have some pain for some time. It may, however, not be perpetually unbearable. The pain that may arise again and again may be the result of slanting your body backward or forward or to the side. If you mindfully observe it, then you can not only adjust it but also avoid future

pain in sitting and extend the period of sitting. If you do not eliminate pain mindfully, you may not be able to extend the duration of sitting.

A severely unpleasant sensation that is not held with mindfulness gives rise to fear, anxiety, anger and hate. Therefore, take great care not to mentally reach beyond nor fall short of the sensation as it presents itself in the body or mind. This means that your attention on feeling should be simultaneous with the rise of feeling. If the attention rises after sensation, it may fall short of the sensation. The time relation of attention to sensation should not be one of future or past but of the simple and immediate present. If severe sensations arise simultaneously on the head, arms, legs, back, etc., then you must pick up the point where the pain is mostly acute and concentrate on it. As mindfulness penetrates into the sensation you must not conceptualize the phenomena. Any conception or discursive reasoning should be replaced by simple, clear awareness of sensation alone.

Furthermore, you should neither be attached to a pleasant sensation, nor should you hate an unpleasant one. Do not be perturbed when the pleasant sensation disappears and do not lose your patience when an unpleasant sensation continues. This condition of mind helps you to be composed at any moment of distress. When you continue this mindfulness of sensations, you will be able to observe the beginning, duration and end of every sensation. This observation will enable you to replace the painful sensations with dispassionate love, which is free from self-identification and discrimination between your loved ones and those whom you hate.

5. *Concentrating on all activities.* You should endeavor to "maintain mindfulness of all activities and perceptions throughout the day, beginning with the first thought and perception upon waking, and ending with the last thought and perception when falling asleep."¹⁰ As it is most difficult to keep a balance of mindfulness all the time during the day, it is better to begin with noticing the position of your body for some time and then extend this mindfulness to other activities such as eating, dressing, washing, etc. This means the practice of mindfulness ideally is a full-time practice. You may also set apart

an hour, or half hour, or fifteen minutes to observe your pleasant, unpleasant or neutral feelings, consciousness and mental contents (hindrances, fetters, faith, etc.) during that particular period of time. As mind or body does not remain still without any function at any given moment you should be able to notice one movement or another; one thought or another. You do not have to verbalize in your mind to notice touch, feeling, mental contents, etc. Just notice what is happening by a process of bare attention.

Meditation can be a twenty-four-hour practice only if it is done profitably. This means that you must be able to apply the result of meditation to your daily activities. The mindfulness that you gain in observing your breath will enable you to look at your daily problems mindfully and find solutions for them. When you face an irritating situation, for instance, you do not have to run into a quiet corner and sit down thinking of how to face that situation. If you are always mindful you will be able to face inevitable problems from which you cannot run away. This means that any moment you are irritated you must recall your mindfulness to guard you against further irritations and confusions and solve as many of your problems as possible without worrying yourself about those which you could not solve.

Suppose you are forced to do something against your conscience, sense of justice or generally accepted moral and ethical principles, what would you do? If you do what you are forced into, you will be going against your conscience. If you do not do it, your life will be in danger or you would not be in peace in the rest of your life. If you meditate daily, your mindfulness itself will suggest to you a most appropriate solution for such situations. Nobody can make one solution for all situations or many solutions for any situation. Each one of us must meditate to gain the intuitive insight which, in the long run, suggests to us the most satisfactorily appropriate solutions to our problems.

You may attain Enlightenment at any moment if you keep your mind bent upon meditation. The minds that are trained to look at things impartially are always flexible and are open to Enlightenment faster than the inflexible minds, because flexible minds

are ready to accept truth at any time at any place from anybody. This means that meditators have to keep their minds open all the time.

Mindfulness is also assisted by the process of intentionally slowing down your thoughts, words and movements. But it will be very difficult for you to keep pace with most regular activities. However, it will furnish you with most surprising, as well as useful, information about the workings of your own mind: the mechanism of your emotions and passions, the reliability of your reasoning power, your true and pretended motives and many other aspects of mental life. Bare attention brings order into the untidy corners of the mind. It will lead you to clear comprehension, to remain rational, mindful, peaceful, penetrating into irrational areas of the mind. It will make you aware of how much you are responsible for your own neuroses, manifesting in miseries, fears, tensions, sufferings, weaknesses and various limitations. It helps improve spiritual life by increasing and deepening your understanding of your own mental process.

When you pay no attention to any external objects or internal psychic irritants, and focus the whole attention on your subject — BREATH — you may feel that your breathing is gradually becoming tranquil and peaceful.

6. *Sign of concentration.* Then there arises in you the desire to continue. With this desire, continue to breathe in and breathe out until you become very joyful. You will thereafter realize a succession of states, not all at once or at one time. Your approach must be as follows:

Continue breathing in and breathing out mindfully until you begin to experience happiness. Experiencing happiness, breathe in and breathe out; experiencing the thought-elements, breathe in and breathe out; tranquilizing the thought-elements, breathe in and breathe out. Realizing the state of your breath, breathe in and breathe out; gladdening the mind, breathe in and breathe out; concentrating the mind, breathe in and breathe out; releasing or relaxing the mind, breathe in and breathe out;

contemplating transitoriness, breathe in and breathe out; discerning freedom from passion, breathe in and breathe out; discerning the cessation of irritants, breathe in and breathe out; discerning your entire freedom from psychic irritants, breathe in and breathe out.

This exercise of mindfulness, which is apparently passive, as some people think, is the most active state of mind, so active that the mind maintains the balance between very strong emotional factors and reasoning power. When in meditation if you are not mindful of your breath at this stage, lights, colors, geometrical patterns begin to appear before you. There is not any particular order or sequence of their appearance. Sometimes they are similar to what you have already perceived and sometimes they are extremely attractive. Because of their familiarity and attractiveness, you may be attached to them. If you do not avoid them mindfully, you can be deluded at this point.

At this stage you may begin to note your breath becoming more refined or fainter and fainter and in the place of the feel of the touch of breath, you might begin to notice a very bright spark of light, white in color. This sign of calmness is very subtle and so imperceptible that you may even think that the breath has ceased altogether. You may even feel that you are floating in the air. However, you should not move away from your seat; neither should you get up nor move in the seat itself at this point. If you do, you will lose what you have gained and then have to start all over again. When you are thus maintaining one-pointedness of mind you will experience the after-image which replaces the spark of light and presents itself like a soft piece of cotton or a cooling breeze; or like a star; or a round ruby or a pearl; or harsh contact of a pointed stick; or like a long string; or a wreath of flowers; or a crest of smoke; or like a cobweb; or a cloud. Focusing your mind on this sign is analogous to keeping your eyes on the teeth of a saw which come into contact with the timber. A man who saws timber with a handsaw will keep his eyes on the point where the drawn line and the saw's teeth come into contact. He may not follow the teeth of the saw that pass through the timber, though aware of them. Similarly, you may be well aware of the long or short breath and

yet not following the breath. The after-image is the representation of breath which you must maintain during the entire period of meditation.

When you maintain it very clearly, you will notice arising three very important thought moments in succession - one after another. They are called preliminary concentration, intermediate concentration and concentration proper. The first is the concentration on perception and the mental image of the breath. This is the power of the individualizing of breath developed by constant practice. The second is the intermediate concentration which arises between the conceptualized image, or after-image, and the third thought-moment which is real concentration. At the attainment of real concentration, you will inhibit greed, ill-will, sloth and torpor, restlessness and doubt in the following manner.

Wakefulness of mind inhibits sloth and torpor. Clear comprehension inhibits doubts. Joy inhibits ill-will. Joy develops by degrees. "At first it is a dull or slight sense of interest, growing keener and keener through oscillating interest, amounting to thrilling emotion followed finally by interest amounting to rapture."¹¹ Rapture with a pleasurable, easeful happy feeling inhibits worry or restlessness. Joy is similar to a thirsty traveler's feeling or thrilled attention excited by the sight of an oasis at a distance. Happiness is similar to the feeling derived from drinking the water. The concentration born of joy and happiness inhibits greed. This is the first absorption born from detachment, accompanied by wakefulness and clear comprehension and filled with rapture and joy. After the by-passing of wakefulness and clear comprehension, and by gaining inner tranquility and oneness of mind, your mind enters into a state far beyond mere wakefulness and clear comprehension, the second absorption, which is born of concentration and filled with rapture and joy. After the fading away of rapture, mind dwells in equanimity, mindful and clearly aware. Thus, the mind enters the third absorption. After the giving up of pleasure and pain, and through the disappearance of previous joy and grief, the mind enters into a state beyond pleasure and pain, into the fourth absorption, which is purified by equanimity and mindfulness.

Attainment of this stage of mind "is a very important psychological moment, marking an epoch in your mental experience because you have, for the first time in your life, tasted something unlike anything you ever experienced before. This feeling is simply indescribable."¹² You will feel an entirely changed person, purged from the hindrances. Once you have attained this stage, you must cultivate the habit of reflecting on his thought or one of its constituent factors. The other habit you must cultivate is the habit of reviewing the same.

After this stage it will be very easy for you to notice the moments of absence, presence, arising of non-arisen greed, hatred, sloth and torpor, agitation and worry and doubt in your mind. Observe the manner of arising material form, feeling, ideation, mental formation, consciousness, beliefs, skeptical thoughts, belief in purification through external observance, belief in rules and rites, sensual lust, ill-will, craving for material existence, craving for immaterial existence, conceit, restlessness and ignorance through the contact of eye and visible objects, the ears and sounds, the nose and smells, the tongue and flavor, the body and tactile objects, and the mind and mind-objects. Contemplate the origin of them, their duration and their dissolution internally, as well as externally, comparing yourself with all external things and beings. Observe the presence and absence of the Factors of Enlightenment in your mind. When mindfulness, investigation of reality, energy, rapture, tranquility, concentration and equanimity are present in you, you must know them; when they are absent from you, you must know it too. Then observe the suffering¹³ of life: when fear, tension, etc. arise in the mind, notice them, their duration, and their disappearance from the mind. Contemplate cultivating thoughts free from lust, ill-will and cruelty; contemplate abstinence from lying, tale-bearing, harsh speech and vain talk; contemplate abstinence from killing, stealing and adultery; contemplate blameless methods of living; contemplate avoiding the arising of evil in you, overcoming evil thoughts that are already in you; contemplate arousing salutary states that have already arisen.

In this way you must first eliminate most gross weaknesses such as killing, stealing, adultery, lying, strong drink, gossip, slandering and harsh language and then begin to inhibit the hindrances. Once they are eliminated your mind turns to weakening minute

impurities, abandoning them and keeping them in check. When it is done, concentrate on that state of mind. Then comes a time when your mind becomes inwardly well-established, settles down, is lofty and tranquilized.¹⁴

Acquiring knowledge from books and teachers is a necessary condition, but not sufficient for the attainment of peace, happiness and Enlightenment. The sufficient condition is practice. This is the product of the natural development of the mind, due to the operation of casual processes. This is a direct knowledge which is communicable and hence not personal, subjective or mystic. This is what is called 'come and see (*ehi passika*).'

VI. *Personality*. Your gross psychic irritants, such as misconduct with regard to body, speech or mind will be destroyed. Your medium psychic irritants, such as thoughts of destruction and ill-will, will be destroyed. Your subtle psychic irritants, such as attachment to your race, country, egotism, etc., will be destroyed.

When they are destroyed, your mind remains pure. Then you maintain sobriety, self-reliance and an observant attitude. You may act confidently. You will be generous, kind, sympathetic, enjoy peace within yourself and think positively. Your senses are keen and guarded. You will speak gently, politely, kindly and only the truth; pleasant words come out of your mouth to please others. The mind becomes calm; thinking is very clear. You will know what psychic irritants you have and what you have destroyed. To you all life is alike. You may notice the physical differences in different beings, but life appears to you the same. Your emotions are calmed because your mind is temporarily free from hatred, greed, delusion, fear, tension, anxiety, neurosis and frustration, and full of universal love, compassion, understanding and wisdom.

"No one can meditate without wisdom.

No one can be wise without meditation.

One who has both — meditation and wisdom —

is close to peace, emancipation and Nibbana.¹⁵

Notes

1. Theravada is school of seniors or elders: more orthodox tradition of Buddhism.
2. Mahayana is school of great vehicle: less orthodox tradition of Buddhism.
3. Nepal, Malaysia, Singapore and India have both Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism.
4. *Dhammapada*: Stanzas 1, 2, 36, & 43.
5. Here faith (*saddha*) means confidence in what you gain as you practice meditation.
6. Paravahera Vajirañana Mahathera. *Buddhist Meditation in Theory and Practice*. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Buddhist Missionary Society, 2505. p. 136.
7. Three-Fold Guidance: Theravada Buddhists repeat the following threefold formula three times on every auspicious occasion, every day in the morning and every evening before going to bed. They recite them in Pali language:
"I go to the Buddha for my guidance.
I go to the Dhamma for my guidance.
I go to the Sangha for my guidance."
8. Nyanaponika Thera. *The Heart of Buddhist Meditation. The Heart of Buddhist Meditation*. London: Rider & Company, 1962. p. 92.

9. The word "skill" and "unskill" are used here in the place of *puñña* (skill) and *papa* or *apuñña* (unskill) in Pali. *Puñña* means any thought, word or deed conducive to peace, happiness and purification of mind. *Papa* or *apuñña* means any thought, word or deed that irritates the mind, disturbs and retards the purification of mind. All the skillful thoughts are put under three categories, such as unselfishness, universal loving-kindness and wisdom, and all the unskillful thoughts are put under the three categories of greed, hatred and ignorance.

10. Nyanaponika Thera. *The Heart of Buddhist Meditation*. p. 92.

11. Anuruddha Thera: *Compendium of Philosophy*. Buddhist Publication Society. p. 56.

12. Anuruddha Thera : *Compendium of Philosophy*. pp 57–58.

13. The "suffering" is an incomplete word to express the meaning of *dukkha* in Pali. *Dukkha* means all types of feelings; pleasant, unpleasant, neutral, their changes; pains, worries, fears, tensions, neuroses, lusts, ideations, mental formations, consciousness, forms, their changes, etc. The word should be understood according to its context.

14. This state is known as *Jhana* in Buddhist literature.

15. *Dhammapada*. Stanza 372.

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