Nibbānagāminipaṭipadā · Mini · Cuốn 2 / Volume 2

Subjects of Tranquillity Meditation — B

Pa-Auk Tawya Sayadaw

English

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Volume 2 — Subjects of Tranquillity Meditation — B

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Nibbānagāminipaṭipadā — The Practice Leading to Nibbāna (Abridged). Volume 2. Subjects of Tranquillity Meditation (Samatha kammaṭṭhāna) — B. Pa-Auk Tawya Sayadaw.

DEVELOP CONCENTRATION

Samādhiṃ, bhikkhave, bhāvetha. Samāhito, bhikkhave, bhikkhu yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti. Kiñca yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti? “Idaṃ dukkhan”ti yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti. “Ayaṃ dukkhasamudayo”ti yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti. “Ayaṃ dukkhanirodho”ti yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti. “Ayaṃ dukkhanirodhagāminī paṭipadā”ti yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti. Samādhiṃ, bhikkhave, bhāvetha. Samāhito, bhikkhave, bhikkhu yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti. (Saṃ, 3, 363.)

Bhikkhus, develop concentration. A bhikkhu who is concentrated understands things as they really are, without distortion. What does he understand as it really is?

He understands as it really is, “This is the Noble Truth of Suffering.” He understands as it really is, “This is the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering.” He understands as it really is, “This is the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering—Nibbāna, where suffering ceases.” He understands as it really is, “This is the Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering—Nibbāna.”

Bhikkhus, establish concentration. A bhikkhu who is concentrated understands things as they really are, without distortion. (Saṃyutta Nikāya 3, p. 363.)

Bìa là ảnh JPG rời, không có trang PDF. Số dẫn giữ theo bìa; chưa đối chiếu độc lập ấn bản Saṃyutta Nikāya.

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Nibbānagāminipaṭipadā

The Practice Leading to Nibbāna (Abridged) — Volume 2

Subjects of Tranquillity Meditation (Samatha kammaṭṭhāna) — B

Pa-Auk Tawya Sayadaw

Dhamma verses and aspiration

Sabbadānaṃ dhammadānaṃ jināti. Sabbarasaṃ dhammaraso jināti. Sabbaratiṃ dhammarati jināti. Taṇhakkhayo sabbadukkhaṃ jināti.

The gift of Dhamma surpasses every gift. The taste of Dhamma surpasses every taste. Delight in Dhamma surpasses every delight. The destruction of craving overcomes all suffering.

Ciraṃ tiṭṭhatu saddhammo, dhamme hontu sagāravā.

May the Buddha's true Dhamma endure for a long time, until its final limit. May all beings honour the three kinds of true Dhamma.

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Attention to repulsiveness and the skeleton meditation subject

Miến / Burmese 1

SUBJECTS OF TRANQUILLITY MEDITATION — B

Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa.

Homage to the Blessed One, the Arahant, the Perfectly Enlightened One.

ATTENTION TO REPULSIVENESS AND THE SKELETON MEDITATION SUBJECT
In this second part of tranquillity meditation, I shall continue by briefly explaining how to develop the four protective meditation subjects before proceeding to insight. For most meditators, developing those protective subjects is easier after developing the white kasiṇa, or the ten kasiṇas and eight attainments. This also greatly supports the detailed method of four-elements meditation. Since there are also many methods of discerning the meditation subject of the four elements, I shall first describe how to discern the thirty-two parts of the body, the skeleton meditation subject, and how to proceed from the skeleton to the white kasiṇa and then, successively, through the eight attainments on each kasiṇa.

Re-establish ānāpāna fourth-jhāna concentration until the light of wisdom shines brilliantly. When its light is very strong, use it to discern the thirty-two parts of the body. Divide the twenty body parts with predominant earth element into four groups of five, and the twelve with predominant water element into two groups of six. Begin with one group at a time. When, looking in a clear mirror, you can see your own face distinctly, you should be able to see the thirty-two parts just as distinctly. If the light of knowledge fades and the body parts become unclear while discerning them, re-establish ānāpāna fourth-jhāna concentration…

The thirty-two parts of the body: predominant earth element

Miến / Burmese 2

…and when the light becomes strong, discern the body parts again. Use the light of knowledge in this way.

THE THIRTY-TWO PARTS OF THE BODY

TWENTY PARTS WITH PREDOMINANT EARTH ELEMENT (PAṬHAVĪ)

1. Kesā — head hair — 44 material phenomena.
2. Lomā — body hair — 44 material phenomena.
3. Nakhā — nails — 44 material phenomena.
4. Dantā — teeth — 44 material phenomena.
5. Taco — skin, the outer skin and inner skin — 44 material phenomena.
[The skin pentad: tacapañcaka.]

6. Maṃsaṃ — flesh — 44 material phenomena.
7. Nhāru — sinews — 44 material phenomena.
8. Aṭṭhi — bones — 44 material phenomena.
9. Aṭṭhimiñjaṃ — bone marrow — 44 material phenomena.
10. Vakkaṃ — kidneys — 44 material phenomena.
[The kidney pentad: vakkapañcaka.]

11. Hadayaṃ — heart — 44 material phenomena.
12. Yakanaṃ — liver — 44 material phenomena.
13. Kilomakaṃ — membranes — 44 material phenomena.
14. Pihakaṃ — spleen — 44 material phenomena.
15. Papphāsaṃ — lungs — 44 material phenomena.
[The lung pentad: papphāsapañcaka.]

16. Antaṃ — large intestine — 44 material phenomena.
17. Antaguṇaṃ — small intestine, the intestinal coils — 44 material phenomena.
18. Udariyaṃ — undigested food — 8 material phenomena.
19. Karīsaṃ — faeces, digested food — 8 material phenomena.
20. Matthaluṅgaṃ — brain — 44 material phenomena.
[The brain pentad: matthaluṅgapañcaka.]

Twelve parts with predominant water element

Miến / Burmese 3

TWELVE PARTS WITH PREDOMINANT WATER ELEMENT (ĀPO)

1. Pittaṃ — bile, contained in the gall bladder and free bile — 44 material phenomena.
2. Semhaṃ — phlegm — 44.
3. Pubbo — pus, temperature-produced (utuja) — 8.
4. Lohitaṃ — blood, contained blood and circulating blood — 44.
5. Sedo — sweat, consciousness-produced and temperature-produced (cittaja + utuja) — 16.
6. Medo — fat — 44.
[The fat hexad: medachakka.]

7. Assu — tears, consciousness-produced and temperature-produced — 16.
8. Vasā — grease — 44.
9. Kheḷo — saliva, consciousness-produced and temperature-produced — 16.
10. Siṅghānikā — nasal mucus, consciousness-produced and temperature-produced — 16.
11. Lasikā — joint fluid — 44.
12. Muttaṃ — urine, temperature-produced — 8.
[The urine hexad: muttachakka.]

Good meditator, using the light arising through ānāpāna fourth jhāna, practise until you are proficient from head hair down to urine, and from urine back to head hair. Discern forwards from head hair downwards, then backwards from urine up to head hair, seeing distinctly with knowledge. When you can do this, your internal practice is thoroughly familiar, firm, and proficient (paguṇa).

Then take the support of the light arising through ānāpāna fourth jhāna…

The three entrances

Miến / Burmese 4

…At the nearest place reached by that light, especially directly in front, discern the thirty-two body parts in the continuity of a good person or another living being. Repeatedly discern forwards from head hair down to urine and backwards from urine up to head hair. When successful, alternate once internally and once externally, again and again. Only when you can repeatedly alternate internally and externally does the strength of development increase.

Following this method, gradually discern from near to far, extending throughout all ten directions. Examine each person or animal reached by the light of ānāpāna fourth jhāna, one being after another, alternating internally and externally. If, whenever you discern, you no longer see a man, woman, buffalo, cow, or animal, but only a collection of thirty-two body parts, you have become thoroughly familiar and proficient, internally and externally (paguṇa).

THREE ENTRANCES

Koṭṭhāsānaṃ paguṇakālato paṭṭhāya tīsu mukhesu ekena mukhena vimuccissati, kammaṭṭhānaṃ vaṇṇato vā paṭikūlato vā suññato vā upaṭṭhāti. Pe. Ākaṅkhamānassa vaṇṇato ākaṅkhamānassa paṭikūlato ākaṅkhamānassa suññato kammaṭṭhānaṃ upaṭṭhahissatiyeva. (Abhi-ṭṭha, 2, 242–243.)

From the time the parts of the body become familiar, one will be liberated through one of three entrances. The meditation subject appears as colour, as repulsive, or as empty. …pe… For one wishing to attend to colour it appears as colour; for one wishing to attend to repulsiveness, as repulsive; for one wishing to attend to emptiness, as empty.

After practising the thirty-two body parts thoroughly and firmly, internally and externally, if from that time one enters through any one of the three great entrances leading to Nibbāna…

Attention to repulsiveness

Miến / Burmese 5

…one will certainly be freed from defilements. The meditation subject can appear:

1. As colour (vaṇṇa), through a colour kasiṇa.
2. As repulsive (paṭikūla), through the mode of repulsiveness.
3. As empty (suññata), through the mode of emptiness, in which no self is found.

1. For one wishing to attend to colour, the subject appears as a colour kasiṇa.
2. For one wishing to attend to repulsiveness, it appears as repulsive.
3. For one wishing to attend to emptiness, it appears as empty. (Abhidhamma Commentary 2, p. 243.)

According to this commentary, when you have become thoroughly proficient in the thirty-two parts, both internally and externally, you can enter any of these three great entrances leading to Nibbāna. I shall now explain these three methods in sequence.

ATTENTION TO REPULSIVENESS (PAṬIKŪLAMANASIKĀRA)

Ettha pana attano jīvamānakasarīre paṭikūlanti parikammaṃ karontassa appanāpi upacārampi jāyati. Parassa jīvamānakasarīre paṭikūlanti manasikarontassa neva appanā jāyati, na upacāraṃ. Nanu ca dasasu asubhesu ubhayampetaṃ jāyatīti. Āma jāyati. Tāni hi anupādinnakapakkhe ṭhitāni, tasmā tattha appanāpi upacārampi jāyati. Idaṃ pana upādinnakapakkhe ṭhitaṃ, tenevettha ubhayampetaṃ na jāyati. Asubhānupassanāsaṅkhātā pana vipassanābhāvanā hotīti veditabbā. (Abhi-ṭṭha, 2, 248.)

Here, when carrying out the preliminary work on one's own living body as repulsive, both access and absorption arise. When attending to another living body as repulsive, neither absorption nor access arises. But does not the Asubhasutta in the Suttanipāta teach that access and absorption arise in both cases? That discourse concerns a body without consciousness. In that case both occur. What is intended here, however, is hair, nails, and so forth in a living body. Attention to repulsiveness in them brings neither access nor absorption, but is beneficial to the perception of foulness. (Abhidhamma Commentary 2, p. 243.)

Internal and external repulsiveness

Miến / Burmese 6

According to this commentary, when the meditator carries out preliminary work on one or several of the thirty-two parts of his own living body as “repulsive, repulsive,” either access or absorption jhāna can occur. When he carries out preliminary work on the body parts of another living being, external to himself, as “repulsive, repulsive,” neither access nor absorption occurs. Nevertheless, the perception of foulness benefits.

Question: In foulness meditation taking any of the ten kinds of corpse as object, are not both access and absorption concentration possible?

Answer: Yes, they are possible. Those ten kinds of corpse are without consciousness, are they not? Therefore foulness meditation taking those corpses as object can produce either access or absorption concentration. (Abhidhamma Commentary 2, p. 248.)

The thirty-two parts of the body in the continuity of a living being, however, are accompanied by consciousness. Consequently, when one attends to the thirty-two parts in an external being as “repulsive, repulsive,” neither access nor absorption occurs. If those thirty-two parts belong to a dead body, access or absorption can occur…

The Mūlaṭīkā explanation

Miến / Burmese 7

…This is contemplation of the body. Its explanation will appear in the insight section. (Abhidhamma Commentary 2, p. 248.)

THE MŪLAṬĪKĀ EXPLANATION

“Anupādinnakavatthu”: The commentary explains that the ten kinds of corpse taken as object in foulness meditation are devoid of life. In the same way, if the thirty-two parts in an external living being appear as lifeless in the continuity of a meditator capable of taking them as lifeless, as in the case of the Venerable Mahātissa dwelling on Cetiya Mountain or the novice attending the Venerable Saṅgharakkhita, the body appears as if belonging to someone whose life has ended, like the ten kinds of corpse. Understand that this points to attaining access concentration. (Mūlaṭīkā 2, p. 155.)

“Atthissa kāye”—“in that person’s body there are [the thirty-two parts]”.

To apprehend hair and the other parts as “another person's hair,” and so forth, is to apprehend them under the aspect of a being. Instead, by apprehending simply “imasmiṃ kāye—in this body,” without taking it as somebody's body, apprehension of a being is removed. Thus, just as one does not call one's own body “my body,” but apprehends it as “in this body,” attention to “I” is removed, and mindfulness inclines towards and becomes established near one's own thirty-two parts appearing distinctly to knowledge associated with concentration. Likewise…

Ảnh Miến in Atthissa kāye ở đoạn kế tiếp.

Access and absorption in repulsiveness meditation

Miến / Burmese 8

…when another person's thirty-two parts become clear, mindfulness can incline towards that body: its thirty-two parts can become manifest. Nevertheless, absorption cannot be attained by attending to repulsiveness in another person's thirty-two parts. When the good meditator proceeds to insight, however, in accordance with the Vijayasutta (Suttanipāta, pp. 307–308), insight contemplating repulsiveness—seeing one's own and another's body alike—can take another person's thirty-two parts as object. Understand in this sense the commentarial statement that there is insight development called contemplation of repulsiveness. This is the Mūlaṭīkā explanation. (Mūlaṭīkā 2, pp. 155–156.)

According to this Mūlaṭīkā author, both access and absorption can arise with the thirty-two internal parts. Externally, when another living body is viewed as a corpse, without life, access can also arise through attending to repulsiveness in its thirty-two parts. This access has five jhāna factors. Absorption also has five factors, but their strength is greater; the jhāna factors are the same, with a difference in power.

Because the five hindrances have been suppressed, the meditating mind can remain firmly concentrated on its object at access. In one who has attained absorption, because the jhāna factors appear distinctly with great strength…

The skeleton meditation subject

Miến / Burmese 9

…the meditating mind can remain firmly established on its object. At access the jhāna factors have not yet arisen with their full power; at absorption they have arisen with their full power. (See Visuddhimagga 1, p. 123.)

THE SKELETON MEDITATION SUBJECT (AṬṬHIKAKAMMAṬṬHĀNA)

A meditator thoroughly proficient in the thirty-two parts can develop attention to repulsiveness by taking either all thirty-two parts together or each part individually as object. (See Visuddhimagga 1, p. 257.)

Here I shall explain practice taking the skeleton alone as object. You may begin internally or externally, as you wish. In this account I begin internally.

Good meditator, re-establish the ānāpāna fourth jhāna already attained. When the light becomes brilliant and bright, discern your thirty-two internal parts. Externally, discern the thirty-two parts in the nearest living being reached by the light. Alternate internally and externally once or twice. Then discern your entire internal skeleton with knowledge. When it appears clearly, take its repulsive, loathsome nature as object:

1. “Paṭikūla, paṭikūla—repulsive, repulsive”; or
2. “Aṭṭhikapaṭikūla—the repulsive skeleton”; or
3. “Aṭṭhika, aṭṭhika—the repulsive skeleton, the repulsive skeleton”.

The learning sign and counterpart sign

Miến / Burmese 10

Contemplate in Pāli or Burmese, as you wish. Place mindfulness of development on that repulsive skeleton object for one hour, two hours, and so on, and endeavour to remain firmly established. Well supported by the powerful decisive-support condition of ānāpāna fourth jhāna, this attention to repulsiveness usually gains strength very quickly in a meditator with outstanding accumulated pāramīs. Therefore discern with knowledge until the skeleton's repulsiveness becomes distinct and clear, as though seeing with the eyes.

THE LEARNING SIGN AND COUNTERPART SIGN (UGGAHANIMITTA, PAṬIBHĀGANIMITTA)

Tattha vaṇṇato santhānadisokāsaparicchedavasena upaṭṭhānaṃ uggahanimittaṃ. Sabbākārato paṭikūlavasena upaṭṭhānaṃ paṭibhāganimittaṃ. (Visuddhi, 1, 257.)

Here, in regard to the skeleton object:

1. Colour (vaṇṇa): the colour of the bones.
2. Shape (santhāna): their shape.
3. Direction (disā): whether they belong to the upper or lower part of the body.
4. Location (okāsa): the place where they are present.
5. Delimitation (pariccheda): their separation from other body parts and the separation of the different bones from one another.

The skeleton appearing in these five respects is the learning sign. When it appears through attention to repulsiveness connected with these five aspects, or in every aspect…

The five jhāna factors; joy and mental pleasant feeling

Miến / Burmese 11

…that skeleton is the counterpart sign. (Visuddhimagga 1, p. 257; Mahāṭīkā 1, p. 310; Abhidhamma Commentary 2, p. 237.)

For the meditator developing meditation based on the skeleton counterpart sign appearing through repulsiveness, absorption occurs only as the first jhāna. (Visuddhimagga 1, p. 257.) The remaining body parts too can be developed in the same way, if desired.

THE FIVE JHĀNA FACTORS

1. Applied thought (vitakka): directing and placing the mind on the repulsive skeleton.
2. Sustained thought (vicāra): repeatedly examining the repulsive skeleton.
3. Joy (pīti): delight in the repulsive skeleton.
4. Bliss (sukha): pleasantly experiencing the taste of the repulsive skeleton object.
5. One-pointedness (ekaggatā): the mind falling upon and remaining steadily on that single object, the repulsive skeleton.

JOY AND MENTAL PLEASANT FEELING (PĪTI, SOMANASSA)

One may ask how joy and mental pleasant feeling can arise with such a repulsive skeleton as object. The answer is as follows. Although the skeleton contemplated by the method of attention to repulsiveness is indeed loathsome, with its counterpart sign as object…

A point to bear in mind

Miến / Burmese 12

…one sees the benefit to be gained: “Addhā imāya paṭipadāya jarāmaraṇamhā parimuccissāmi”—surely through this practice I shall be freed from the great dangers of ageing and death. Because one sees that benefit, and because one abandons the hindrances which corrupt the continuity of consciousness, joy and mental pleasant feeling can arise. It is like a refuse collector who takes a great heap of refuse as object and feels joy and mental pleasure because he sees the profit he will gain from it. Or it is like a person severely ill who feels joy and mental pleasure when vomiting or purging gives relief. (Visuddhimagga 1, p. 188.)

A POINT TO BEAR IN MIND

When developing attention to repulsiveness with the skeleton as object, let go of the name-concept “skeleton” and establish mindfulness only on its loathsome nature, attending “paṭikūla, paṭikūla—repulsive, repulsive.” At the beginning of the endeavour, however, that repulsive nature may not yet appear. As long as it is not manifest, do not discard the name-concept “skeleton.” When it does appear as loathsome and repulsive, discard the name-concept or skeleton concept and attend to it simply as “repulsive, repulsive.” According to the manner explained above…

Internally and externally

Miến / Burmese 13

…attend in every respect so that its loathsome, repulsive nature becomes manifest. (See Abhidhamma Commentary 2, p. 245.)

INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY (AJJHATTA, BAHIDDHA)

Sace pana bahiddhāpi manasikāraṃ upasaṃharati, athassa evaṃ sabbakoṭṭhāsesu pākaṭībhūtesu āhiṇḍantā manussatiracchānādayo sattākāraṃ vijahitvā koṭṭhāsarāsivaseneva upaṭṭhahanti. Tehi ca ajjhohariyamānaṃ pānabhojanādi koṭṭhāsarāsimhi pakkhipiyamānamiva upaṭṭhāti. Athassa anupubbamuñcanādivasena paṭikūlaṃ paṭikūlanti punappunaṃ manasikaroto anukkamena appanā uppajjati. (Abhi-ṭṭha, 2, 236–237.)

If, after thoroughly practising the thirty-two internal parts, one directs attention to another person's external parts, those parts all become manifest. People, animals, and other beings going about and eating no longer appear under the aspect of beings, but as collections of parts. Through the power of the light, people and animals appear like bundles of body parts into which food and drink are being put. When the meditator repeatedly attends “repulsive, repulsive” to many internal parts, or to one prominent internal part, absorption can arise in due course. (Abhidhamma Commentary 2, pp. 236–237.)

When proficiency in discerning the thirty-two parts has been established, use external contemplation as described, and repeatedly return to attention to internal repulsiveness until absorption arises.

Alternating the internal and external skeleton

Miến / Burmese 14

According to the commentary, when you reach the first jhāna by attending to the repulsiveness of your internal skeleton, practise its five kinds of mastery. After mastering them, take the skeleton of a person directly in front of you, or the nearest person reached by the light, and attend to its repulsiveness until the jhāna factors appear. According to the Mūlaṭīkā explanation above, what is obtained in this way is only access jhāna, attained by attending to the external skeleton as if it were the lifeless skeleton of a corpse.

When the factors appear, return to the internal skeleton and attend to its repulsiveness. Alternate internally and externally. By repeatedly alternating in this way, the development of attention to repulsiveness becomes very powerful. Then discern one skeleton after another in all ten directions reached by the light. Direct knowledge far and near throughout the entire area, again alternating internal and external. Practise until, wherever you look in the ten directions, you see only skeletons. When you succeed, you may proceed to the white kasiṇa.

Ten kasiṇas and eight attainments

Miến / Burmese 15

TEN KASIṆAS — EIGHT ATTAINMENTS

COLOUR KASIṆAS (VAṆṆAKASIṆA)

THE FOUR COLOUR KASIṆAS

From the thirty-two body parts one can obtain four colour kasiṇas: blue, yellow, red, and white.

1. Blue kasiṇa (nīlakasiṇa): take as object the blue-black colour of head hair, body hair, bile, or the dark part of the eye. Attending “nīlaṃ, nīlaṃ—blue, blue,” one can attain the jhānas of the fourfold or fivefold scheme. Taking those jhānas as a basis for insight, one who develops insight knowledge can reach the Fruition of Arahantship. (Abhidhamma Commentary 2, p. 239.)

2. Take as object the yellow colour of fat or the yellow part of the eye, or yellow skin or yellow fingernails and toenails. Attending “pītakaṃ, pītakaṃ—yellow, yellow,” one can attain the jhānas of the fourfold or fivefold scheme. Taking those jhānas as a basis for insight, one who develops insight knowledge can reach the Fruition of Arahantship. (Abhidhamma Commentary 2, p. 239.)

3. Take as object the red colour of flesh, blood, the tongue, or the red part of the eye. Attending “lohitakaṃ, lohitakaṃ—red, red,” one can attain the jhānas of the fourfold or fivefold scheme. Taking those jhānas…

Jhāna of the bases of mastery

Miến / Burmese 16

…as a basis for insight, one who develops insight knowledge can reach the Fruition of Arahantship. (Abhidhamma Commentary 2, p. 239; Dīgha Commentary 2, p. 151.)

4. Take as object the white colour of the fingernails and toenails, teeth, thick or thin skin, bones, or the white part of the eye. Attending “odātaṃ, odātaṃ—white, white,” one can attain the jhānas of the fourfold or fivefold scheme. Taking those jhānas as a basis for insight, one who develops insight knowledge can reach the Fruition of Arahantship. (Abhidhamma Commentary 2, p. 239; Dīgha Commentary 2, p. 151.)

JHĀNA OF THE BASES OF MASTERY (ABHIBHĀYATANAJHĀNA)

The jhānas obtained by proceeding from the thirty-two body parts to the four colour kasiṇas are called jhānas of the bases of mastery because they are attained by mastering those kasiṇa objects. They are also so called because they readily master the opposing states, the defilements that stain the mind.

Abhibhāyatanānīti abhibhavanakāraṇāni. Kiṃ abhibhavanti? Paccanīkadhammepi ārammaṇānipi. Tāni hi paṭipakkhabhāvena paccanīkadhamme abhibhavanti, puggalassa ñāṇuttariyatāya ārammaṇāni. (Dī-ṭṭha 2,151; Ma-ṭṭha 3,177; Aṅ-ṭṭha 3,243.)

The bases of mastery are the fine-material jhānas that bring about mastery. What do they master? They master both the opposing states and the kasiṇa objects. Indeed…

What the bases of mastery overcome

Miến / Burmese 17

…these jhānas master their opposing states because they are directly opposed to them. They also master their kasiṇa objects because of the sharpness and strength of the meditator's knowledge in developing them. (Dīgha Commentary 2, p. 151; Majjhima Commentary 3, p. 177; Aṅguttara Commentary 3, p. 243.)

Even if the part is as small as bile, one can develop a blue kasiṇa based on it. As the blue kasiṇa sign arises, one can bring about absorption. The jhānas thus attained are called jhānas of the bases of mastery. (See Paṭisambhidāmagga Commentary, vol. 1, p. 69.)

“Abhibhāyatana” means both mastery (abhibhū) and a basis (āyatana). The meditator's knowledge of preparatory kasiṇa development is called mastery because it overcomes the kasiṇa object and the opposing states. The jhāna in which that mastery functions as a supporting basis is called jhāna of the bases of mastery. Alternatively, it is so called because its supporting kasiṇa object is to be mastered. A fine-material jhāna with its associated states is mastery because it overcomes its kasiṇa object, and a basis because it is the footing for the meditator's special bliss. (Dīgha Subcommentary 2, p. 159; Majjhima Subcommentary 3, p. 121; Aṅguttara Subcommentary 3, p. 245.)

Mastering the kasiṇa object means that, whether the kasiṇa disk is very small, like bile, or rather large, like a skull, the meditator can easily and effortlessly extend it as far as desired…

The internal and external bases of mastery

Miến / Burmese 18

…throughout the ten directions, to the limit of the world-system, and can develop absorption upon it.

The Buddha taught these jhānas of the bases of mastery in the Mahāparinibbānasutta (Dīgha Nikāya 2, pp. 92–94), the Abhibhāyatanasutta (Aṅguttara Nikāya 3, pp. 125–126), the Dhammasaṅgaṇī (Abhidhamma 1, pp. 64–65), and other places.

INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY

In the discourses, such expressions as “Ajjhattaṃ rūpasaññī eko bahiddhā rūpāni passati parittāni” (Dīgha Nikāya 2, p. 92) include development of colour kasiṇa on the basis of the internal body parts. In the Abhidhamma Dhammasaṅgaṇī (Abhidhamma 1, pp. 64–65), however, it says “ajjhattaṃ arūpasaññī”—without internal perception of form—and does not teach the development of colour kasiṇa from internal body parts. The commentary explains why:

Ajjhattarūpāni anabhibhavanīyato. Tattha vā idha vā bahiddhārūpāneva abhibhavitabbāni. Tasmā tāni niyamato vattabbānīti tatthāpi idhāpi vuttāni. (Abhi-ṭṭha 1,234.)

Because internal forms cannot be mastered in the same way, only external forms are described as having been mastered. Therefore only external forms are stated as the definite basis, and so the statement occurs here too.

Ajjhattarūpānaṃ anabhibhavanīyatā ca bahiddhārūpānaṃ viya avibhūtattā. (Mūlaṭīkā 1,106.)

Internal forms are not mastered because they do not become manifest as distinctly as external forms.

Avibhūtattāti idaṃ ñāṇuttarānaṃ saha nimittuppādanena appanānibbattanaṃ ārammaṇassa abhibhavo na suṭṭhu vibhūtabhāvamantareṇa sambhavatīti katvā vuttaṃ. (Anuṭīkā 1,114.)

“Because of being indistinct”: this is said with reference to the superior knowledge that, together with the sign, brings absorption about. Mastery of the object is not achieved by ordinary discrimination of it but by the distinction of its clear appearance.

Why external forms are more readily mastered

Miến / Burmese 19

When the meditator develops a colour kasiṇa taking the colour present in his own thirty-two parts, preparatory development can occur in accordance with the commentary: “Ajjhattarūpe parikammavasena ajjhattaṃ rūpasaññī nāma hoti”—he is called one perceiving internal form by virtue of the preparatory work on internal form. (Dīgha Commentary 2, p. 151.) Nevertheless, when preparatory kasiṇa meditation takes the colour of the internal parts as object, those internal kasiṇa forms are not as clear as external kasiṇa forms.

For a meditator of keen knowledge, the appearance of the counterpart sign, the occurrence of a few access concentration impulsions, and then the arising of absorption are possible because he can master the kasiṇa disk. Such mastery is possible only when the kasiṇa form appears distinctly. Without that clarity it is not possible. Since the kasiṇa form in the internal parts does not appear distinctly, only preparatory development occurs with those internal kasiṇa forms; access and absorption do not occur on them in the account given here.

In both the discourses and the Abhidhamma, the meditator masters external colour kasiṇa forms up to absorption. He can develop those external kasiṇa forms to absorption because they appear distinctly. Therefore, if he wishes to obtain jhāna of the bases of mastery, after developing preparation with internal kasiṇa forms he must proceed to preparatory development, access, and absorption with external forms. If he is unable to develop preparation on the internal forms, or…

With or without internal perception of form

Miến / Burmese 20

…does not wish to do so, he should develop preparatory, access, and absorption meditation on external kasiṇa forms alone.

Since the external kasiṇa forms are properly taught in both the discourses and the Abhidhamma, they have been taught in both places. (See Abhidhamma Commentary 1, pp. 233–234; Mūlaṭīkā 1, p. 106; Anuṭīkā 1, p. 114.)

Tattha ajjhattaṃ arūpasaññīti alābhitāya vā anatthikatāya vā ajjhattarūpe parikammasaññāvirahito. (Abhi-ṭṭha 1,233.)

Here, “without internal perception of form” means not having obtained, not being able to obtain, or being without the preparatory perception of internal form. This is an explanation for someone who, although exerting himself, cannot obtain kasiṇa jhānas on internal parts, or does not wish to develop them there.

The discussion of liberations, however, does say that a meditator who wishes to strive for kasiṇa jhānas on internal parts can attain them. (See Aṅguttara Nikāya 3, p. 126; Aṅguttara Commentary 3, p. 245; Aṅguttara Subcommentary 3, p. 249; Abhidhamma Commentary 1, p. 235.)

Ajjhattaṃ rūpasaññī (arūpasaññī) eko bahiddhā rūpāni passati parittāni (appamāṇāni) suvaṇṇadubbaṇṇāni. (Dī 2,92; Aṅ 3,125–126; Abhi 1,55–56.)

One who perceives form internally, or who does not perceive form internally, sees external forms that are limited or immeasurable, beautiful or ugly.

In the jhānas of the bases of mastery, four kinds of kasiṇa object are given, as follows…

Four kinds of kasiṇa object; proceeding to the white kasiṇa

Miến / Burmese 21

1. Limited (paritta): a small kasiṇa disk not yet extended.
2. Immeasurable (appamāṇa): a kasiṇa disk already enlarged and extended without limit.
3. Beautiful (suvaṇṇa): a kasiṇa disk of beautiful colour.
4. Ugly (dubbaṇṇa): a kasiṇa disk of unattractive colour.

Thus four kinds of kasiṇa object are given. Among them:

1. The limited, small unextended disk is given for one of discursive temperament.
2. The immeasurable disk, enlarged and extended without limit, is given for one of deluded temperament.
3. The beautifully coloured disk is given for one of aversive temperament.
4. The unattractively coloured disk is given for one strongly inclined to greed. (Abhidhamma Commentary 1, p. 234.)

PROCEEDING TO THE WHITE KASIṆA

Etadaggaṃ, bhikkhave, imesaṃ aṭṭhannaṃ abhibhāyatanānaṃ, yadidaṃ ajjhattaṃ arūpasaññī eko bahiddhā rūpāni passati odātāni odātavaṇṇāni odātanidassanāni odātanibhāsāni, tāni abhibhuyya “jānāmi passāmī”ti evaṃsaññī hoti. (Aṅ 3,306, kinh Paṭhamakosala.)

Bhikkhus, among the eight bases of mastery, the foremost is this: without perceiving form in his internal continuity, a meditator sees external forms…

Taking white as the meditation object

Miến / Burmese 22

…white, of white colour, white in appearance, and white in lustre. Having mastered them, he is percipient thus: “I know, I see.” This is the foremost and finest jhāna of the bases of mastery. (Aṅguttara Nikāya 3, p. 306.)

According to this discourse, among the four colour kasiṇas the white kasiṇa is foremost, as it makes the meditator's mind especially clear. I shall therefore explain the method of developing it first.

1. Re-establish ānāpāna fourth-jhāna concentration. When the light is brilliant and radiant:
2. Discern the thirty-two internal parts.
3. Discern the thirty-two external parts of the person directly in front of you, or the nearest person reached by the light.
4. Discern the skeleton among those thirty-two external parts. (Attend to its repulsiveness if you wish; otherwise simply discern the skeleton.)
5. Choose the whitest part of that external skeleton. If the entire skeleton is white, take it as a whole; or take the skull as object. Attend “odāta, odāta—white, white.”

If you have a keen mind, and have attained the first jhāna by attending to repulsiveness in the internal skeleton, when that skeleton appears white, take its white colour as object…

Developing the white sign

Miến / Burmese 23

…for preparatory development, if you wish. If you cannot, or do not wish to, develop the internal kasiṇa form to absorption, establish only preparatory concentration on it and proceed to develop white kasiṇa taking the white colour of the external skeleton.

Alternatively, proceed directly to white kasiṇa from the external skeleton as described above. Attending to repulsiveness in the external skeleton is a means of practising attention to repulsiveness, steadying the skeleton object, and making it appear white. You may proceed to white kasiṇa without attending to repulsiveness if you wish. Take the white colour of the external skeleton, especially the skull, attend “odāta, odāta—white, white,” and strive to keep the meditating mind quietly established there for an hour, two hours, or longer.

Well supported by the powerful decisive-support condition and other conditions of earlier meditation, such as ānāpāna fourth jhāna, the mind developing the white kasiṇa can remain firmly established on white. When the mind has remained quietly established on white for an hour, two hours, or more, the skeleton disappears and only the white kasiṇa disk remains. The disk white like a tuft of cotton is the learning sign. The exceptionally clear, bright disk, like the morning star, is the counterpart sign. Before the learning sign is reached…

Extending the white kasiṇa

Miến / Burmese 24

…the skeleton signs, not yet pure white, are only preparatory signs.

If you possess pāramīs and supportive wholesome kamma from cultivating the white kasiṇa in earlier lives in this dispensation or those of earlier Buddhas, when the learning sign or counterpart sign is reached, the white disk may extend effortlessly in all ten directions as you attend “white, white,” without any special effort to extend it.

If the white disk does not spread, continue establishing concentration on it as “white, white” until it is pure white, exceptionally clear, and bright. When you reach the pure, clear, brilliant counterpart sign and continue developing it as “white, white,” you can reach first-jhāna concentration. But the concentration may be unstable and may not last long. Therefore extend the counterpart sign to make concentration stable and enduring.

When the mind is quietly established on that white counterpart sign for an hour, two hours, or more, resolve, in accordance with the strength of your knowledge, “May the white kasiṇa disk spread all around by a fingerbreadth, or by two, three, or four fingerbreadths.” Extend it by a fingerbreadth, two fingerbreadths…

Stabilising the extended sign

Miến / Burmese 25

…and so on. Extend it by resolving on a definite measure. Do not extend the disk without delimiting it by one fingerbreadth, two fingerbreadths, and so on. When extended by such a resolution, the disk may move slightly. Continue attending “white, white” to make it still. When concentration becomes strong, the disk will become still.

Once it is still, again delimit and resolve on an extension in the same way. As it gradually spreads, resolve, “May it extend a cubit; may it extend a fathom,” and so forth, extending it progressively. In this way extend the disk without limit in all ten directions. Wherever you look in the ten directions, let it be white. Within and without, let there be no perception of a being, only white.

If the white kasiṇa disk is moving, keep the meditating mind steadily on the white object and make the disk still. Fix the mind on one place in the extended white kasiṇa, as one might fix a roof tile in place on a wall, and attend only “white, white.” As the meditating mind becomes firmly established on the white object, the white kasiṇa also ceases moving and becomes still.

When the mindfulness of development has not yet become firmly established, continue practising. When both mind and white kasiṇa are still, the white kasiṇa becomes pure white, exceptionally clear and clean. This is the counterpart sign obtained again after enlarging the white kasiṇa disk. Keep the meditating mind quietly established on it for an hour, two hours, or longer…

Five jhāna factors of the white kasiṇa

Miến / Burmese 26

…attending only “white, white.” When repeatedly attending to that counterpart sign, the meditating mind becomes quiet and steady, closely focused and deeply absorbed in it. The five jhāna factors become very distinct and strong. At that time first-jhāna concentration has been attained.

THE FIVE JHĀNA FACTORS

1. Applied thought (vitakka): directing and placing the mind on the white kasiṇa counterpart sign.
2. Sustained thought (vicāra): repeatedly examining it as “white, white.”
3. Joy (pīti): delighting in the white kasiṇa counterpart sign.
4. Bliss (sukha): pleasantly experiencing the taste of that object.
5. One-pointedness (ekaggatā): the mind falling upon and remaining steady on that single white kasiṇa counterpart sign.

Applied thought and the others, taken individually, are jhāna factors; the group of factors is called jhāna. Practise the five kinds of mastery of this first jhāna. When proficient in all five, proceed in order to the second, third, and fourth jhānas, as explained in the ānāpāna meditation subject.

The fourfold and fivefold jhāna schemes

Miến / Burmese 27

THE FOURFOLD METHOD — FOUR JHĀNAS

1. First jhāna: five factors—applied thought, sustained thought, joy, bliss, and one-pointedness.
2. Second jhāna: three factors—joy, bliss, and one-pointedness.
3. Third jhāna: two factors—bliss and one-pointedness.
4. Fourth jhāna: two factors—equanimity and one-pointedness.

THE FIVEFOLD METHOD — FIVE JHĀNAS

1. First jhāna: five factors—applied thought, sustained thought, joy, bliss, and one-pointedness.
2. Second jhāna: four factors—sustained thought, joy, bliss, and one-pointedness.
3. Third jhāna: three factors—joy, bliss, and one-pointedness.
4. Fourth jhāna: two factors—bliss and one-pointedness.
5. Fifth jhāna: two factors—equanimity and one-pointedness.

In the fivefold method, applied thought and sustained thought are abandoned one at a time; thus there are five jhānas. In the fourfold method, they are abandoned together; thus there are four. To suit the inclinations of those to be trained—devas, humans, and Brahmās—the Buddha taught the fivefold method to those of slower knowledge and the fourfold method to those of keen knowledge. These are fine-material jhānas, capable of leading to the fine-material plane.

In practising these kasiṇa jhānas, however, the work of establishing concentration is not undertaken with the intention of reaching the fine-material plane…

Other objects for the white kasiṇa

Miến / Burmese 28

…It is undertaken to establish concentration as a basis for insight.

A meditator who has thoroughly developed the white kasiṇa based on the external skeleton up to fourth-jhāna concentration should proceed to develop it to the fourth jhāna with the white colour of the internal skeleton as object. Thereafter the white kasiṇa sign can be taken from:

1. White flowers such as akyaw, jasmine, and myat-lei.
2. White cloth.
3. White paper.
4. A white stone slab, such as marble.

When a meditator has successfully established white kasiṇa concentration on the skeleton up to the fourth jhāna, he can attend to the whiteness of any white object without making a separate disk. Merely attending to the white colour of that object, the white kasiṇa disk can arise at once and spread easily in all ten directions without special effort to extend it. Then strive to develop from first-jhāna concentration up to fourth-jhāna concentration.

The blue kasiṇa (nīlakasiṇa)

Miến / Burmese 29

A meditator wishing to develop the blue kasiṇa should re-establish white kasiṇa fourth-jhāna concentration and discern the thirty-two parts again. Take the blue-black head hair of a meditator sitting in front of you as object. When the blue-black hair appears clearly to knowledge, attend “nīla, nīla—blue, blue.” Supported by the powerful decisive-support condition of earlier concentration, preparatory blue kasiṇa concentration becomes stronger. Before long, instead of the hair you will see only the blue kasiṇa disk. Take that disk as object and continue establishing concentration.

Continue attending and establishing concentration as explained for the white kasiṇa until, in due order, you obtain the three signs—preparatory, learning, and counterpart; the three kinds of development—preparatory, access, and absorption; and the three kinds of concentration—preparatory, access, and absorption.

When the ordinary sign of the hair still appears as hair, it is the preparatory sign, the development is preparatory development, and the concentration preparatory concentration. As concentration is developed further, the hair no longer appears; a kasiṇa disk appears to the meditator's knowledge. That is the learning sign. Its defects are still visible. When, taking that learning sign as object, you continue establishing concentration…

The three signs and three stages of concentration

Miến / Burmese 30

…the development is still preparatory development and the concentration still preparatory concentration. As concentration on the learning sign matures, the sign passes to the counterpart stage. The counterpart sign appears apart from the disk, like a fan of blue gems standing in the air. Even then the development and concentration may still be preparatory.

However, as you continue to mature concentration, the counterpart sign becomes clearer and brighter. The meditating mind occasionally sinks into that sign. The concentration before it sinks into the sign is access concentration, and the development is access development. When the mind sinks into that sign, the concentration is absorption-jhāna concentration and the development absorption development.

That absorption may not yet endure. To make it last, at access concentration or absorption concentration extend the kasiṇa disk without limit in all ten directions. Then take as object one part of that extended blue kasiṇa directly in front of you and continue establishing concentration. You can attain absorption-jhāna concentration, and that concentration can endure. After extending the disk in this way, one obtains in succession:

1. Three signs: the preparatory sign (parikammanimitta), learning sign (uggahanimitta), and counterpart sign (paṭibhāganimitta).
2. Three kinds of development: preparatory (parikammabhāvanā), access (upacārabhāvanā), and absorption (appanābhāvanā).
3. Three kinds of concentration: preparatory (parikammasamādhi), access (upacārasamādhi), and absorption (appanāsamādhi).

Developing the blue kasiṇa on other objects

Miến / Burmese 31

Continue establishing concentration up to the fourth jhāna. When successful, take your own head hair as object and practise in the same way; you can establish concentration up to the fourth jhāna. Next take external bile as object and develop the blue kasiṇa in the same way, up to fourth-jhāna concentration. After establishing blue kasiṇa concentration up to the fourth jhāna with external bile as object, practise likewise with internal bile.

When successful, take a blue flower such as aung-me-nyo or myat-khwa-nyo and endeavour to develop the blue kasiṇa. A single blue flower can become a powerful supporting object leading the meditator's mind to fourth-jhāna concentration, through the force of the object decisive-support condition (ārammaṇūpanissayapaccaya). This is drawing the essence of fourth-jhāna concentration from a single flower. For one who knows how to attend wisely and correctly, lofty wholesome states such as jhāna and insight are always waiting to arise.

Likewise, take other blue flowers, blue cloth, or blue stones such as sapphires as object, and practise in the same way.

The yellow kasiṇa (pītakasiṇa)

Miến / Burmese 32

Re-establish any fourth-jhāna concentration you have attained. When its light becomes brilliant and bright, use it to take as object the yellow colour of fat or urine among the thirty-two internal or external body parts. Attend “pītaka, pītaka, pītaka—yellow, yellow, yellow.” Follow the remaining instructions as explained for the white and blue kasiṇas. Develop up to fourth-jhāna concentration with internal urine and with external urine in turn.

Faeces and urine are by nature exceedingly repulsive body parts. However repulsive they may be, wise attention (yonisomanasikāra) is present in the continuity of a meditator who knows the proper method. If the faeces or urine is yellow, its yellow colour can stand as a powerful supporting object, supporting the meditator through the object decisive-support condition until fourth-jhāna concentration arises.

Taking that fourth jhāna as a basis, if you proceed to insight you can, in accordance with your pāramīs, reach even the Fruition of Arahantship. Therefore, good meditator who aspires to Nibbāna, always cultivate wise attention. Where nothing of value is apparent…

Padauk and golden shower flowers

Miến / Burmese 33

…learn to draw from this body the essence called meditation. Strive to make your life worthwhile.

PADAUK AND GOLDEN SHOWER FLOWERS

Padauk blossoms are bathed in gold. Around the month of Tagu, when whole trees of padauk and golden shower are in bloom, they seem to invite the good meditator who has developed yellow kasiṇa to fourth-jhāna concentration: “Come; try contemplating.” When certain meditators thoroughly proficient in yellow kasiṇa up to the fourth jhāna see a padauk or golden shower tree in full bloom, with or without relying on their earlier concentration, they take the yellow colour of the flowers as the yellow kasiṇa sign. In a short time they see the whole world covered in yellow, and easily establish the successive levels of concentration up to the fourth jhāna. They can even practise and obtain that concentration while travelling in a vehicle.

For a meditator whose wise attention is established and who knows the proper method, a yellow garment too can be the sign and object of the yellow kasiṇa. A yellow slab of mineral pigment can likewise be its sign and object. That yellow garment or yellow mineral slab, for the meditator developing the yellow kasiṇa…

The red kasiṇa (lohitakasiṇa)

Miến / Burmese 34

…serves as an object condition, affording support by its power until fourth-jhāna concentration arises in the meditator's continuity.

Re-establish any fourth-jhāna concentration already attained. When the light becomes especially powerful, use it to take the red colour of the blood inside the heart of a meditator directly in front of you. Develop it by attending “lohitakaṃ, lohitakaṃ, lohitakaṃ—red, red, red.” When the blood disappears and the red kasiṇa disk appears, take the disk as object and continue establishing concentration. Extend it as explained above, and develop it up to the fourth jhāna.

You may likewise take the red colour of pooled blood around the external liver, heart, and so on. You can also develop red kasiṇa with the red colour of blood inside your own heart, or around your own liver, heart, and so on, as object.

For a good meditator thoroughly proficient in red kasiṇa up to fourth-jhāna concentration, a red lotus seems to invite, “Come; try contemplating,” to develop the red kasiṇa. A reddish hibiscus flower also seems to invite him to develop the red kasiṇa…

Essences leading to the noble path and fruition

Miến / Burmese 35

…with the words, “Come; try contemplating.” A ruby set in a ring likewise seems to say, “Come; try contemplating,” as does any reddish velvet cloth. This is how one extracts the essence of meditation from the mire of the five strands of sensual pleasure—things that entice, delight, and give rise to craving and greed.

Essences leading to the noble path and fruition

Even a repulsive bodily part, such as hair or bile, can serve as a blue kasiṇa and support concentration up to the fourth jhāna. A beautiful yellow champak flower can do so as a yellow kasiṇa, a precious ruby as a red kasiṇa, and even a repulsive tooth as a white kasiṇa.

A meditator in whom wise attention is present can extract from the mire of the five strands of sensual pleasure the essence of meditation that leads to fourth-jhāna concentration…

Essences leading to the noble path and fruition

Miến / Burmese 36

…at any time. Furthermore, by using fourth-jhāna concentration as a basis for insight and proceeding to insight, one can extract the essences leading as far as arahant fruition, in accordance with the strength of one's perfections.

Even if one's perfections are incomplete and one attains only stream-entry rather than arahant fruition, for a good person whose jhāna has not declined, the lofty happiness of the Brahmā realm stands waiting along the journey through saṃsāra, as if inviting, “Please come, please come.” Noble persons, even stream-enterers, who take rebirth in a Brahmā realm do not return from there to take rebirth in the sensual realm. Within seven lives they attain arahant fruition and attain final Nibbāna. They have already received a sure token of admission to Nibbāna, where the great fire of suffering in the round of rebirths is extinguished.

Why should a good person such as you, who holds to faith in the Teaching, fail to exert yourself for these excellent and noble states of such great benefit? Make the effort while you have time.

The earth kasiṇa (paṭhavīkasiṇa)

Miến / Burmese 37

The earth kasiṇa sign may be taken from: (1) earth prepared as a kasiṇa disk; (2) unprepared earth, such as a ploughed field or threshing floor; (3) earth with a boundary; (4) earth that is not without a boundary; (5) earth the size of a small rice sieve; or (6) earth the size of the mouth of a pot or jar. (Visuddhimagga I, 120.)

Tattha yena atītabhavepi sāsane vā isipabbajjāya vā pabbajitvā pathavīkasiṇe catukkapañcakajjhānāni nibbattitapubbāni, evarūpassa puññavato upanissayasampannassa akatāya pathaviyā kasitaṭṭhāne vā khalamaṇḍale vā nimittaṃ uppajjati. (Visuddhi 1,120.)

A meditator may have gone forth in an earlier life, either in the Buddha's dispensation or as an ascetic, and produced the fourth or fifth jhāna on the earth kasiṇa. For such a meditator, wholesome meditation in the past, supported by the accumulated merit of the perfections, serves as a powerful decisive support.

Just as the Bodhisatta Hatthipāla could take the water kasiṇa sign from the unprepared current of the Ganges and do the preliminary work that produces jhāna (Jātaka Commentary, vol. 4, p. 483), such a meditator can take the earth sign from ordinary, unprepared ground…

Dòng 4 dùng cách nói phủ định hai lần như bản in.

Taking the earth kasiṇa sign

Miến / Burmese 38

…such as a ploughed field or a threshing floor. As he develops the preliminary sign with “paṭhavī, paṭhavī,” it can change directly into the learning sign. (Visuddhimagga I, 120.)

Following these instructions, to take the earth kasiṇa sign, select a level patch of natural ground free of grass, leaves, stones and other blemishes. Use a stick or another implement to draw a circle, from the size of a small rice sieve up to whatever size suits you.

Aruṇavaṇṇāya mattikāya kasiṇaṃ kātabbaṃ. (Visuddhi 1,120.)

The Visuddhimagga directs that the disk be made of dawn-coloured clay. Use earth tinged with red like dawn, neither too dark nor too pale. Look steadily at the circle and attend: “paṭhavī, paṭhavī, paṭhavī—earth, earth, earth.”

Open and close your eyes repeatedly to take the sign. If it remains indistinct, re-establish a fourth jhāna you have already attained. With the help of the light from that concentration, look at the prepared disk and attend, “paṭhavī, paṭhavī, paṭhavī—earth, earth, earth.” Alternatively, open and close your eyes to take the sign. When you can take it as clearly as you see it with open eyes…

What to attend to in the earth kasiṇa

Miến / Burmese 39

…you may go and sit where you wish. Re-establish a fourth jhāna you already know. As its light shines brilliantly, use it to take the sign of the same disk as your object. Once you can take it again, apprehend it repeatedly.

Na vaṇṇo paccavekkhitabbo, na lakkhaṇaṃ manasikātabbaṃ. Api ca vaṇṇaṃ amuñcitvā nissayasavaṇṇaṃ katvā ussadavasena paññattidhamme cittaṃ ṭhapetvā manasikātabbaṃ. (Visuddhimagga II, 122.)

When attending to the earth kasiṇa sign, do not examine or attend to the dawn colour of the disk. Do not attend to the hardness that characterizes the earth element in the clay. Without disregarding colour altogether, let it remain connected with its support, the disk. Go beyond it by giving prominence to earth as the underlying basis. Direct the mind to the ordinary designation “earth” and attend, “paṭhavī, paṭhavī, paṭhavī—earth, earth, earth.”

A possible error

If the meditator attends to the dawn colour of the earth disk, the practice becomes a colour kasiṇa rather than the earth kasiṇa…

Ảnh Miến in số dẫn Visuddhi 2,122.

The learning sign and the counterpart sign

Miến / Burmese 40

…and thus shifts from the earth kasiṇa to a colour kasiṇa. If the meditator attends to the hardness of the earth element predominant in the disk, this is attention to an element meditation subject. The practice has shifted from the earth kasiṇa to contemplation of the elements.

A more troublesome problem arises if one attends to the softness of the disk. When the sign is extended in all ten directions, softness can seem to envelop the whole body. As concentration grows stronger, the softness may become so pronounced that the meditator cannot bear it. Be mindful. Observe the rule given above both when taking the sign from ordinary ground and when bringing it to mind again at your seat.

The learning sign (uggaha-nimitta) and the counterpart sign (paṭibhāga-nimitta)

The original earth disk on the ground is the preliminary sign. Open and close your eyes to take its sign. When it appears with eyes closed just as it does with eyes open, the learning sign has arisen. Alternatively, go to your seat and establish a fourth jhāna you have already attained. Using its light, bring to mind again…

From the learning sign to fourth jhāna

Miến / Burmese 41

…the sign of the earth disk from which you first took it. If it appears as clearly as when seen with open eyes, the learning sign has arisen in this way too. Keep attending to it, apprehending it, and strengthening concentration upon it. In due course the hindrances are suppressed, the defilements subside, the mind settles in access concentration, and the counterpart sign appears.

You may take the counterpart sign as object with or without extending it. Continued attention and development can bring concentration up to the fourth jhāna. As extending the sign helps meditative concentration endure, extend it as far as you are able, then contemplate it up to the fourth jhāna.

In the learning sign, defects such as finger marks or stick marks may still be apparent. The counterpart sign seems to emerge through the learning sign, far clearer and purer, like a mirror disk taken from its case, a well-polished mother-of-pearl dish, the full moon emerging from clouds, or a flock of cranes against a dark cloud. (Visuddhimagga I, 122.)

Using an existing attainment; the water kasiṇa

Miến / Burmese 42

As explained above, some meditators have already strengthened concentration on such objects as the white kasiṇa. They need not prepare a separate earth disk. Establish fourth jhāna with a kasiṇa already mastered. When the light of knowledge shines brilliantly, use it to penetrate ordinary dawn-coloured earth beneath or around the seat and take the earth kasiṇa sign. By apprehending and developing it repeatedly, the three signs, three stages of development, and three kinds of concentration can arise in order. On reaching the counterpart sign, extend it as far as you are able and continue developing it up to the fourth jhāna.

1. The water kasiṇa (āpokasiṇa) can be taken from a bowl, cup, pot or similar vessel filled to the brim with clear rainwater or equally pure water, free of admixtures of blue, yellow, white, or red.

2. Water in a well, a pond, a salt pan, or seawater that has risen from the sea…

Taking the water kasiṇa sign

Miến / Burmese 43

…a salt pit filled with brine, a creek or the sea: the water kasiṇa sign can also be taken from such water without preparing a kasiṇa disk. (Visuddhimagga I, 165.)

Clear, clean well water is best for a meditator. If it is unavailable or you prefer not to use it, fill a bowl or pot and let the water settle before taking the sign. Whether using a well or a vessel, take only the concept of water as your object. Be careful not to look at the sides or bottom of the well or vessel. Look at the water alone to take the sign.

When taking the sign, first establish a fourth jhāna you already know. When the light has become strong, emerge from jhāna and open and close the eyes repeatedly to take the water sign. The practice may progress quickly from learning sign to counterpart sign. This is because earlier meditative concentration serves as a powerful decisive support for concentration on the water kasiṇa.

Na vaṇṇo paccavekkhitabbo, na lakkhaṇaṃ manasikātabbaṃ. (Visuddhi 1,165.)

When taking the water kasiṇa sign, do not attend to the colour of the water. Attending to its colour would shift the practice to a colour kasiṇa…

The signs of the water kasiṇa

Miến / Burmese 44

…Do not attend to the water element's characteristic of cohesion, or to the water's coldness. Attending to an element would shift the practice to element meditation. In particular, if you attend to coldness, when concentration strengthens and the water disk is extended, cold may overwhelm you and make you shiver.

Therefore let the colour remain with the water kasiṇa that supports it, and give prominence to water. Set the mind on the ordinary designation “water” and develop it by attending, “āpo, āpo, āpo—water, water, water.”

The learning sign and the counterpart sign

The water kasiṇa learning sign may appear to move. If the original water contained froth or bubbles, the learning sign may retain those features. Defects such as waves, froth and bubbles may still appear. Deep, still water is therefore preferable, since it has fewer defects. The counterpart sign is motionless and appears like a crystal fan set in the sky or a disk of polished metal. As soon as it appears, continue establishing concentration on it as explained above. Access and absorption can then be reached. (Visuddhimagga I, 165–166.)

The fire kasiṇa (tejokasiṇa)

Miến / Burmese 45

A person with merit accumulated by developing the fire kasiṇa in former lives can take the sign from fire without preparing a kasiṇa disk.

The learning sign and counterpart sign can arise while watching a flame from (1) an oil lamp, (2) a cooking hearth, (3) a fire used for firing bowls, or (4) a forest fire, or while looking at flames in any other suitable fire.

A meditator without such accumulated practice should prepare a fire kasiṇa. Pile dry pieces of resinous firewood in a suitable place as for firing a bowl, and light them until flames rise.

Make a circular opening about a span across in a mat, piece of leather or coarse cloth, or a wooden board. Sit with the screen in front of you.

Attend neither to (1) the grass and firewood burning below nor to (2) the smoke and tongues of flame rising above…

What to attend to in the fire kasiṇa

Miến / Burmese 46

…Instead, take the learning sign and counterpart sign from the fire burning densely in the centre, as a single mass. (Visuddhimagga I, 166.)

Do not attend to colour or characteristic

Vaṇṇo na paccavekkhitabbo, uṇhattavasena lakkhaṇaṃ na manasikātabbaṃ. (Visuddhi 1,166.)

When taking the fire kasiṇa sign, do not attend to the flame's different colours, such as blue, yellow or red. Doing so shifts the practice to a colour kasiṇa. Do not attend to the flame's characteristic of heat, which would shift the practice to element meditation.

I have heard that one meditator attended to the burning heat as his fire kasiṇa concentration grew stronger. When the concentration became powerful and the disk extended in the ten directions, the heat became so vivid that he could no longer bear it and ran away. It seemed to him that flames were burning all around his body.

Therefore, in developing the fire kasiṇa, leave the colours with the fire in which they appear, and give prominence to fire. Set the mind on the ordinary designation “fire”…

Developing the fire kasiṇa

Miến / Burmese 47

…and develop it by attending, “tejo, tejo, tejo—fire, fire, fire.” For a meditator who practises in this way, the learning sign and counterpart sign arise in succession. (Visuddhimagga I, 166.)

To follow these instructions, re-establish a fourth jhāna you have already attained. First try taking the sign from a cooking fire. Look at the centre of the fire, leaving aside the wood below and the tongues of flame above. If this fails, place a screen with an opening about ten inches across in front of you and try taking the sign from the flame through that opening. It can succeed in this way. Make an effort to attain, in order, the three signs, the three stages of development, and the three kinds of concentration.

If you have previously seen a house, village, town or forest on fire, you can re-establish a fourth jhāna you already know, take the centre of those flames as your object, and develop the fire kasiṇa.

The learning sign and the counterpart sign

Of these two signs, the learning sign appears like flames continually breaking and falling away. For someone who takes the fire kasiṇa sign from an unprepared fire, its defects…

The signs of the fire kasiṇa; the wind kasiṇa

Miến / Burmese 48

…are apparent. Pieces of firewood, burnt wood, embers, ash or smoke may still appear. The counterpart sign is motionless, like a piece of red cloth spread in the sky, a golden fan, or a golden pillar. With its appearance, the meditator can reach access or absorption. (Visuddhimagga I, 166.)

The wind kasiṇa (vāyokasiṇa)

Vāyokasiṇaṃ bhāvetukāmenāpi vāyusmiṃ nimittaṃ gahetabbaṃ. Tañca kho diṭṭhavasena vā phuṭṭhavasena vā. (Visuddhi 1,167.)

A meditator who wishes to develop the wind kasiṇa should take the sign from wind, either by sight or by touch. Thus (1) you can take the sign by watching wind moving through trees or leaves, or (2) you can take the wind touching a part of your own body as the sign.

1. To take the sign by watching wind move trees or leaves, first establish a fourth jhāna you already know. When the light is strong, use it…

The signs of the wind kasiṇa; the light kasiṇa

Miến / Burmese 49

…to see the wind and establish mindfulness on it. Develop it by attending, “vāyo, vāyo, vāyo—wind, wind, wind.” Practise so as to attain in order the three signs, the three stages of development, and the three kinds of concentration.

2. To take as the sign the wind that touches your own body, first re-establish a fourth jhāna you already know. When the light grows strong, establish mindfulness on the wind that enters through a window or the like and touches a part of your body. Develop it by attending, “vāyo, vāyo, vāyo—wind, wind, wind.” Establish concentration in stages up to the fourth jhāna. Practise so as to attain the three kinds of concentration in order.

The learning sign and the counterpart sign

The learning sign appears to move, like steam rising from rice just taken off the stove. The counterpart sign appears still and motionless. Understand the rest in the same way. (Visuddhimagga I, 167.)

The light kasiṇa (ālokakasiṇa)

A meditator who wishes to take the light kasiṇa sign may use a patch of sunlight or moonlight entering (1) through a hole in a wall, (2) through a keyhole, or (3) through a window…

Taking the light kasiṇa sign

Miến / Burmese 50

…and take the sign from any one of these patches of light. (Visuddhimagga I, 169.)

For someone with wholesome merit and perfections from previous practice of the light kasiṇa, the learning sign and counterpart sign may appear simply upon seeing a patch of sunlight or moonlight on a wall or floor, cast through a hole in the wall or a similar opening. They may also arise on seeing a patch of light cast on the ground through the branches of a densely leafed tree or through gaps in a thick canopy of branches. (Visuddhimagga I, 169.)

A meditator whose perfections from developing this kasiṇa are weak should attend to one of the three kinds of light mentioned above: “āloko, āloko, āloko—light, light, light.” If this fails, light an oil lamp inside a pot, cover the mouth, and place the pot with a small opening facing a wall. Light from the lamp shines through the hole, forming a patch on the wall. Develop it by attending to this patch: “āloko, āloko, āloko—light, light, light.” A disk of light prepared in this way lasts longer than one cast by the moon or sun. (Visuddhimagga I, 169.)

The signs of the light kasiṇa; overcoming sloth and torpor

Miến / Burmese 51

A meditator who has successfully established the various fourth jhānas described above can take the sign readily from sunlight seen through thick branches and foliage in the morning or evening. This light is often more powerful. When the sign is extended at night, the area to which the kasiṇa disk extends becomes as bright as daytime. This agrees with the Buddha's instructions to Venerable Mahāmoggallāna in the Pacalāyamāna Sutta, in the Book of the Sevens of the Aṅguttara Nikāya. (Aṅguttara Nikāya, vol. 2, p. 463.)

The learning sign and the counterpart sign

The learning sign resembles the ordinary patch of light on a wall or floor or among branches and leaves. The counterpart sign resembles an especially clear mass of light, with a compact shape like the Buddha's fathom-wide radiance. Understand the rest in the same way. (Visuddhimagga I, 169.)

Overcoming sloth and torpor (thīnamiddha)

The perception of light (ālokasaññā), here called the light kasiṇa, is an excellent means for dispelling the sluggishness of consciousness and its associated mental factors. In the Pacalāyamāna Sutta of the Book of the Sevens…

The space kasiṇa (ākāsakasiṇa)

Miến / Burmese 52

…the Buddha explained seven methods for dispelling sloth and torpor, including the perception of light. Every meditator who aspires to Nibbāna should have this meditation subject at hand. Among the kasiṇas used as a basis for the higher knowledge of the divine eye, the light kasiṇa is the most excellent.

The space kasiṇa (ākāsakasiṇa)

The sign of the space kasiṇa—that is, the kasiṇa of an opening or of the sky—can be taken from (1) a hole in a wall, (2) a keyhole, or (3) a gap in a window.

For someone with wholesome merit from previous development of the space kasiṇa, the learning sign and counterpart sign can readily arise on seeing an opening such as a hole in a wall. Someone with little such accumulated merit should make a round opening about a span and four fingers across in a well-covered shelter where the sun does not shine through, or in a piece of leather, a mat, or the like. Take the space in that prepared opening or another opening such as a hole in a wall, and develop it by attending, “ākāso, ākāso, ākāso—space, space, space.”

Taking the space kasiṇa sign

Miến / Burmese 53

If unsuccessful, cut a circular hole about a span or a foot across in a board. Hold the board up to a clear patch of sky free of trees, clouds, and shadows, and concentrate on the bounded space. Do not let your gaze go beyond the hole into the sky. Take the space kasiṇa sign only from the opening cut in the board.

If the sign is still difficult to take, re-establish a fourth jhāna you already know. Then open your eyes and take the sign from the opening in the same way. If the learning sign appears when you close your eyes, you have succeeded. Practise a little longer until the space sign is firm, then go to a place of your choice and continue developing it there.

When seated in a place you find suitable, re-establish a fourth jhāna you already know. Then take as object the space kasiṇa sign you previously acquired. Earlier meditative concentration supports later meditative concentration by the power of decisive support, making the later practice proceed smoothly.

The learning sign and the counterpart sign

The learning sign of the space kasiṇa resembles the original opening in the wall or other object, together with its edges…

Mastering the ten kasiṇas

Miến / Burmese 54

…At the learning-sign stage, the power of development is still weak. Even if you try to extend the disk, it will not expand. In the counterpart sign, the edges of the circular opening no longer appear. Only a disk of space appears. By this stage, concentration on the space kasiṇa has matured and the disk can be extended. Understand the rest in the same way. (Visuddhimagga I, 169.)

The ten kasiṇas

This concludes the account of developing the ten kasiṇas up to fourth-jhāna concentration. After attaining this, develop each kasiṇa repeatedly up to the fourth jhāna in the order taught by the Buddha: earth, water, fire, wind, blue, yellow, red, white, light, and space.

If you practise in this way, whenever you encounter a suitable object and turn your attention to it as a kasiṇa, you can take the sign easily. For a meditator skilled in all ten kasiṇas up to the fourth jhāna, even a tiny yellow champak flower can support the arising of the yellow kasiṇa by the power of object condition. A reddish rose…

The fruits of kasiṇa practice

Miến / Burmese 55

…can likewise support the arising of the red kasiṇa, and a tiny jasmine flower can support the arising of the white kasiṇa, by the power of object condition.

If you know how to extract the essence of meditation from living and inanimate objects of sensual desire and from this great heap of a body in which no essence can be found, then for a meditator who attends wisely in the manner described here, such fruits of meditation as fourth-jhāna concentration will arise readily. If you proceed to insight on the basis of that fourth jhāna, those states of concentration can support you as far as the attainment of arahant fruition.

Here, however, the exposition will continue with how to develop the immaterial jhānas on the basis of fourth-jhāna concentration attained with a kasiṇa concept as object.

The immaterial jhānas

Miến / Burmese 57

The immaterial jhānas

The jhāna of the base of infinite space (ākāsānañcāyatanajhāna)

There are four kinds of immaterial jhāna:

1. The jhāna of the base of infinite space takes the concept of space as its object.
2. The jhāna of the base of infinite consciousness takes the consciousness of the base of infinite space as its object.
3. The jhāna of the base of nothingness takes the concept of the absence of the consciousness of the base of infinite space as its object.
4. The jhāna of the base of neither perception nor non-perception takes an exceedingly subtle perception as its object. Gross perception is absent, but perception is not altogether absent.

A meditator who wishes to attain the jhāna of the base of infinite space should first contemplate material phenomena so as to see their drawbacks.

This body, which depends on the parents' generative fluids and comes into being through the four causes of kamma, consciousness, temperature, and nutriment, is called the material body (karajakāya). Because this material body exists, people kill one another with sticks, swords, and other weapons. They strike, torment, and oppress one another, contend with one another, and suffer. They also undergo eye disease…

Seeing the drawbacks of materiality

Miến / Burmese 58

…ear disease, and various other illnesses. Reflect wisely that, if there were no material phenomena called the material body, one would be free from such suffering. Then strive for the jhāna of the base of infinite space, with the aim of causing materiality to fade away, become repulsive, and cease.

The jhāna of the base of infinite space takes the concept of space as its object. Having seen the drawbacks in the material phenomena called the material body, develop the fourth jhāna with one of the nine kasiṇas beginning with earth, leaving aside the space kasiṇa, in order to surmount those material phenomena. (Visuddhimagga I, 320.)

Further explanation

Take the earth kasiṇa as an example. The earth from which the meditator first takes the sign is actual materiality, a collection of temperature-produced material phenomena. If the meditator discerns the four great elements in that earth and establishes concentration, the earth as such disappears and only a collection of material groups is seen. In each group are eight phenomena: earth, water, fire, wind, colour, odour, taste, and nutritive essence. The fire element, or temperature, in each group gives rise to further generations of temperature-produced materiality. These are actual material phenomena.

The object of the fine-material jhānas up to the fourth jhāna on the earth kasiṇa is the counterpart sign of that kasiṇa. This counterpart sign is distinct from the ultimate material phenomena produced by temperature that constitute the original earth. It is a concept brought into being by the meditator's…

Why the kasiṇa sign is also surmounted

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…perception during meditation. It is not actual materiality. The fine-material jhānas up to the fourth jhāna take only this conceptual counterpart sign as object. They do not take as object the actual material phenomena, the collection of temperature-produced materiality in the earth on which the original kasiṇa disk depended. Thus the fine-material jhānas have already surmounted the actual material phenomena called the material body.

Illustrations from ordinary life

Through the power of the fourth fine-material jhāna, the meditator takes only the counterpart sign as object instead of the actual material body. In this sense the material body has indeed been surmounted. Yet the kasiṇa form can still be taken as an object of jhāna and is therefore like that material form. The meditator consequently wishes to surmount the kasiṇa form as well.

Suppose someone afraid of snakes is chased by one in a forest and runs away as fast as he can, exhausting himself. If from a distance he sees a palm leaf painted to resemble a snake, a creeper, a rope, or a crack in the ground, he is startled and frightened and does not want to look at it.

Consider also a man who lives in the same village as an enemy who harms him. The enemy attacks him, harasses him, and even sets fire to his house. The man moves to another village…

Preparing to develop infinite space

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…Yet if he encounters someone whose appearance, voice, or conduct resembles that enemy, he is again startled and afraid, and does not want to look at him.

In the same way, firmly recognize that the kasiṇa form, which arises in dependence on the material body, resembles that material form. When fear, alarm, and aversion to seeing the kasiṇa form arise, recognize the wish to surmount it too. (Visuddhimagga I, 320.)

The work to be done

To develop the jhāna of the base of infinite space using the earth kasiṇa as a basis, first enter the first, second, third, and fourth jhānas on the earth kasiṇa in order. Then practise as follows.

Wishing to become disenchanted with and surmount the earth kasiṇa form, the object of the fourth jhāna, first gain the five kinds of mastery. Emerge from the thoroughly practised fourth jhāna on the earth kasiṇa and consider its drawbacks as follows.

1. This fine-material fourth jhāna still takes as object the kasiṇa form with which I have become disenchanted.
2. It has a near enemy in the pleasant mental feeling called somanassa.

Removing the earth kasiṇa

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3. It is gross compared with the immaterial jhānas, which are peaceful liberations.

Contemplate these drawbacks. The fine-material fourth jhāna has only two factors, equanimity and one-pointedness. The immaterial jhānas likewise have only these two factors. Thus, the distinction in grossness does not lie in the jhāna factors. Having contemplated the drawbacks as described:

4. Bring longing and attachment to that fourth jhāna to an end.
5. Attend to the jhāna of the base of infinite space as peaceful and infinite.
6. Extend the earth kasiṇa form already developed to the bounds of the world system, or as far as you wish.
7. Attend to the space occupied by that kasiṇa form as “space, space” or “infinite space, infinite space.”

This is how the meditator removes the earth kasiṇa form that was the object of the fine-material fourth jhāna. Understand that removing the earth kasiṇa form does not involve rolling it up like a mat or removing it as one might lift a cake from a pan. It consists in giving up consideration of the earth kasiṇa, ceasing to attend to it, and no longer reviewing it. Instead, the meditator attends exclusively to the space it occupied as “space, space”…

The space left by the kasiṇa

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…A meditator who attends exclusively to space in this way is said to remove the kasiṇa. The earth kasiṇa thus removed does not roll itself up or vanish physically. The term “removal of the earth kasiṇa” refers to the meditator's giving up attention to it and attending exclusively to “space, space.” With its removal, only the concept of space appears.

1. Kasiṇugghāṭimākāsa: the space obtained by removing the kasiṇa.
2. Kasiṇaphuṭṭhākāsa: the space occupied by the kasiṇa.
3. Kasiṇavivittākāsa: the space clear of the kasiṇa.

These three expressions are alternative ways of saying the same thing. (Visuddhimagga I, 320–321.)

Practical advice

Try attending as instructed above. If you do not succeed, try this. Extend the earth kasiṇa disk to fill a world system. If you wish, extend it throughout countless world systems. Then enter the jhānas on the earth kasiṇa up to the fourth. Emerge and reflect on the points given above, from (1) through (5). Then extend the earth kasiṇa form without limit.

Developing the sign of space

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…Then settle your mind on one place in the earth kasiṇa disk. Attend exclusively to space, leaving earth aside. Soon you may see an opening. From then on leave the parts of the earth kasiṇa where space has not appeared entirely out of attention. Attend exclusively to the space that has appeared, contemplating “space, space.”

As space becomes clearer and steadier, extend that very space while contemplating “space, space.” As space expands, the earth kasiṇa disk gradually recedes and space takes its place. Extend space gradually in all ten directions. Eventually the earth kasiṇa disappears and only space remains. This is the sign of space obtained by removing the earth kasiṇa. Then continue practising according to the instructions of the Visuddhimagga below.

Entering the base of infinite space

Repeatedly consider the sign of space obtained by removing the earth kasiṇa, attending “space, space.” With applied thought, direct the mind to it and turn it repeatedly towards it as “space, space.” In the meditator who repeatedly considers and directs the mind to it in this way, the hindrances and stains of defilement fall away. Mindfulness, taking the sign of space as its object, becomes very clear and firmly established. Through access concentration, the mind engaged in development…

Absorption in the base of infinite space

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…settles firmly on the sign of space. The meditator repeatedly apprehends, develops, and practises with this sign. For a meditator who considers and attends in this way again and again, the consciousness of the base of infinite space arises in absorption with the sign of space as object, just as fine-material jhāna consciousness arises in absorption with a kasiṇa concept such as the earth kasiṇa as object.

In this cognitive process of the base of infinite space, however, the three or four access impulsions preceding the jhāna are sense-sphere impulsions and are accompanied only by equanimous feeling. The fourth or fifth impulsion is the immaterial-sphere impulsion called the base of infinite space. The explanation is as given for the earth kasiṇa. (Visuddhimagga I, 321.)

A point to note

When immaterial jhāna consciousness arises, it is as if a cloth covering the mouth of a pot were lifted away and the unobstructed space came into view. Previously the meditator contemplated the kasiṇa disk with the eye of fine-material jhāna. Then, leaving the disk out of attention, the meditator removed it by attending “space, space” with the preliminary attention of access concentration. The meditator now contemplates only the sign of space that has appeared, with the eye of immaterial jhāna. With this much understood, the meditator is described as follows…

Surmounting perceptions of form

Miến / Burmese 65

…

Sabbaso rūpasaññānaṃ samatikkamā paṭighasaññānaṃ atthaṅgamā nānattasaññānaṃ amanasikārā “ananto ākāso”ti ākāsānañcāyatanaṃ upasampajja viharati. (Abhidhamma 2, p. 254; Dīgha Nikāya 2, p. 60.)

With the complete surmounting of perceptions of form, with the disappearance of perceptions of sensory impact, and with non-attention to perceptions of diversity, contemplating “space is infinite,” the meditator enters and dwells in the base of infinite space.

1. The fine-material jhānas that take forms such as the earth kasiṇa as their objects are called perceptions of form. The meditator completely surmounts both these jhānas and their objects, such as the earth kasiṇa.

2. Perceptions of sensory impact disappear. These are perceptions of visible forms, sounds, odours, tastes, and tangibles that arise from the impact of sense objects on their respective bases. They accompany the two sets of five sense consciousnesses.

3. The meditator does not attend to perceptions of diversity. These are the forty-four kinds of perception accompanying the forty-four wholesome, unwholesome, resultant, and functional sense-sphere consciousnesses other than the ten sense consciousnesses. Thus the meditator enters and dwells in the jhāna of the base of infinite space, attending to space as infinite. (Visuddhimagga I, 322.)

Note: Understand the passage as teaching that all fifty-four kinds of sense-sphere consciousness and their associated mental factors are set aside and left out of attention in the jhāna of the base of infinite space. The meditator attends exclusively to the space obtained by removing the kasiṇa.

The base of infinite consciousness

Miến / Burmese 66

The jhāna of the base of infinite consciousness (viññāṇañcāyatanajhāna) takes as its object the consciousness of the base of infinite space. It is attained by taking that consciousness as object, contemplating it, developing it, and reviewing it.

A meditator who wishes to attain this jhāna should first practise the attainment of the base of infinite space until proficient in all five kinds of mastery. Having gained those masteries:

1. See that the attainment of the base of infinite space has a near enemy in the fine-material jhānas.
2. See that it is less peaceful than the attainment of the base of infinite consciousness. Contemplate its drawbacks in this way.
3. Bring craving and delight in the jhāna of the base of infinite space to an end.
4. Attend to the jhāna of the base of infinite consciousness as peaceful.

Then repeatedly consider and attend to the consciousness of the base of infinite space, which arose pervading the sign of space obtained by removing the earth kasiṇa. Consider it with discernment. Through applied thought, direct the mind repeatedly towards it as “viññāṇaṃ, viññāṇaṃ—consciousness, consciousness.”

Do not attend simply to “infinite, infinite.” You may attend either to “consciousness, consciousness” or to “infinite consciousness, infinite consciousness.”

Absorption with consciousness as object

Miến / Burmese 67

When a meditator repeatedly develops the mind with that sign of consciousness, namely the consciousness of the base of infinite space, the hindrances and stains of defilement fall away. Mindfulness is firmly established on that consciousness. Through access concentration the mind engaged in development becomes well collected. The meditator repeatedly apprehends the sign of consciousness, develops it, and practises it many times. Just as the jhāna consciousness of the base of infinite space arose in absorption with the sign of space obtained by removing the kasiṇa, so the jhāna consciousness of the base of infinite consciousness arises in absorption with the consciousness that had pervaded that space as its object. (Visuddhimagga I, 325.)

Remember that the object is an ultimate reality

The object contemplated here is the jhāna consciousness of the base of infinite space, an ultimate object. When the meditator contemplates that consciousness as “consciousness, consciousness,” the mind engaged in development settles firmly on it. The jhāna consciousness that arises in absorption after the access impulsions is that of the base of infinite consciousness. It takes the consciousness of the base of infinite space as object. One is the jhāna consciousness being contemplated. The other is the jhāna consciousness that contemplates it. Both are jhāna consciousnesses and both are ultimate realities.

Advice on discerning the object

Miến / Burmese 68

A practical difficulty

Because the object is an ultimate reality, some meditators who have yet to discern mentality may have difficulty discerning the consciousness of the base of infinite space. When asked whether they can discern that jhāna's two factors, equanimity and one-pointedness, they say that they can.

They are then advised to discern the jhāna consciousness that arises with those two factors in the same cognitive process. This enables them to discern it. A further question often arises. As the consciousness of the base of infinite space arises in dependence on the material heart-base within the heart, should one focus on the location of the heart-base when contemplating “consciousness, consciousness”? The answer is yes. This is done by directing the mind there. There is no need to bend the head and look towards the heart with the eyes.

Attaining the base of infinite consciousness

When a meditator develops the practice to this extent, the attainment is described as follows.

Sabbaso ākāsānañcāyatanaṃ samatikkamma “anantaṃ viññāṇaṃ”ti viññāṇañcāyatanaṃ upasampajja viharati. (Abhidhamma 2, p. 254; Dīgha Nikāya 2, p. 60.)

What is surmounted in this attainment

Miến / Burmese 69

“Having completely surmounted the base of infinite space, attending ‘consciousness is infinite,’ the meditator enters and dwells in the base of infinite consciousness.” (Abhidhamma 2, p. 254; Dīgha Nikāya 2, p. 60; Visuddhimagga I, 325.)

Here “the base of infinite space” refers both to the jhāna and to its object, the sign of space. The meditator can enter and dwell in the base of infinite consciousness only by completely surmounting both, through the non-arising of that jhāna and by leaving its object out of attention. The Buddha therefore describes the surmounting of the jhāna and its object together by saying “having surmounted the base of infinite space.” (Visuddhimagga I, 325–326.)

What this means

Two consciousnesses cannot arise simultaneously in a single mind moment. One can arise only after another. The jhāna consciousness of the base of infinite space that is contemplated and the jhāna consciousness of the base of infinite consciousness that contemplates it cannot arise together. When the former is undergoing arising, presence, and dissolution, the latter cannot do so. When the latter is undergoing arising, presence, and dissolution, the former cannot…

Why consciousness is called infinite

Miến / Burmese 70

…do so. Only when the consciousness taken as object, that of the base of infinite space, is no longer undergoing arising, presence, and dissolution can the consciousness of the base of infinite consciousness fully arise. The earlier jhāna consciousness knew only the sign of space obtained by removing the kasiṇa. Once the consciousness that knew space is surmounted, that knowing of the sign of space is no longer present. The sign of space as object is therefore surmounted at the same time. Although both that jhāna and its object have been surmounted, the consciousness of the base of infinite consciousness can still take the past, ceased consciousness of the base of infinite space as its object. (See the Anupada Sutta, Uparipaṇṇāsa, section 95; Majjhima, vol. 3, p. 78.)

Infinite consciousness

The consciousness of the base of infinite space takes as object the concept of boundless space, the sign of space with no limit. “Infinite,” the name of its object, is applied figuratively to the consciousness that takes it, transferring the name of the cause to the result. Thus the consciousness of the base of infinite space itself is called “infinite consciousness.” A meditator who seeks the base of infinite consciousness should attend to that very consciousness as “infinite consciousness.” On this explanation, “infinite consciousness” refers to consciousness whose object is the concept of space without bounds…

The base of nothingness

Miến / Burmese 71

…that is, the sign of space, and thus refers to the consciousness of the base of infinite space. Alternatively, when the mind engaged in developing infinite consciousness takes the earlier consciousness as its object, it does not take arising, presence, or dissolution separately. It takes the whole consciousness of the base of infinite space without dividing it. In particular, the developing mind of infinite consciousness takes it without imposing boundaries, attending to the whole of that earlier consciousness without omitting even the least part. On this explanation it is called “infinite consciousness” because the consciousness of the base of infinite space is taken without division. (Visuddhimagga I, 326.)

The jhāna of the base of nothingness (ākiñcaññāyatanajhāna)

The jhāna of the base of nothingness takes as object the concept of the absence of the jhāna of the base of infinite space. To develop it, first practise the attainment of the base of infinite consciousness until proficient in all five kinds of mastery. Then reflect as follows.

1. The attainment of the base of infinite consciousness that I have attained has a near enemy in the base of infinite space. That is, it may decline at any time and fall back to the base of infinite space…

Attending to absence

Miến / Burmese 72

…This is what is meant by a near enemy.

2. The base of infinite consciousness is less peaceful than the base of nothingness. See its drawbacks in this way.
3. Bring attachment and longing for the base of infinite consciousness to an end.
4. Attend to the base of nothingness as peaceful.
5. The jhāna of the base of infinite consciousness arose taking as object the consciousness of the base of infinite space. Attend to the absence of that earlier consciousness, the concept of its non-presence, as empty and secluded.

Note. As explained above, two consciousnesses cannot arise simultaneously in one mind moment. While the consciousness of the base of infinite space undergoes arising, presence, and dissolution, the consciousness of the base of infinite consciousness cannot do so. Conversely, when the latter undergoes arising, presence, and dissolution, the former no longer does so. The absence of the earlier consciousness in terms of arising, presence, and dissolution is called the concept of absence. Attend to that concept.

How should one attend? Leave the consciousness of the base of infinite space entirely out of attention and take only its absence as object…

Absorption in the base of nothingness

Miến / Burmese 73

1. “Natthi, natthi—there is none, there is none,” or “natthi kiñci, natthi kiñci—there is nothing, there is nothing.”
2. “Suññaṃ, suññaṃ—empty, empty.”
3. “Vivittaṃ, vivittaṃ—secluded, secluded.”

Consider it and attend to it repeatedly. Penetrate it with discernment. With applied thought, direct the mind to it and turn the mind repeatedly towards it as “there is nothing, there is nothing.” (Visuddhimagga I, 326–327.)

When the meditator develops the mind with this sign that leads to jhāna, the concept of the absence of the consciousness of the base of infinite space, the hindrances and stains of defilement fall away. Mindfulness is firmly established on that absence. Through access concentration the developing mind settles well. Repeatedly apprehend, develop, and practise with that sign. In one who practises in this way, the jhāna consciousness of the base of nothingness arises in absorption taking as its object the emptiness, seclusion, or absence of the consciousness of the base of infinite space, which had arisen pervading the sign of space obtained by removing the earth kasiṇa. This is analogous to the arising of the consciousness of the base of infinite consciousness with the consciousness that had pervaded the sign of space as its object. (Visuddhimagga I, 327.)

Seeing only the absence

Miến / Burmese 74

A point to remember. When the jhāna consciousness of the base of nothingness arises with the concept of absence as its object, the meditator contemplates only the absence of the consciousness of the base of infinite space.

For an illustration from ordinary life, suppose a man sees monks assembled on some business in a meeting hall and then goes elsewhere. He later returns to the hall. By then the meeting has ended and the monks have left. Standing in the doorway, he looks in and sees only that the place is empty and deserted. It does not occur to him to speculate whether so many monks have died or gone somewhere else. He sees only that they are absent from the meeting place and that it is empty of them.

Similarly, the meditator formerly contemplated as “consciousness, consciousness,” with the eye of the jhāna of the base of infinite consciousness, the consciousness of the base of infinite space that had arisen on the sign of space obtained by removing the earth kasiṇa. Later…

Nothing, empty, secluded

Miến / Burmese 75

…taking as object the absence of that consciousness, the meditator applies the preliminary attention “natthi, natthi,” “suññaṃ, suññaṃ,” or “vivittaṃ, vivittaṃ.” When the consciousness of the base of infinite space disappears from view, the developing mind repeatedly contemplates only the concept of its absence, that is, the fact that it is absent and has disappeared from view. (Visuddhimagga I, 327.)

Natthi, natthi. Suññaṃ, suññaṃ. Vivittaṃ, vivittaṃ.

The statement that the consciousness of the base of infinite space disappears through this preliminary attention means that its disappearance becomes apparent because it is no longer taken as object. It does not disappear on account of being destroyed. The consciousness of the base of infinite consciousness takes the consciousness of the base of infinite space as object and attends to it. While the former arises, the latter is apparent in its role as an object condition. The consciousness of the base of nothingness, however, does not take that earlier consciousness as object or attend to it. It takes and attends only to the concept of its absence. Thus, because the consciousness of the base of nothingness does not take or attend to the consciousness of the base of infinite space and attends only to its absence, that consciousness of the base of infinite space…

The meaning of disappearance

Miến / Burmese 76

…disappears from view. This is the intended meaning. Its disappearance here does not refer to its destruction.

Explanation of the illustration

In the example above, the man saw a group of monks assembled in a hall and went elsewhere. Later all the monks left the hall on some business. When the man returned and looked in, he saw only that the assembly place was deserted. He did not investigate why the monks had gone.

Likewise, the meditator first contemplated the consciousness of the base of infinite space with the eye of the jhāna of the base of infinite consciousness. Later, attending to it in preliminary development as “there is none,” the meditator finds that it is absent. With the eye of the jhāna of the base of nothingness, the meditator contemplates only the concept of its absence, without investigating why that consciousness is absent or ceased. The jhāna of the base of nothingness does not attend to the cause of its absence, cessation, or non-presence. (Mahāṭīkā I, 402.)

Attaining the base of nothingness

Miến / Burmese 77

Sabbaso viññāṇañcāyatanaṃ samatikkamma “natthi kiñci”ti ākiñcaññāyatanaṃ upasampajja viharati. (Abhidhamma 2, p. 254; Dīgha Nikāya 2, p. 60.)

The words describe a meditator who completely surmounts the jhāna of the base of infinite consciousness and its object, the consciousness of the base of infinite space. Taking as object the concept of the absence of that earlier consciousness, the meditator attends “there is none,” “empty,” or “secluded,” and enters and dwells in the base of nothingness. (Abhidhamma 2, p. 254; Dīgha Nikāya 2, p. 60; Visuddhimagga I, 327.)

Sabbaso viññāṇañcāyatanaṃ samatikkamma—having completely surmounted the base of infinite consciousness

The meditator enters and dwells in the base of nothingness only after fully surmounting the base of infinite consciousness and its object, the consciousness of the base of infinite space, through the non-arising of that jhāna and non-attention to its object. The Buddha accordingly includes both jhāna and object in the phrase “having surmounted the base of infinite consciousness.” (Visuddhimagga I, 328.)

Natthi kiñci—there is nothing

This refers to attending “natthi, natthi,” “suññaṃ, suññaṃ,” or “vivittaṃ, vivittaṃ”…

What “there is nothing” means

Miến / Burmese 78

…The Vibhaṅga says that the consciousness of the base of infinite space, previously attended to as “infinite consciousness,” is made to disappear from view, so that not even the least trace of it remains apparent. One contemplates in this way, hence the words “there is nothing.” Although the wording resembles that used of insight contemplating the dissolution of formations, as in the phrase “as subject to destruction,” understand the Vibhaṅga here in the sense already explained. The meditator does not consider that consciousness, attend to it, or penetrate it with discernment. By attending exclusively to its absence, the concept of its non-presence, the meditator makes it disappear from view. The passage should be understood in this sense. (Visuddhimagga I, 328.)

What is the jhāna of the base of nothingness?

The meditator strives to attain the jhāna of the base of nothingness by taking the concept of the absence of the consciousness of the base of infinite space as object. In this practice not the slightest trace of that consciousness, as the object contemplated in the lower attainment, remains. It is therefore described by the term akiñcana in the explanation of the name.

Neither perception nor non-perception

Miến / Burmese 79

…The disappearance from the meditator's knowledge of the consciousness of the base of infinite space, with no trace left, is called ākiñcañña. Its absence is called natthibhāva. This absence is a concept rather than an ultimate reality and is therefore called the concept of absence (natthibhāvapaññatti). Just as a deity's residence is called a dwelling place, this concept of absence is called a base (āyatana) because it serves as the basis for the third immaterial jhāna. Hence the third immaterial jhāna arising with that concept as its object is called the jhāna of the base of nothingness. (Visuddhimagga I, 328.)

The jhāna of the base of neither perception nor non-perception (nevasaññānāsaññāyatanajhāna)

In this attainment there is no gross perception, only exceedingly subtle perception. It is therefore called the jhāna of the base of neither perception nor non-perception. The teaching names it in terms of perception. All thirty-one mental phenomena present in this attainment, including consciousness, contact, feeling, and volition, are also exceedingly subtle. Only these exceedingly subtle mental phenomena are present. The attainment is therefore called saṅkhārāvasesasamāpatti, the attainment with only a residue of formations. Formations have reached the utmost subtlety and only this barely describable residue remains in the fourth immaterial attainment.

Preparing for the fourth immaterial attainment

Miến / Burmese 80

A meditator who wishes to attain the base of neither perception nor non-perception should first practise the base of nothingness until proficient in all five kinds of mastery. Having done so, reflect as follows.

1. The attainment of the base of nothingness that I have gained has a near enemy in the base of infinite consciousness.
2. It is less peaceful than the base of neither perception nor non-perception. Reflect also: “Perception is a disease, perception is a boil, perception is a dart. This base of neither perception nor non-perception is peaceful. This base of neither perception nor non-perception is sublime.”

In this way see the drawbacks of the base of nothingness and the benefits of the higher attainment, the base of neither perception nor non-perception.

3. Bring delight in and attachment to the base of nothingness to an end.
4. Attend to the base of neither perception nor non-perception as peaceful.
5. The jhāna of the base of nothingness arises taking as object the concept of the absence of the consciousness of the base of infinite space…

Absorption in neither perception nor non-perception

Miến / Burmese 81

…Take that very attainment as object and repeatedly consider and attend to it as “santaṃ, santaṃ—peaceful, peaceful.” Discern it with understanding. With applied thought, direct the mind to it and turn the mind repeatedly towards it as “peaceful, peaceful.” (Visuddhimagga I, 328–329.)

As the meditator repeatedly applies this meditative attention to the sign of the attainment of nothingness, the hindrances and stains of defilement fall away. Mindfulness is firmly established with the consciousness of the base of nothingness as object. The developing mind becomes well collected through access concentration.

The meditator repeatedly apprehends, develops, and practises this sign of the attainment of nothingness, which leads to the jhāna of neither perception nor non-perception. Taking it repeatedly as object, the meditator establishes concentration so that the developing mind settles firmly on it. Just as the jhāna of nothingness arose in absorption with the concept of the absence of the consciousness of infinite space as object, so the consciousness of neither perception nor non-perception arises in absorption with the four mental aggregates of the attainment of nothingness as object. (Visuddhimagga I, 329.)

Attaining neither perception nor non-perception

Miến / Burmese 82

Vuttañhetaṃ: “Sabbaso ākiñcaññāyatanaṃ samatikkamma nevasaññānāsaññāyatanaṃ upasampajja viharatī”ti vuccati. (Abhidhamma 2, p. 254; Dīgha Nikāya 2, p. 60; Visuddhimagga I, 329.)

This describes a meditator who completely surmounts the jhāna of the base of nothingness and its object, the concept of the absence of the consciousness of infinite space. Attending to the consciousness of nothingness as “peaceful, peaceful,” the meditator enters and dwells in the base of neither perception nor non-perception. (Abhidhamma 2, p. 254; Dīgha Nikāya 2, p. 60; Visuddhimagga I, 329.)

Ākiñcaññāyatanaṃ samatikkamma—having surmounted the base of nothingness

Both the jhāna of nothingness and the concept of absence that serves as its object are called the base of nothingness here. Its object, the concept of absence, is called ākiñcañña as explained above. It is also called a base (āyatana) because the third immaterial jhāna rests on it, just as a deity's residence is called a dwelling place. Thus the concept of absence is called the base of nothingness. Just as the country of Kamboja is a region in which horses arise, so the concept of absence…

Attending to the peaceful and sublime

Miến / Burmese 83

…is ākiñcañña and is also a base because it is a cause of the arising of the third immaterial jhāna, the base of nothingness. For this reason too it is called ākiñcañññāyatana.

Only after surmounting both the jhāna and the concept of absence, through the non-arising of the jhāna and non-attention to its object, does the meditator enter and dwell in the base of neither perception nor non-perception. The Buddha accordingly includes both in the words “having surmounted the base of nothingness.” (Visuddhimagga I, 329.)

Peaceful and sublime

Santato manasi karotīti “santā vatāyaṃ samāpatti, yatra hi nāma natthibhāvampi ārammaṇaṃ karitvā ṭhassatī”ti ce santārammaṇatāya taṃ santāti manasi karoti. (Visuddhimagga I, 329.) [Latin transcription to be checked against the Pāli edition.]

To attain neither perception nor non-perception, attend to the base of nothingness, which is the object contemplated, in the following ways.

1. “Etaṃ santaṃ, etaṃ paṇītaṃ—this is peaceful, this is sublime.”
2. “Santaṃ, santaṃ,” or “santā, santā—peaceful, peaceful.”
3. “Paṇītaṃ, paṇītaṃ—sublime, sublime.”

In what sense nothingness is peaceful

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…Attend in this way. Ordinarily consciousnesses can remain absorbed for a long time only when they have some definite thing as a knowable object. The third immaterial attainment, the base of nothingness, can take the very concept of absence as its object. Thus the meditator reflects, “How peaceful this attainment is. It can remain with so subtle an object as the concept of absence, the emptiness of the consciousness of infinite space.” Because that attainment has a peaceful object, the meditator attends to it as peaceful. (Visuddhimagga I, 329.)

The meditator praises the third immaterial jhāna as exceedingly peaceful and sublime because it can take the concept of absence as its object. Earlier, during preparation, the meditator considered it less peaceful than the consciousness and mental factors of the fourth immaterial jhāna. The praise “this is peaceful, this is sublime” concerns its ability to take absence as its object. Seeing a fault where there is a fault and praising a quality where there is a quality do not conflict. It is like finding fault with the appearance of an unattractive girl and praising her for her skill.

How a peaceful attainment is surmounted

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Question. If one attends to the base of nothingness as peaceful, how can one surmount that jhāna and its object?

Answer. One can surmount it because one has no wish to enter the attainment of nothingness. The meditator does indeed attend to it as peaceful. Yet the meditator does not repeatedly turn the mind towards reviewing it, entering it, resolving to stay in it, emerging from it, or reviewing its factors. Such attention does not arise because the base of neither perception nor non-perception is more peaceful and sublime than the base of nothingness. (Visuddhimagga I, 330.)

An illustration from ordinary life

Suppose a king goes round an exhibition of crafts. He sees ivory workers with one cloth wrapped around their heads and another tied at their waists. Their bodies are covered with ivory dust as they work hard making fine ivory figures, bangles, and other objects. The king warmly praises their workmanship and skill. Yet he has no wish to leave his throne and take up ivory carving himself…

The function of perception in the highest attainment

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…He praises the ivory workers and continues past them until he reaches his palace. Understand the example in this way. (Visuddhimagga I, 330.)

Nevasaññā—nāsaññā

The perception in this attainment is called “neither perception” because it cannot perform the evident function of perception. It is also called “nor non-perception” because an exceedingly subtle residue of perception is present.

Question. What is the evident function of perception here?

Answer. It consists in recognizing and marking the object, the attainment of nothingness, or in being taken as an object of insight knowledge and giving rise to knowledge of disenchantment.

Just as the fire element in cold water cannot perform the function of burning, this perception cannot clearly perform the function of marking and recognizing its object, the attainment of nothingness. Nor can it serve as an object of insight and give rise to knowledge of disenchantment in the way that perception in the other three immaterial attainments can. Indeed, a meditating bhikkhu who has never discerned or attended with insight to aggregates other than those of neither perception nor non-perception cannot, by applying the three characteristics to the aggregates of neither perception nor non-perception…

The limits of insight into this attainment

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…contemplate them with insight and reach knowledge of disenchantment with formations. Even Venerable Sāriputta could not have attained knowledge of disenchantment by starting with those aggregates without having attended with insight to other aggregates first.

Only someone of wisdom comparable to Venerable Sāriputta, who began by developing insight into the five aggregates and was thoroughly familiar with seeing the material and mental formations that continually arise at the six doors together with their objects, could bring forth knowledge of rise and fall with regard to the aggregates of neither perception nor non-perception.

Even an insight meditator as wise as Venerable Sāriputta could contemplate the mental phenomena of this attainment only collectively, by the method of comprehension in groups (kalāpasammasana): “These phenomena were absent before, then suddenly arose. Having arisen, they suddenly ceased.” He could not apply the three characteristics to each ultimate phenomenon in the attainment separately by the method of insight into successive phenomena (anupadadhammavipassanā). Thus even Venerable Sāriputta, the General of the Dhamma, could not contemplate this attainment by that method…

The increasing subtlety of the immaterial attainments

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…because it had reached such extreme subtlety. (Visuddhimagga I, 331.)

Each successive attainment is more sublime

All four immaterial attainments have the same two jhāna factors, equanimity and one-pointedness. They may therefore appear indistinguishable. Yet each successive attainment is more sublime through the increasing power of development. Imagine a building with four floors. On the lowest floor delicious food and dancers are provided to delight the senses, and the second, third, and fourth floors are similarly furnished, each more splendid than the one below. Or imagine four pieces of cloth of the same length and width, woven from thread that is coarse, fine, finer still, and exceedingly fine. Each piece is finer than the preceding one. Understand the attainments in the same way. (Visuddhimagga I, 332–333.)

An object one must nevertheless take

One striving to attain the base of infinite consciousness sees drawbacks in the consciousness of the base of infinite space. Yet there is no other object with which to reach the base of infinite consciousness. As development proceeds, the consciousness of infinite consciousness must take that earlier consciousness as its object.

The remaining kasiṇas

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Likewise, one striving to attain neither perception nor non-perception sees drawbacks in the consciousness of the base of nothingness. Yet there is no other object with which to reach the higher attainment. As development proceeds, the consciousness of neither perception nor non-perception must take that consciousness as its object. It is like a minister who sees faults in the king but, having no other suitable livelihood, must remain in the service of that same king. (Visuddhimagga I, 334.)

The need to take such an object may also be understood through a man climbing a long ladder who must rely on the rungs because there is nothing else to hold, someone ascending mountain peaks who must use those very peaks, or someone climbing a rocky mountain who trembles and, having nothing else to grasp, must rely on his own cloth. In the same way, the jhāna of infinite consciousness arises with the consciousness of infinite space as its object, and the jhāna of neither perception nor non-perception arises with the consciousness of nothingness as its object. (Visuddhimagga I, 334–335.)

The remaining kasiṇas

The method of developing the eight attainments using the earth kasiṇa as a basis has now been presented in sequence. Apply the same method to the other kasiṇas from water through light and strive to attain the eight attainments with each…

From the kasiṇas to the protective meditations

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…Here is a brief example. Establish concentration on the water kasiṇa up to the fourth jhāna. Emerge and consider the drawbacks of materiality. Extend the water kasiṇa through countless world systems. Reflect on the drawbacks of the fourth jhāna and the advantages of infinite space. Then discern the sign of space in the water kasiṇa sign and remove the water kasiṇa. When it disappears and only the sign of space remains, take that sign as object to attain infinite space. Take the consciousness of infinite space as object to attain infinite consciousness, the concept of the absence of the consciousness of infinite space to attain nothingness, and the consciousness of nothingness to attain neither perception nor non-perception. This much should suffice to make the method clear.

The four protective meditation subjects will now be presented. They are loving-kindness, recollection of the Buddha, foulness, and mindfulness of death. Loving-kindness will be presented first. Because it is one of the divine abidings, the other three divine abidings, compassion, appreciative joy, and equanimity, will be presented along with it. The method of practice will be given in outline following the exposition on the divine abidings in the Visuddhimagga.

The divine abidings: loving-kindness

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The four protective meditation subjects. The divine abidings and the development of loving-kindness (mettā)

A good person who wishes to develop loving-kindness should know which persons can hinder its development. With some one should not begin the practice, and with others one should not develop it in the specified manner at all.

1. Appiyapuggala—a person who is not dear.
2. Atippiyasahāyaka—a very dear friend or companion.
3. Majjhattapuggala—a neutral person, neither loved nor disliked.
4. Veripuggala—an enemy.

Do not begin by developing loving-kindness towards these four kinds of person before attaining mettā jhāna. Once mettā jhāna has been attained, develop it in the order self, dear person, neutral person, and enemy, so as to attain jhāna. The individuals chosen should be living persons of the same sex.

Note. A person who is not dear includes someone who does not act for one's welfare or the welfare of someone dear to oneself, or someone who acts for the welfare of a person one dislikes. Such people can be grounds for resentment, as when one thinks, “They did not act for my welfare,” or “They did not act for the welfare of someone dear to me.” An enemy is someone who acts to harm oneself or someone dear to oneself. (Mahāṭīkā I, 351.)

Whom to choose for developing loving-kindness

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5. Liṅgavisabhāga—a person of the opposite sex. Do not develop loving-kindness with a particular person of the opposite sex as the object. A woman should not direct it specifically to an individual man, and a man should not direct it specifically to an individual woman. Lust may arise.

6. Kālakata puggala—a person who has died. Do not develop loving-kindness with a deceased person as object.

The reasons

Trying to place someone who is not dear in the position of a dear person is tiring. Trying to place a very dear friend in the position of a neutral person is tiring too. If even slight suffering befalls that very dear friend, one may feel as if one were about to weep. Trying to regard a neutral person as someone respected or dear is also tiring. Repeatedly recalling an enemy can arouse anger. Therefore do not begin the practice with these four kinds of person. Do not develop it specifically towards an individual of the opposite sex because lust may arise. After attaining mettā jhāna and breaking down the barriers, one may develop loving-kindness towards all women (sabbā itthiyo) or all men (sabbe purisā). If one develops it towards a deceased person…

Beginning with oneself

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…one cannot reach either absorption or access concentration in loving-kindness. Therefore do not develop loving-kindness with a deceased person as object. (See Visuddhimagga I, 287–288.)

The order of persons towards whom loving-kindness is developed:

1. Atta—oneself.
2. Piya—someone dear or respected, and someone very dear.
3. Majjhatta—a neutral person, neither loved nor disliked.
4. Veri—an enemy.

Develop loving-kindness towards these four in order. Begin with oneself as an example. This is not for attaining absorption. Even if a meditator were to develop loving-kindness towards oneself for a hundred or a thousand years with the thought “Ahaṃ sukhito homi—may I be happy in body and mind,” absorption would not arise in this way.

When developing loving-kindness towards oneself with the thought “May I be happy in body and mind,” the meditator reflects that just as one wishes for happiness, dislikes suffering, wants to live, and does not want to die, other beings likewise wish for happiness, dislike suffering, and want to live. Using oneself as an example in this way gives rise to a wish for the welfare and happiness of other beings.

Wishes for one's own well-being

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Sabbā disā anuparigamma cetasā,
nevajjhagā piyataramattanā kvaci.
Evaṃ piyo puthu attā paresaṃ,
tasmā na hiṃse paramattakāmo. (Saṃyutta Nikāya 1, p. 75; Khuddaka Nikāya 1, p. 133.)

Even after searching all directions with the mind, one finds no other being dearer than oneself. Just as one can find no one dearer than oneself, each of the other beings holds themselves dear. Therefore a good person who wishes for their own welfare and happiness should not harm another being. (Saṃyutta Nikāya 1, p. 75; Khuddaka Nikāya 1, p. 133.)

Following these instructions, first develop loving-kindness towards yourself for a short time, so that the mind becomes gentle and tender and empathy takes root.

1. Ahaṃ avero homi.
2. Abyāpajjo homi.
3. Anīgho homi.
4. Sukhī attānaṃ pariharāmi.

1. May I be free from enmity and danger.
2. May I be free from mental suffering.
3. May I be free from bodily suffering.
4. May I look after myself happily and in good health.

Turning towards a dear and respected person

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When the mind has become gentle and tender and empathy has grown strong, turn to developing loving-kindness towards other beings. For someone whose mind is already tender and whose empathy is strong, loving-kindness towards another being may be developed readily, without difficulty, and extensive practice towards oneself is unnecessary. To develop loving-kindness towards another being up to mettā jhāna, practise in the following order.

A dear and respected person of the same sex

Re-establish fourth-jhāna concentration on mindfulness of breathing or, if you can, fourth-jhāna concentration on the white kasiṇa, until the light shines brilliantly. Concentration on the white kasiṇa is preferable. With the aid of this concentration and its light, and with the strength imparted by that concentration as a powerful decisive support, the development of loving-kindness proceeds readily.

Through fourth-jhāna concentration the mind is clear of the stains of greed, hatred, delusion, and the other defilements. It has become malleable (mudubhūta), tender and pliant, and wieldy (kammaniya), ready for the particular meditation to be developed. It is purified and bright, with radiant light. These qualities enable the development of loving-kindness to proceed readily within a short time…

Directing loving-kindness to a respected person

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…because they help strengthen loving-kindness. When the light shines brilliantly, bring to mind a living person of the same sex whom you dearly love, value, and respect. The light arising from fourth-jhāna concentration spreads in all directions around you. You will see within that light the person you have brought to mind as the object of loving-kindness. Choose the posture and appearance in which you most liked to see that person and in which they seemed happiest, whether sitting, standing, or otherwise. Bring that image to mind about four or five cubits away. Once the person appears clearly in the light, develop loving-kindness as follows.

Ayaṃ sappuriso:
1. Avero hotu.
2. Abyāpajjo hotu.
3. Anīgho hotu.
4. Sukhī attānaṃ pariharatu.

May this good person:
1. Be free from enmity and danger.
2. Be free from mental suffering.
3. Be free from bodily suffering.
4. Look after themselves happily and in good health.

Developing each wish to the third jhāna

Miến / Burmese 97

Practise the four ways of developing loving-kindness about three or four times. Then choose whichever of the four you prefer. Suppose you choose “May this person be free from mental suffering.” Take the image of that person free from mental suffering and smiling as your object. Repeat the wish many times. Once the developing mind settles very peacefully on the image, review the jhāna factors. Develop the first, second, and third jhānas in order. Then develop each of the four wishes in turn up to the third jhāna. When wishing freedom from danger, let the person appear free from danger. When wishing freedom from mental or bodily suffering, let the person appear free from that suffering. When wishing that the person look after themselves happily and in good health, let them appear to do so. Practise until proficient in the five kinds of mastery for each mettā jhāna.

Evarūpe ca puggale kāmaṃ appanā sampajjati. (Visuddhimagga I, 289.)
Jhānacittaṃ upanetabbaṃ uppādetabbanti attho. (Mahāṭīkā I, 354.)

According to these explanations in the commentary and subcommentary, develop loving-kindness towards each individual up to the third jhāna. With each of the four ways of developing loving-kindness, reach the third jhāna and practise the five masteries for each jhāna. The wish for freedom from danger, freedom from mental suffering…

Extending the practice to other individuals

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…and freedom from bodily suffering, and the wish for the person to live happily, are wishes for the person's welfare. Since these wishes are of the nature of loving-kindness rather than equanimity, this practice does not reach the fourth jhāna.

After succeeding, develop loving-kindness in the same way towards other dear and respected people of the same sex, one at a time. After succeeding with at least about ten, bring to mind very dear living friends of the same sex one by one. Develop loving-kindness up to the third jhāna with each. Practise until loving-kindness towards the dear and respected people and towards the very dear friends is equal, so they all belong to the category of dear persons.

Then take at least about ten neutral persons, neither loved nor disliked, one by one and develop loving-kindness up to the third jhāna with each. They should all be living persons of the same sex. Then develop loving-kindness towards enemies or people you dislike. Leave the person you dislike most until last and begin with someone with whom you have had a slight disagreement. Once successful, bring enemies to mind one by one and suffuse them with loving-kindness up to jhāna. Develop each of the four wishes up to the third jhāna for each individual. All should be living persons of the same sex. Some people have no enemy and no one they hate. Their minds are like those of the Bodhisatta in the Great Being's births, such as King Nandiya, so even towards people who act against their welfare…

Breaking down the barriers

Miến / Burmese 99

…the perception “enemy” does not arise. Such a meditator need not seek out an enemy. Those who have an enemy should develop loving-kindness towards that person.

Āsevantena ca ekekaṃ koṭṭhāse muduṃ kammaniyaṃ cittaṃ katvā tadanantare tadanantare upasaṃharitabbaṃ. (Visuddhimagga I, 289.)
Tena vuttaṃ “tadanantare tadanantare upasaṃharitabban”ti, jhānacittaṃ uppādetabbanti attho. (Mahāṭīkā I, 354.) [Transcription of these two Pāli lines to be checked.]

There are four classes of person to whom loving-kindness is directed here: a dear person, a very dear person, a neutral person, and an enemy. Practise with one class until the mind engaged in development becomes pliant and accustomed to the practice, reaching the third jhāna. Then direct the mind to each succeeding class and bring forth jhāna consciousness. (Visuddhimagga I, 289. Mahāṭīkā I, 354.)

Sīmāsambheda—breaking down the boundaries between persons

By repeatedly developing loving-kindness, make the mind equal towards oneself, a dear person, a neutral person, and an enemy. This is how the barriers are broken down. “Equality of mind” here means an equal mind towards the persons concerned. It is that equality which constitutes the breaking down of the barriers. (Visuddhimagga I, 300. Mahāṭīkā I, 362.)

1. Piyamanāpagārubhāvanīya—a person who is dear, pleasing, worthy of respect and esteem, and who encourages the growth of wholesome qualities.

Making loving-kindness equal

2. Atippiyasahāyaka—a very dear friend or companion.
3. Majjhatta—a neutral person, neither loved nor disliked.
4. Veri—an enemy or a person one dislikes.

When you have become proficient in developing loving-kindness up to the third jhāna towards these four kinds of person, loving-kindness towards the dear and respected person and the very dear friend becomes equal. They can then be treated as a single category of dear persons.

1. Atta—oneself.
2. Piya—a dear and respected person or a very dear person.
3. Majjhatta—a neutral person, neither loved nor disliked.
4. Veri—an enemy or a person one dislikes.

Practise so that loving-kindness is equal towards these four. Develop it repeatedly until the mind makes no distinction such as “this is oneself,” “this is a dear person,” “this is a neutral person,” or “this is an enemy.” Loving-kindness with oneself as object cannot reach jhāna. Here the purpose is to develop an equal and uninterrupted flow of loving-kindness, without distinctions between oneself, a dear person, a neutral person, and an enemy. When the loving-kindness is equal, the barriers between persons have been broken down. It is for this breaking down of the barriers…

Practising the breaking down of barriers

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…that loving-kindness is developed towards oneself at this stage.

First re-establish a fourth jhāna already attained on mindfulness of breathing or the white kasiṇa. When the light becomes strong, develop loving-kindness towards yourself for a short time, about a quarter of a minute. Then take a dear person as object and develop loving-kindness up to the third jhāna. Do the same with a neutral person, and then with an enemy.

Next develop loving-kindness towards yourself again in the same way. Then take another dear person, another neutral person, and another enemy in turn and do likewise. For each dear person, neutral person, and enemy, develop each of the four wishes up to the third jhāna.

Continue in this way, changing the dear, neutral, and hostile persons one by one and repeating the sequence oneself, dear person, neutral person, and enemy many times. Train so that the mind developing loving-kindness has an even quality and so that the mettā jhānas attained towards dear, neutral, and hostile persons are equal. When the attitude and the mettā jhānas have become equal, the barriers between persons have been broken down. At that point, as stated in the Paṭisambhidāmagga, the meditator can proceed to the following methods…

The three modes of pervading with loving-kindness

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1. Five modes of liberation of mind through loving-kindness by unspecified pervasion (anodhisopharaṇā mettā cetovimutti).
2. Seven modes of liberation of mind through loving-kindness by specified pervasion (odhisopharaṇā mettā cetovimutti).
3. Ten modes of liberation of mind through loving-kindness by directional pervasion (disāpharaṇā mettā cetovimutti). These methods of developing loving-kindness can now be practised.

Tasmiṃ appanāppattacittasseva samijjhatīti veditabbaṃ. (Visuddhimagga I, 302.) [Transcription to be checked.]

Understand that this succeeds only in one whose mind has reached absorption.

The modes of development listed above, beginning with unspecified pervasion, become fully established only in one who has broken down the barriers between oneself, a dear person, a neutral person, and an enemy, and has attained absorption in loving-kindness with dear, neutral, and hostile persons as objects. (Visuddhimagga I, 302.)

Those wishing to develop loving-kindness with such formulas as “Sabbe sattā averā hontu—may all beings be free from enmity” should carefully bear this rule in mind and practise accordingly.

Five modes of unspecified pervasion

There are five ways of pervading with the liberation of mind through loving-kindness without delimiting the group intended.

1. Sabbe sattā—all beings, so called because they cling to the five aggregates.

Groups for unspecified and specified pervasion

2. Sabbe pāṇā—all breathing beings.
3. Sabbe bhūtā—all beings who have come into existence through kamma and defilements.
4. Sabbe puggalā—all persons, beings subject to falling away and rebirth.
5. Sabbe attabhāvapariyāpannā—all beings included in an individual existence, that is, in a body taken as self.

Seven modes of specified pervasion

There are seven ways of pervading with the liberation of mind through loving-kindness by delimiting the group intended.

1. Sabbā itthiyo—all women.
2. Sabbe purisā—all men.
3. Sabbe ariyā—all noble persons.
4. Sabbe anariyā—all who are not noble persons.
5. Sabbe devā—all deities.
6. Sabbe manussā—all human beings.
7. Sabbe vinipātikā—all beings in the states of deprivation.

The forty-eight ways of developing loving-kindness

Miến / Burmese 104

First re-establish concentration up to the fourth jhāna on the white kasiṇa. As explained above, repeatedly enter mettā jhāna, making loving-kindness equal towards yourself, a dear person, a neutral person, and an enemy. When loving-kindness has become equal and the barriers are gone, bring to mind all the beings within a monastery compound or a house and its grounds, as far as you are able. At that time the light arising from the mind engaged in tranquillity meditation through loving-kindness will shine brilliantly.

With the help of that light, take all beings within the area you have marked out as your object, seeing them clearly in the light. Then develop the five modes of unspecified pervasion and the seven modes of specified pervasion, twelve groups in all. There are four wishes for each group, making forty-eight ways of developing loving-kindness.

For example:

1. Sabbe sattā:
(a) Averā hontu.
(b) Abyāpajjā hontu.
(c) Anīghā hontu.
(d) Sukhī attānaṃ pariharantu.

Practising each of the four wishes

Miến / Burmese 105

1. May all beings who cling to the five aggregates:

(a) Be free from enmity and danger. Develop this to the third jhāna.
(b) Be free from mental suffering. Develop this to the third jhāna.
(c) Be free from bodily suffering. Develop this to the third jhāna.
(d) Look after themselves happily and in good health. Develop this to the third jhāna.

In developing these four wishes, attain the third jhāna with each. See all the beings who are the object of mettā jhāna clearly in the light of knowledge. When you succeed, do the same with "sabbe pāṇā," reaching the third jhāna with each of the four wishes.

Continue with the four wishes for the remaining groups, beginning with "sabbe bhūtā." When developing "sabbā itthiyo," see all the women within the area you have marked out in the light. With "sabbe purisā," see all the men. With "sabbe devā," see all the deities in the area. With "sabbe manussā," see all the human beings. With "sabbe vinipātikā," encompass all the beings in states of deprivation within that area, as far as your knowledge permits. Practise these forty-eight ways repeatedly.

Extending loving-kindness in the ten directions

Miến / Burmese 106

Once you succeed within a monastery compound or a house and its grounds, gradually extend mettā jhāna. Develop the forty-eight ways throughout the whole monastery, then throughout two monasteries, and so on. Practise the forty-eight ways over a village, a township, two townships, a region, two regions, a whole country, a whole world system, and all thirty-one planes, extending the range gradually. Once successful, extend the forty-eight ways throughout countless world systems. Then proceed to the ten modes of directional pervasion.

Ten modes of directional pervasion

The liberation of mind through loving-kindness may be spread in ten directions as follows.

1. East: forty-eight ways.
2. West: forty-eight ways.
3. South: forty-eight ways.
4. North: forty-eight ways.
5. Southeast: forty-eight ways.
6. Southwest: forty-eight ways.
7. Northwest: forty-eight ways.
8. Northeast: forty-eight ways.
9. Above: forty-eight ways.
10. Below: forty-eight ways.

The 528 ways of pervading with loving-kindness

Miến / Burmese 107

The ten directions give 10 × 48 = 480 ways. Add these to the forty-eight ways already developed towards all beings throughout countless world systems. Together they make 528 ways of developing loving-kindness.

To practise directional pervasion, take as object all beings to the east, extending as far as countless world systems. When you see them in the light, develop the forty-eight ways of loving-kindness. Do likewise towards the west and in the remaining directions. Once successful, you can continue with the methods given in the Mettā Sutta and elsewhere. When you can practise the 528 ways systematically, you can know for yourself that your practice accords with the following teaching of the Buddha.

So mettāsahagatena cetasā ekaṃ disaṃ pharitvā viharati. Tathā dutiyaṃ, tathā tatiyaṃ, tathā catutthaṃ. Iti uddhamadho tiriyaṃ sabbadhi sabbattatāya sabbāvantaṃ lokaṃ mettāsahagatena cetasā vipulena mahaggatena appamāṇena averena abyāpajjena pharitvā viharati. (Dī 1,234.)

The meditator dwells pervading one direction with a mind imbued with loving-kindness. In the same way the meditator pervades the second, third, and fourth directions…

The eleven benefits of loving-kindness

Miến / Burmese 108

…and likewise above, below, and across, everywhere and in every respect. Regarding all beings as oneself, the meditator dwells pervading the whole world of beings with a mind imbued with loving-kindness, abundant, exalted, immeasurable, free from enmity and affliction. (Dīgha Nikāya 1, p. 234.)

Mettāya, bhikkhave, cetovimuttiyā āsevitāya bhāvitāya bahulīkatāya yānīkatāya vatthukatāya anuṭṭhitāya paricitāya susamāraddhāya ekādasānisaṃsā pāṭikaṅkhā. Katame ekādasa? Sukhaṃ supati, sukhaṃ paṭibujjhati, na pāpakaṃ supinaṃ passati, manussānaṃ piyo hoti, amanussānaṃ piyo hoti, devatā rakkhanti, nāssa aggi vā visaṃ vā satthaṃ vā kamati, tuvaṭaṃ cittaṃ samādhiyati, mukhavaṇṇo vippasīdati, asammūḷho kālaṃ karoti, uttari appaṭivijjhanto brahmalokūpago hoti. (Aṅ 3,542.)

Bhikkhus, when the liberation of mind through loving-kindness, so called because it is freed from opposing states, has been cultivated, developed, practised repeatedly, made a vehicle and a foundation, maintained, consolidated, and well undertaken, eleven benefits can be expected. What eleven?

The benefits of practising loving-kindness

Miến / Burmese 109

1. One sleeps at ease.
2. One wakes at ease.
3. One has no bad dreams.
4. One is dear to human beings.
5. One is dear to non-human beings.
6. Deities protect one.
7. Fire, poison, and weapons do not harm one.
8. The mind becomes concentrated quickly.
9. One's complexion is clear.
10. One dies unconfused.
11. If one penetrates no higher to arahant fruition, one is reborn in the Brahmā world.
(Aṅguttara Nikāya 3, p. 542.)

Sleep and waking are peaceful, dreams are free from evil, one is dear to others and guarded by deities, fire and poison do not harm one, the mind settles, the face is clear, death comes without confusion, and one goes to the Brahmā world. These eleven benefits follow the cultivation of loving-kindness. It is a practice for monastics and laypeople alike. (Pyay Sayadaw, Burmese explanation of the Visuddhimagga, vol. 2, p. 332.)

Developing compassion

Miến / Burmese 110

To develop compassion (karuṇā), first choose a living being of the same sex, near to you, who is suffering. Consider that person's suffering and attend to it in a way that brings forth compassion.

Re-establish the fourth jhāna on the white or light kasiṇa. When the light grows strong, use it to see the suffering person you have chosen. When the person appears as clearly as if illuminated by a torch, take them as object. You may first enter mettā jhāna and then emerge to develop compassion, or you may develop compassion directly. In either case take that suffering person as object.

Ayaṃ sappuriso dukkhā muccatu…
May this good person be freed from suffering…

Develop compassion repeatedly in this way up to the third jhāna and gain the five masteries in each jhāna. Then take four, five, or about ten suffering people of the same sex, one by one, and develop compassion towards each up to the third jhāna. Then, in the order explained for loving-kindness, develop compassion up to the third jhāna towards a dear person, a neutral person, and an enemy.

Extending compassion to all beings

Miến / Burmese 111

All ordinary persons are worthy of compassion because they have yet to escape the danger of the states of deprivation. Until they escape that danger, they may one day experience suffering there as a result of misconduct committed in the long course of saṃsāra. All beings, ordinary or noble, are worthy of compassion insofar as they have yet to escape the dangers of ageing, illness, and death. By wisely reflecting on these grounds, compassion can also be developed towards those who are presently happy.

When successful, break down the barriers between oneself, a dear person, a neutral person, and an enemy as explained for loving-kindness. Repeatedly apprehend, develop, and practise with the resulting conceptual sign of beings, strengthening absorption in compassion through the first, second, and third jhānas. Then develop compassion by unspecified, specified, and directional pervasion.

Pervading all beings throughout countless world systems, develop: (1) five modes of unspecified compassion, (2) seven modes of specified compassion, and (3) 120 modes of directional compassion (10 × 12). There are 132 ways of developing compassion in all.

Developing appreciative joy

Miến / Burmese 112

To develop appreciative joy (muditā), first choose someone who is prospering and happy. Let that person be a very dear friend or companion, alive and of the same sex, someone whose very appearance brings you much joy and gladness.

Re-establish fourth jhāna on the white or light kasiṇa. When the light becomes strong, bring to mind the happy person you selected. When you see them as clearly as if by torchlight, you may take them as object and enter mettā jhāna, then enter compassion jhāna. You may also proceed directly to appreciative joy. If you first develop loving-kindness and compassion, emerge from those attainments. Whether proceeding from them or starting directly, take the person you selected as object.

Ayaṃ sappuriso yathāladdhasampattito mā vigacchatu…
May this good person not lose the prosperity and happiness they have gained…

Practise appreciative joy in this way. Develop it repeatedly up to the third jhāna. Earlier meditative concentration supports this development as a powerful decisive condition…

Extending appreciative joy

Miến / Burmese 113

…The special strength received from that support makes appreciative joy easy to develop. You can take as object the person's appearance when happy in the past, when happy at present, or as they will be when happy in the future. Here past and future refer to times in the present life of someone still alive.

Continue in the same way with about ten happy beings of the same sex whom you love and esteem. Then develop appreciative joy towards a dear person, a neutral person, and an enemy in order. Attain the third jhāna and strengthen absorption. Make appreciative joy equal towards oneself, a dear person, a neutral person, and an enemy, breaking down the barriers. Repeatedly apprehend and develop the resulting conceptual sign of beings to strengthen absorption in appreciative joy. Then take the countless beings in countless world systems as object.

1. Five modes of unspecified pervasion.
2. Seven modes of specified pervasion.
3. 120 modes of directional pervasion (10 × 12).

In all there are 132 ways of developing appreciative joy.

Continue developing these ways of appreciative joy. Apply the relevant details already given in the section on loving-kindness.

Developing equanimity

Miến / Burmese 114

A meditator who wishes to develop equanimity (upekkhā) as a divine abiding should proceed as follows.

1. Re-establish the fourth jhāna on the white or light kasiṇa. When the light becomes strong, proceed as below.
2. Take as object a living person of the same sex who is neutral, neither loved nor disliked. Develop loving-kindness up to the third jhāna.
3. With the same person as object, develop compassion up to the third jhāna.
4. With that very person as object, develop appreciative joy up to the third jhāna.

Having obtained the third jhāna on each of these three divine abidings with a neutral person as object, enter them in order as thoroughly practised. Emerge from the third jhāna of appreciative joy and consider the following.

1. Sukhitā hontu—may beings be happy. In developing loving-kindness up to the third jhāna with this and similar wishes, attention is coloured by concern for the beings who are its object.

Seeing the advantages of equanimity

Miến / Burmese 115

2. Dukkhā muccantu—may beings be freed from suffering. In developing compassion up to the third jhāna in this way, the attainment remains close to the distinction between those one dislikes and those one loves.
3. Yathāladdhasampattito mā vigacchantu—may beings not lose the prosperity they have gained. In developing appreciative joy up to the third jhāna in this way, that jhāna is accompanied by gladness and is therefore comparatively gross.

See these drawbacks in the third jhānas of loving-kindness, compassion, and appreciative joy. See the benefit of the peaceful nature of the fourth jhāna of equanimity.

Take the neutral person already used for the three preceding jhānas, someone towards whom you can naturally be impartial. Enter the third jhānas of loving-kindness, compassion, and appreciative joy on that same person and then reflect as above, or reflect as follows.

Beings are owners of their kamma

Miến / Burmese 116

1. Even when you develop loving-kindness wishing that the person be free from danger, mental suffering, and bodily suffering, and that they look after themselves happily and in good health, those wishes will come about only if conditions allow.
2. Even when you develop compassion wishing that the person be freed from suffering, they will be freed only if conditions allow.
3. Even when you develop appreciative joy wishing that the person not lose the prosperity already gained, it will remain only if conditions allow.
4. Why? Reflect that all beings have kamma as their own possession.

Ayaṃ sappuriso kammassako.
This good person is the owner of their kamma.

Develop equanimity repeatedly in this way. Because you have advanced to this divine abiding on the basis of the third jhānas of loving-kindness, compassion, and appreciative joy, the earlier concentration lends its strength as a powerful decisive support. With this special strength, the subsequent development of equanimity can reach the fourth jhāna before long.

Practising equanimity with different people

Miến / Burmese 117

When successful, take about ten neutral persons one by one and develop the four divine abidings towards each. Develop loving-kindness, compassion, and appreciative joy up to the third jhāna, then equanimity with the same person as object up to the fourth. The first, second, and third jhānas do not occur with this equanimity. Only the fourth occurs. It is attainable only after developing the first three jhānas separately in loving-kindness, compassion, and appreciative joy. If one tries to develop this equanimity based on the third jhāna of breathing or a kasiṇa, the fourth jhāna of equanimity cannot be reached because those attainments do not take the concept of a being as object.

After succeeding with many neutral persons, developing the divine abidings in order up to the fourth jhāna, proceed to: (1) about ten dear persons, (2) about ten very dear persons, (3) about ten neutral persons, and (4) about ten enemies, or as many as there are…

Breaking down the barriers in equanimity

Miến / Burmese 118

…Take each of these persons individually and develop loving-kindness, compassion, appreciative joy, and equanimity in the same way. Remember that equanimity cannot be attained for an individual without first establishing the jhānas of loving-kindness, compassion, and appreciative joy for that individual.

Then develop the four divine abidings so that there are no barriers between oneself, a dear person, a neutral person, and an enemy. Break down these barriers. With the conceptual sign of beings obtained after breaking them down, develop the following.

1. Loving-kindness: first, second, and third jhānas.
2. Compassion: first, second, and third jhānas.
3. Appreciative joy: first, second, and third jhānas.
4. Equanimity: fourth jhāna.

Apprehend, develop, and practise repeatedly with each divine abiding to attain its respective jhānas. Developing the four in this order is the way to develop the divine abiding of equanimity. After breaking down the barriers, the meditator who repeatedly takes the conceptual sign of beings as object and develops equanimity in this way attains the fourth jhāna of equanimity. Then proceed as follows.

The 132 ways of pervading with equanimity

Miến / Burmese 119

1. Five modes of unspecified pervasion with equanimity.
2. Seven modes of specified pervasion with equanimity.
3. 120 modes of directional pervasion with equanimity (10 × 12).
In all there are 132 ways of developing equanimity.

Continue practising these 132 ways. Development of the divine abiding of equanimity involves cultivating loving-kindness, compassion, appreciative joy, and equanimity in order up to their respective jhānas.

Question. Can the fourth jhāna of equanimity arise in a meditator who has attained the third jhāna on the earth kasiṇa or a similar subject?

Answer. It cannot. The third jhāna on the earth kasiṇa and similar subjects takes a kasiṇa as object, whereas the fourth jhāna of equanimity takes the concept of a being as object. The objects of the first three jhānas and that of the fourth would differ. The fourth jhāna of equanimity can arise only in a meditator who has attained the third jhānas of loving-kindness, compassion, and appreciative joy…

The object must be the same

Miến / Burmese 120

…because they share the same kind of object, the concept of a being. Having developed the jhānas of loving-kindness, compassion, and appreciative joy towards a dear person, one can develop the jhāna of equanimity towards that same person. The object of the first, second, and third jhānas must be the same as that of the fourth jhāna of equanimity. Thus the jhānas of loving-kindness, compassion, appreciative joy, and equanimity share the same dear, neutral, or hostile person as their object. Likewise, when one has developed the third jhānas of loving-kindness, compassion, and appreciative joy towards all beings, one can develop the fourth jhāna of equanimity towards all those same beings. In this way the divine abidings share the concept of a being as their object. (See Visuddhimagga I, pp. 287–319.)

Characteristic, function, manifestation, and proximate cause of loving-kindness

Miến / Burmese 121

1. Hitākārappavattilakkhaṇā mettā.
2. Hitūpasaṃhārarasā.
3. Āghātavinayapaccupaṭṭhānā.
4. Sattānaṃ manāpabhāvadassanapadaṭṭhānā.
Byāpādūpasamo etissā sampatti, sinehasambhavo vipatti. (Visuddhi 1,311.)

1. Loving-kindness has the characteristic of proceeding in the mode of promoting the welfare of beings, or of bringing about that welfare.
2. Its function is to bring welfare to beings, or its accomplishment consists in bringing welfare to them.
3. It manifests to the meditator's discernment as the removal of resentment, or it brings about the disappearance of resentment.
4. Its proximate cause is wise attention that sees what is endearing in beings.

Its success is the subsiding of ill will, the desire to harm or destroy beings, through suppression by concentration. This is its proper accomplishment. When attachment and craving arise, loving-kindness has failed. (Visuddhimagga I, 311.)

Characteristic, function, manifestation, and proximate cause of compassion

Miến / Burmese 122

1. Dukkhāpanayanākārappavattilakkhaṇā karuṇā.
2. Paradukkhāsahanarasā.
3. Avihiṃsāpaccupaṭṭhānā.
4. Dukkhābhibhūtānaṃ anāthabhāvadassanapadaṭṭhānā.
Vihiṃsūpasamo tassā sampatti, sokasambhavo vipatti. (Visuddhi 1,311.)

1. Compassion has the characteristic of proceeding in the mode of wishing to remove the suffering of beings.
2. Its function is to be unable to bear others' suffering, in the sense of wishing to remove it.
3. Its effect is to bring about non-cruelty. To the discernment of the meditator it appears as the opposite of cruelty and oppression.
4. Its proximate cause is wise attention that sees the helplessness of beings afflicted and oppressed by suffering.

Compassion succeeds when cruelty subsides, that is, when the mental factor of aversion that directly opposes compassion and takes the form of cruelty towards beings subsides. This is the accomplishment of its function. Compassion fails when sorrow over suffering beings arises. (Visuddhimagga I, 311.)

Characteristic, function, manifestation, and proximate cause of appreciative joy

Miến / Burmese 123

1. Pamodanalakkhaṇā muditā.
2. Anissāyanarasā.
3. Arativighātapaccupaṭṭhānā.
4. Sattānaṃ sampattidassanapadaṭṭhānā.
Arativūpasamo tassā sampatti, pahāsasambhavo vipatti. (Visuddhi 1,311.)

1. Appreciative joy has the characteristic of rejoicing when one sees the success and prosperity of others.
2. Its function is freedom from envy of others' success and prosperity, or the removal of envy as its opposite.
3. It appears to the meditator's discernment as the removal of discontent with others' worldly prosperity or with their excellent wholesome accomplishments, such as tranquillity and insight. Alternatively, its effect is to dispel discontent with these achievements.
4. Its proximate cause is wise attention that sees the success of beings with approval.

When discontent with others' prosperity or their excellent wholesome accomplishments, such as tranquillity and insight…

Characteristic, function, manifestation, and proximate cause of equanimity

Miến / Burmese 124

…subsides, appreciative joy succeeds. It fails when one rejoices in others' prosperity or wholesome accomplishments with worldly gladness arising in dependence on sensual pleasures. (Visuddhimagga I, 311.)

1. Sattesu majjhattākārappavattilakkhaṇā upekkhā.
2. Sattesu samabhāvadassanarasā.
3. Paṭighānunayūpasamapaccupaṭṭhānā.
4. “Kammassakā sattā, te kassa ruciyā sukhitā vā bhavissanti, dukkhato vā muccissanti, pattasampattito vā na parihāyissantī”ti evaṃ pavattakammassakatādassanapadaṭṭhānā. Paṭighānunayūpasamo tassā sampatti, gehasitāya aññāṇupekkhāya sambhavo vipatti. (Visuddhi 1,311–312.)

1. Equanimity has the characteristic of proceeding impartially towards beings.
2. Its function is to see equality among beings, through looking on without taking sides.
3. Its effect is to quiet aversion and affection towards beings.
4. Its proximate cause is discernment that beings own their kamma: “Beings have the kamma they have done as their own possession. By whose wish would they become happy, as one who develops loving-kindness wishes them to be happy? By whose wish would they be freed from suffering…

The divine abidings as escapes from defilements

Miến / Burmese 125

…as one who develops compassion wishes them to be freed? By whose wish would they retain the prosperity and happiness they have gained, as one who develops appreciative joy wishes them not to lose it?” The discernment that beings own their kamma, arising in this way, is the proximate cause.

The quieting of aversion and affection is the success and proper accomplishment of equanimity as a divine abiding. When unknowing indifference associated with delusion and dependent on sensual pleasures arises, equanimity has failed. (Visuddhimagga I, 311.)

Escape from defilements

1. Nissaraṇañhetaṃ, āvuso, byāpādassa yadidaṃ mettā cetovimutti.
2. Nissaraṇañhetaṃ, āvuso, vihesāya yadidaṃ karuṇā cetovimutti.
3. Nissaraṇañhetaṃ, āvuso, aratiyā yadidaṃ muditā cetovimutti.
4. Nissaraṇañhetaṃ, āvuso, rāgassa yadidaṃ upekkhā cetovimutti. (Dī 3,205–206; Aṅ 2,257.)

1. Friend, the jhāna consciousness accompanied by loving-kindness, free from defilements, is the escape from ill will, the wish to harm beings…

Dwelling free of opposing defilements

Miến / Burmese 126

…that is, it is the escape from aversion.

2. Friend, the jhāna consciousness accompanied by compassion, free from defilements, is the escape from cruelty, the wish to torment beings.
3. Friend, the jhāna consciousness accompanied by appreciative joy, free from defilements, is the escape from discontent.
4. Friend, the jhāna consciousness accompanied by equanimity, free from defilements, is the escape from attachment, that is, lust. (Dīgha Nikāya 3, pp. 205–206; Aṅguttara Nikāya 2, p. 257.)

According to these teachings, the jhānas of the divine abidings have the power to free the mind from the opposing defilements. Dwelling with a mind free from those defilements is called brahmavihāra, a sublime abiding. It may also be called dwelling like a Brahmā.

Recollection of the Buddha

Miến / Burmese 127

Ārakattā hatattā ca kilesārīna so muni,
hatasaṃsāracakkāro paccayādīna cāraho,
na raho karoti pāpāni arahaṃ tena vuccati. (Visuddhi 1,195.)

1. The Blessed Buddha is called Arahaṃ because, having eradicated defilements along with their habitual traces, he is far removed from them.
2. The Blessed Buddha is called Arahaṃ because he destroyed the fifteen hundred enemies that are the defilements with the sword of the knowledge of the path of arahantship.
3. The Blessed Buddha is called Arahaṃ because he broke the spokes of the wheel of saṃsāra, whose hub is ignorance and craving and whose rim is ageing and death.
4. The Blessed Buddha is called Arahaṃ because his unsurpassed virtue, concentration, and wisdom make him worthy of the special offerings and homage of humans, deities, and Brahmās.
5. The Blessed Buddha is called Arahaṃ because he commits no evil in deed, speech, or thought even in a hidden place.

These are the five meanings of the quality Arahaṃ. Practise so that…

Developing the recollection of Arahaṃ

Miến / Burmese 128

…you know these meanings well and remember them fluently. To develop this subject, re-establish fourth-jhāna concentration on the white kasiṇa or mindfulness of breathing. Using the light that arises from the knowledge of tranquillity meditation, bring into view a Buddha image for which you have reverence and faith. Since you have not seen the living Buddha, start with an image representing him. When it appears clearly, recognize the image as the living Buddha and direct the mind to it.

If you met a living Buddha in the past, an image of that Buddha may appear. Then shift attention from that image to his quality. If no image of a living Buddha appears, regard the image you have taken as the living Buddha and shift from the image to the quality. Choose whichever of the five meanings of Arahaṃ you prefer and develop it as “Arahaṃ, Arahaṃ.” When concentration grows strong, the image disappears and the developing mind remains peacefully settled on the quality. Do not seek the image again. Develop the mind so that it remains peacefully settled on the quality alone. When it has remained settled on the quality for about an hour, review the jhāna factors. This is access jhāna only. Develop it to that point and cultivate the remaining qualities in the same manner. Practise until proficient in the masteries.

Meditation on foulness

Miến / Burmese 129

Re-establish fourth-jhāna concentration on mindfulness of breathing or the white kasiṇa. When the light associated with that concentration spreads and shines brilliantly all around, bring to mind the most repulsive corpse of someone of the same sex that you have seen. Try to see the corpse in the light of knowledge. Use the light to bring it into view as it appeared when you saw it before. When it is clearly visible, settle the developing mind peacefully on its most repulsive aspect, contemplating “paṭikkūla, paṭikkūla—repulsive, repulsive.”

When the mind developing foulness remains peacefully settled on the corpse for an hour, two hours, or so, the object will pass from the learning sign to the counterpart sign. The image of the corpse seen as distinctly as if with the eyes open is the learning sign.

Uggahanimittaṃ virūpaṃ bībhacchaṃ bheravadassanaṃ hutvā upaṭṭhāti. Paṭibhāganimittaṃ pana yāvadatthaṃ bhuñjitvā nipanno thūlaṅgapaccaṅgapuriso viya. (Visuddhi 1,183–184.)

When attention to the foul corpse has not yet grown expansive and strong…

From the learning sign to first jhāna

Miến / Burmese 130

…and the object of the foul corpse has yet to become very peaceful, the learning sign appears misshapen, hideous, and frightening. When attention to foulness grows expansive and strong and the object has become peaceful, the counterpart sign appears like a well-fed man with large limbs, lying asleep after eating his fill. (Visuddhimagga I, pp. 183–184; Mahāṭīkā I, p. 210.)

Repeatedly contemplate that very counterpart sign as “paṭikkūla, paṭikkūla—repulsive, repulsive.” When the developing mind remains peacefully settled on that object for one or two hours, the jhāna factors become evident. When they are evident, first-jhāna concentration has been reached. Practise until proficient in all five masteries.

Mindfulness of death

Miến / Burmese 131

Tattha maraṇanti ekabhavapariyāpannassa jīvitindriyassa upacchedo.

Pe. Iti jīvitindriyupacchedasaṅkhātassa maraṇassa saraṇaṃ maraṇassati. (Visuddhimagga I, 222.)

Here death means the cutting off of the life faculty within a single existence. Mindfulness of death is the recollection of death as the cutting off of the life faculty.

Puna caparaṃ, bhikkhave, bhikkhu seyyathāpi passeyya sarīraṃ sivathikāya chaḍḍitaṃ ekāhamataṃ vā dvīhamataṃ vā tīhamataṃ vā uddhumātakaṃ vinīlakaṃ vipubbakajātaṃ. So imameva kāyaṃ upasaṃharati: “Ayampi kho kāyo evaṃdhammo evaṃbhāvī evaṃanatīto”ti. (Ma 1,73.)

Again, bhikkhus, as though seeing a corpse thrown into a charnel ground, one day, two days, or three days dead, swollen, discoloured, and festering, a bhikkhu compares this very body with it: “This body too is of that nature, will become like that, and has not gone beyond that.”

Tasmā tattha hatamatādisatte oloketvā diṭṭhapubbasampattīnaṃ sattānaṃ matānaṃ maraṇaṃ āvajjetvā satiñca saṃvegañca ñāṇañca yojetvā “maraṇaṃ bhavissatī”tiādinā nayena manasikāro pavattetabbo. (Visuddhi 1,223.)

Therefore, look at beings who have been killed or have died here and there, and bring to mind the death of beings who died amid prosperity. With mindfulness, a sense of urgency, and discernment, attend in such ways as “Death will come.”

Following these passages, to develop mindfulness of death, first re-establish concentration on foulness up to the first jhāna. When you can contemplate the repulsive corpse up to first-jhāna concentration, direct discernment to your own death: “This body of mine too is subject to such death. This death will surely occur. I cannot go beyond it.” Looking with mindfulness, urgency, and discernment, you will see your own repulsive corpse. Then use discernment to see the cutting off of the life faculty in that image of your own death…

Taking the cutting off of the life faculty as object

Miến / Burmese 132

…Keep the developing mind peacefully settled on the cutting off of the life faculty, attending as follows.

1. Maraṇaṃ me dhuvaṃ, jīvitaṃ me adhuvaṃ. My death is certain, my life uncertain.
2. Maraṇaṃ me bhavissati. Death will come to me.
3. Maraṇapariyosānaṃ me jīvitaṃ. My life ends in death.
4. Maraṇaṃ, maraṇaṃ. Death, death.

Choose whichever of these ways of attending you prefer, in Pāli or your own language. Strive to keep the mind developing mindfulness of death peacefully settled for an hour or two on the cutting off of the life faculty in the image of your death. When it remains settled in this way, the five jhāna factors will become evident. This is access jhāna only.

The cutting off of the life faculty

This is a difficult contemplation because it concerns an ultimate reality, the life faculty. The Visuddhimagga defines mindfulness of death as recollecting death as the cutting off of the life faculty. Practise so as to see the cutting off of your own life faculty. Merely bringing to mind and seeing your own corpse with discernment does not complete the task. Therefore, once the meditator…

Discerning the cessation of the life faculty

Miến / Burmese 133

…has developed first-jhāna concentration with a repulsive corpse as object, they can direct discernment towards the image of their own death. When you see your corpse, direct attention inside its heart. You may not immediately see the cutting off of the life faculty, since in that corpse the faculty has already been cut off.

When you can direct discernment into the heart in this way, look back a little to the time before death. You may then see, near the time of death, the clarity of the life-continuum mind-door or the stream of consciousness. Here the intended object is the clarity of the life-continuum mind-door. Since you have already discerned it when discerning the jhāna factors, you can discern it readily here too. When you see it with discernment, move closer to the time of death. You can then see that clarity cease. As explained earlier, discern the life-continuum consciousness that produces that clarity. When you see it, look further to see the cutting off of the life faculty that accompanies it. In seeing that, you understand the cutting off of the life faculty.

For most meditators who have never discerned mentality, however, at this stage it is very difficult to understand the life-continuum consciousness and the life faculty.

The four protective meditation subjects

Miến / Burmese 134

Even if this is difficult, you have already seen the clarity of the life-continuum mind-door and can develop mindfulness of death by taking its cessation as object. As explained above, this clarity is called the life-continuum by way of a figurative designation. With discernment you can still bring your own corpse into view. Someone who has practised mindfulness of death in past lives may see the cutting off of the life faculty, or, put another way, the cessation of the life-continuum consciousness together with the life faculty. It is best if this can be seen.

Most meditators who have yet to discern mentality can see the cessation of the clarity of the life-continuum mind-door just explained, called the life-continuum figuratively. They can develop mindfulness of death by taking as object the cessation of that material clarity. Meditators who have discerned the relations of cause and effect in dependent origination up to knowledge of discerning conditions can readily see the cessation of the life-continuum consciousness together with the life faculty.

Loving-kindness, recollection of the Buddha, foulness, and mindfulness of death are the four protective meditation subjects. They are called protective because they guard meditators. They are subjects to learn and cultivate before proceeding to insight.

Choosing a subject to counter a hindrance

Miến / Burmese 135

Asubhā bhāvetabbā rāgassa pahānāya.
Mettā bhāvetabbā byāpādassa pahānāya.
Ānāpānassati bhāvetabbā vitakkupacchedāya. (Aṅ 3,169; Udāna 120, Meghiyasutta.)

Develop foulness for abandoning lust. Develop loving-kindness for abandoning ill will. Develop mindfulness of breathing for cutting off applied thoughts.

According to this teaching in the Meghiya Sutta, foulness is an excellent means of countering lust. The foulness meditation described above, with a corpse as its object, is foulness connected with the lifeless. The Girimānanda Sutta teaches another subject of foulness, attending to the thirty-two parts of a living body as repulsive. This is foulness connected with the living. Both kinds are excellent means of removing lust. Loving-kindness is an excellent subject for removing ill will and aversion. Mindfulness of breathing is an effective subject for countering plans and other kinds of thought.

Therefore, good meditator, develop foulness when lust is strong, loving-kindness when aversion is strong, and mindfulness of breathing when thoughts proliferate. When faith diminishes and the mind lacks clarity in meditation, develop recollection of the Buddha. When urgency diminishes and you become lax in meditation, develop mindfulness of death.

Conclusion of the section on tranquillity meditation

Miến / Burmese 136

The Buddha taught forty meditation subjects for tranquillity. Of these, this section has presented the following subjects in brief.

1. Mindfulness of breathing.
2. Attention to repulsiveness, the meditation on the bones.
3. The ten kasiṇas and the eight attainments.
4. The four divine abidings.
5. Recollection of the Buddha.
6. Meditation on foulness.
7. Mindfulness of death.

Anyone wishing to cultivate the remaining tranquillity subjects should approach teachers and learn from them. If you wish to proceed to insight meditation, continue by developing the subjects beginning with the discernment of materiality.

Ciraṃ tiṭṭhatu saddhammo, dhamme hontu sagāravā.

May the Buddha's true teaching endure for a long time. May there be reverence for the threefold true Dhamma.

Pa-Auk Tawya Sayadaw
Cittala Hill Monastery
Pa-Auk Tawya
Myanmar Era 1367

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