



Words of the Master

By

Luang Poo Tate

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May all beings be happy and may they share in any merit made in the translation of this text.

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TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

This book is intended to be a tribute to Luang Poo Tate. The words “Luang Poo” being an expression of reverence in Thailand, literally meaning Holy Grandfather.

Luang Poo's contribution to the expansion of Buddhism into the west has been underestimated. To some extent, this is because most of the translations of his works are not available in a digital format, having been translated long before the rise of the internet or word processors.

During his life at Wat Hin Mark Peng, he taught many foreigners. He also visited Singapore, Indonesia and Australia out of compassion for those Buddhists living outside of a Buddhist culture. I was one of those westerners whom he taught. I was ordained for seven years and spend my last three years with Luang Poo at Wat Hin Mark Peng. I accompanied him as his interpreter on his overseas trips.

This collection of works by Luang Poo is not available in the Thai language. The talks contained herein are selected from a number of different sources. Part Two, The Way of the Path, is an updated version of a translation that I did back in the 1970's. It contains its own glossary as well as another, specific Translator's Introduction.

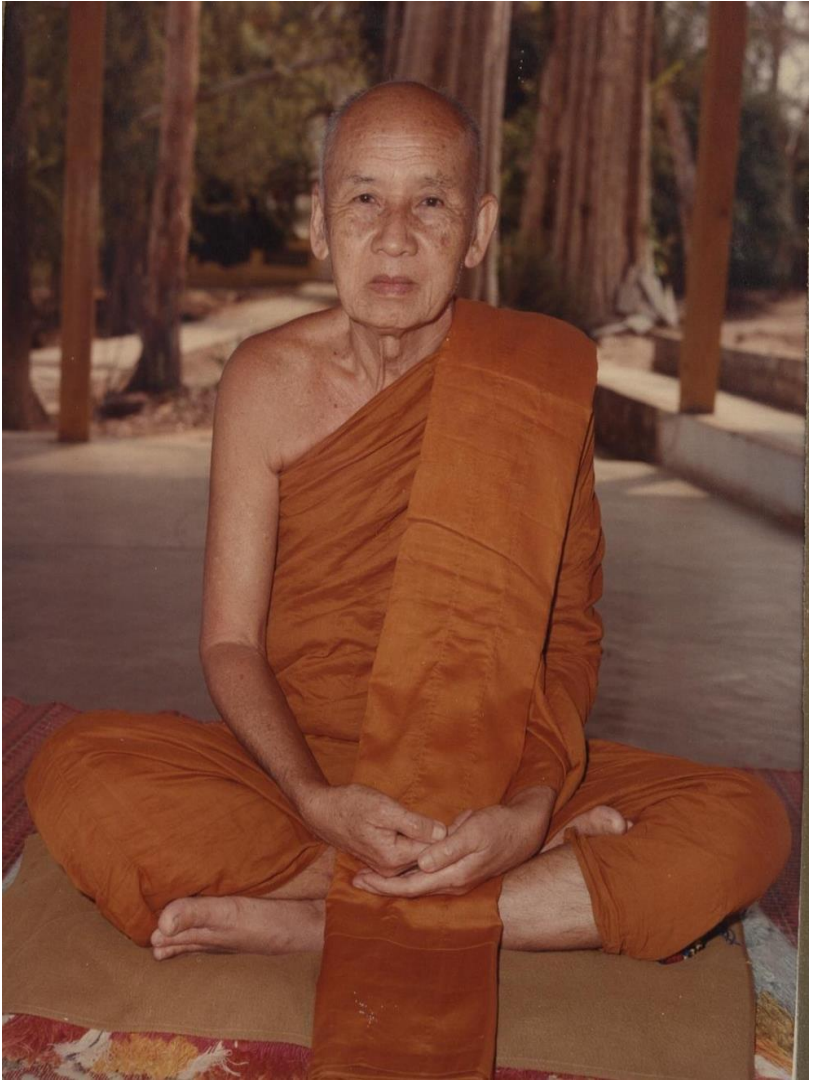
Words in round () brackets are my additions for the purpose of clarification. All the highlighted text follows the format of the original Thai text. All footnotes have been added by myself. I would like to thank Venerable Kassapa for proof-reading the original manuscript.

Having spent those years learning from Luang Poo, I can say that his knowledge and practise of the Dhamma were exceptional. He was able to explain all aspects of Dhamma in great detail and with great authority. He was, however, thought unconventional by some people and, when this was pointed out to him, he would respond by saying, *“When you actually experience that Dhamma for yourself, it will be exactly as I have explained. After which, when you re-read the text, you will see that there is nothing unconventional in what I say.”*

I hope that this collection of translations gives the reader some impression of his stature.

Metta

Steven Towler



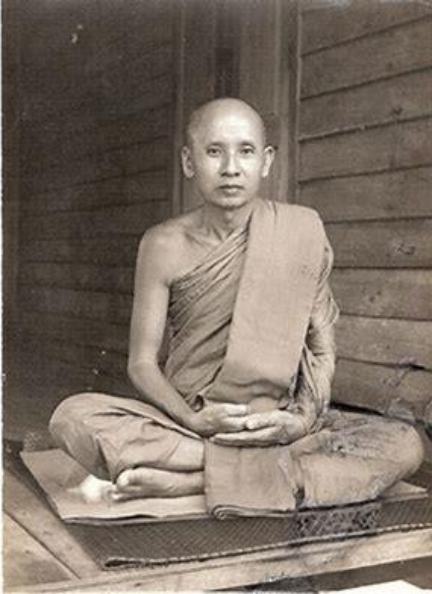
Luang Poo Tate

1902 - 1994

Khandha (Aggregates)

Wat Hin Mark Peng

11 April 2526 B. E.



1 Luang Poo as a Young Monk

I will talk about the Dhamma, for you to listen to. The Dhamma is not something external that is miles away. We have come across quite a lot of it already. We may have forgotten some of it. The Dhamma is close by. It is our “being”. Because it is so handy, we

take it for granted and tend to forget about it. Being so handy, we think we can examine it anytime we choose.

The word “**Dhamma**” in this sense *refers to everything in the cosmos. This is what it is. This is where it is to be found. This is Dhamma.*

The words “**seeing Dhamma**” refer to seeing the reality of existence. This is what it means. I call on

you to understand that this is the way things are. It means seeing the (true) nature of Dhamma.

I want you to understand that anything and everything about our being is nothing but Dhamma. For example, we can see that there is birth, aging and death associated with our body. However, we don't want to look at this and so we miss seeing the Dhamma. The reason we do not see Dhamma is we don't find it satisfying. We don't believe in it. We are not excited about the way things are. However, should satisfaction, belief and excitement in the Dhamma occur, set about investigating it. A clarity, a luminosity will then arise in your heart.

This is the reason why those who examine Dhamma are always examining their body. I implore you to have faith, belief, satisfaction and excitement in the various Dhamma of the body. This will be of great benefit in making up for your shortcomings.

What I am going to explain today is one of the many aspects of Dhamma. This aspect is called the **5 Khandha (Aggregates)**. These are our being, not some distant thing. Every aspect of our being can be referred to as the 5 Khandha. The 5 Khandha are: Rupa, Vedanā, Saññā, Sankhāra and Viññāna. Rupa is evident as our body (form). Vedanā is happy or painful or neither happy nor painful feelings. These all occur in our being. Saññā is memory and that

which gives meaning to various things. Sankhāra is thought and imagination. Viññāna is consciousness.

Today, I am going to explain just these five. They all form our being. They coalesce in our being. All five are entirely in our being, however, we fail to examine them, and I am going to explain “why”, so that you understand.

Rupa

We examine this from the point of view of the body being disgustingly filthy, not beautiful, not pretty. Every aspect of our body is like this. Sweat and skin flakes flow from the body. They are excrement. We look at this and see it as filth, so we take a shower to clean this rotten body. A body that is rotten at any time of day, rotten even before we die. Disgusting substances ooze out of the body. Colloquially, we call this stuff crap. That is to say, it is still vile for a while and so we call it crap. It is not actual shit. It is concealed for a little while, but it still stinks. This collection of crap we have in our body right now. We have the complete set, mucus, saliva, ear wax, sleep. It’s all crap and even though it is only slightly gross, we don’t like looking at it. We call this covering our eyes and ears. Whatever we excrete from the body is nothing but crap.

Any amount of waste is called crap. For example, wood shavings, saw dust and coconut husks. All are considered to be crap. A portion of the food we eat

goes towards nourishing the body. It gets excreted without much attention and we call this shit. This is Dhamma. I call on you to investigate this as being Dhamma. See it as Dhamma. Whoever hides from the truth, it's still the truth. I am saying this so that you can see the facts, that this is Dhamma. This is referred to as investigation of the body as being excrement.

The body can also be analysed as being *Dhatu* (elements). The elements are: the earth element, the water element, the fire element and the air element. These are the four elements. This body is a lump of earth. It is not male or female. The nomenclature of male and female is simply a convention, a supposition. In reality, they are lumps of elements and nothing else. These lumps are just the four elements. This is one aspect of Dhamma and is referred to as *Dhamma Dhatu*.

You could also analyse the body from the point of view of **Aniccaṃ**, impermanence. Or, you could see the body as **Dukkhaṃ**, something (torment) you cannot withstand. Or, you could see it as **Anattā**, void of any self.

This mass we have right now, I have said is the 4 Dhatu, earth, water, fire and air. These are disgusting excrement. This is all the same thing. It is Dhamma. As I have said, these are the 5 Khandha and we call this our body. So, where else would you go? The

Dhamma can already be found in our bodies. When you have complete belief in this, you will exclaim, “Oh! We already possess the Dhamma. We already have all the Dhamma right here in our body.” [Have strong faith, then investigate the body but this time with contempt and indignation¹. Investigate the body as 4 Dhatu or as filth. Examine it as being a Khandha.]²

Rupa Khandha

Rupa Khandha is a lump of pain and suffering. From the time of birth, it experiences suffering and hardship. However, we choose to believe we do not suffer. When we have a fever and sickness, we search for medicine to make us better. When we have become tired through walking, we sit down. When we are tired of sitting, we lie down. These things obscure the suffering, so that we don’t see it. We don’t see the suffering and so we don’t see the Dhamma. See the suffering. This is what you need to do to see the Dhamma. When you change your posture as mentioned, pain doesn’t arise. As pain does not occur, you fail to see the Dhamma.

¹ As opposed to admiring the body and seeing it as a thing of beauty.

² This section of text was in parenthesis in the original Thai. The square brackets have been used here to differentiate this section from those in round brackets used by the translator for the purpose of clarification.

When you deconstruct things, you will be able to explain them in great detail. There will be no end to the words you could say. If you break it all down and you see things vividly in your heart³, you will discover that the body is completely insubstantial. You will see it is just a form that can move around, and nothing more.

Vedanā Khandha

This refers to Sukha (happiness), Dukkha (suffering) or Upekkhā, equanimity or indifference. Investigate Dukkha in the way that I have told you. Various aches and pains, hunger and thirst, freezing and boiling hot, or various weaknesses, can all be lumped together as Dukkha.

People just want Sukha but get Dukkha, which they don't want to talk about. It is still Dukkha, even if they don't want to discuss it. It is not the case that by not discussing Dukkha, it vanishes. When anxiety, confusion and worry arise, people say, "Jeez, that was really painful." However, it escapes them to investigate this as being Dukkha.

³ In this talk, Luang Poo Tate predominantly uses the term "heart" in preference to the terms mind or Citta. In some ways this contravenes his own edict which says that "heart" refers to a neutral, singularity, whereas "mind" and "Citta" refer to expressions of the heart, such as love and hatred. Heart is a pure, a state of rest. Citta is the active mental activity, thoughts, feelings, etc.. In this talk "heart" can have either meaning.

Happy feelings are few and far between. We have happiness, but not much, and then Dukkha returns. In most instances, Dukkha is perceived as Sukha. This is what is called being deluded and mistaken about Dukkha being Sukha.

Upekkhā Vedanā, now, where on earth can you find this? It is not often found in us. Upekkhā Vedanā is very hard to find. When Upekkhā does occur, it doesn't last long. It's gone in a flash. However, it is seen very clearly by those people that enter Samādhi Samāpatti⁴. In these states the Citta converges into a single, central point. This is how you experience Upekkhā Vedanā. If you are no good at Samādhi, thinking of all sorts of things, here, there and everywhere, in the past and in the future, you won't experience Upekkhā at all. Whenever, anyone sends out their thoughts all over the place, the Citta won't converge. They won't achieve Samādhi Bhāvanā and they won't experience Upekkhā Vedanā.

This is another Khandha and it is called Vedanā Khandha.

Saññā Khandha

This refers to recognising/remembering every single sense object. All of our experiences in the past and

⁴ The skill of being able to enter, remain in and exit Jhana/Appanā Samādhi, the highest levels of concentration, at will.

the future are concentrated and remembered here in our heart. This is where they are nurtured. This is what we call Saññā.

Sankhāra Khandha

This is thinking and imagining anything that can be thought about, day or night, without end. This is Sankhāra Khandha.

Viññāna Khandha

This Viññāna is the Viññāna in the five Khandha. There are two types of Viññāna. The first is Viññāna in the five Khandha. The second is the Patisandhi Viññāna. The Patisandhi Viññāna is the re-birth consciousness that is the first consciousness that occurs at birth.

The Viññāna of the five Khandha means the “knowing” that arises with Phassa (sense contact), which then vanishes. For example, the eye sees a form (object). “The one who knows”⁵ this form is called Viññāna. After this, Saññā takes over. It recognises the type of form. Saññā then passes away. Sankhāra then jumps in and starts thinking and imagining. The awareness of the form in the first place is called Viññāna Khandha and is one of the five Khandha.

⁵ “The one who knows” refers to a basic awareness of the object. It does not imply that everything that is known about the object arises at this time.

Whether it is the Viññāna of the five Khandha or the Patisandhi Viññāna, they are basically the same thing, not miles apart. They are in the heart, the same heart, but they have different functions. If it has the function of “the one who knows” or awareness arising from Phassa with the six Āyatana (the six senses, sight, sound, taste, smell, touch, thought) it is called Viññāna Khandha. Patisandhi Viññāna is that which guides birth. If this Viññāna did not happen, there would be no birth. It is the culmination of Avijjā, Tanhā, Upādāna and Kamma⁶. These coalesce in this Viññāna.

In reality, Avijjā is the heart. Tanhā, is the heart. Upādāna is the heart. Kamma is the heart. When we talk about them coalescing in one place, this is just for the purposes of description. In reality, we don't refer to this as coalescing. These four Dhamma simply perform their function for the being that is to take birth. A being that takes birth must have a complete set of these four Dhamma if birth is to take place.

Why are these called Khandha? Khandha translates as a component of a group. These are components. Just as an external vessel in which we put rice, water, flowers, etc., this is one type of vessel, which people use to store different things so that they don't

⁶ Avijjā, ignorance; Tanhā, craving; Upādāna, attachment; Kamma, action or cause.

become scattered. What we have here is the same. Khandha is a way of arranging Rupa, Vedanā, Saññā and Viññāna as a group so as to preserve their relationship.

The conventional, everyday world can be explained in many ways. The complete explanation is **the story of the heart**, which can be called the **Khandha**, or **Dhātu** or **Āyatanā** or various other names. But it all boils down to a single spot, the heart. As soon as we apply various labels to it, we become complacent and forget about the originator, the heart. Everything at that is born into this world depends most significantly on the heart. The heart is the one who sees the Dhamma. The heart is superior to all else. If the heart did not exist, nothing in the world would be. The entire world springs forth from the heart. Just like building a massive house, if there was no heart, who would build the house? How could anyone live if there was no heart? They would be nothing.

The heart is paramount. We live only because of the heart.

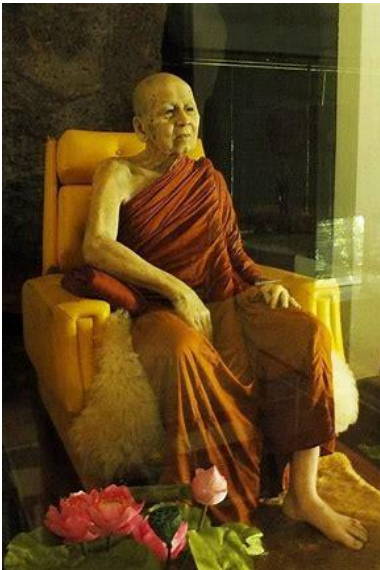
I call on you to explore what I have said. You don't need to investigate something miles away. All the Dhamma is to be found in our being. I call on you to have resolute faith in the heart, in the Dhamma, the words of the Lord Buddha. To the extent that you exclaim, "Oh! The Dhamma exist right here within us." Whether you go north or south, near or far, every

aspect of the Dhamma is present in this body. We carry the Dhamma around with us, but we fail to observe it and this is why we don't see it.

If there comes a time when you do observe what's right here, a clear understanding of the Dhamma will arise and you'll say, "Oh, I get it. The Dhamma lies within us and that is all there is to it." It exists right here. There is no need to rush around (to find it). We already have the Dhamma right here in our being. This is the Teaching of Lord Buddha. Every sacred text emanates from this Dhamma and nothing else.

Marana Sati (Mindfulness of Death)

Wat Hin Mark Peng



Marana Sati, that is, meditation on death, is a meditation subject of the highest order. This is because, when recollecting death, the Citta becomes melancholy and withdrawn from other objects and emotions.

2 Statue Made from Photograph Taken Close to His Death

Death is the ultimate stage of our life. This being the case, what could be left over? Apart from death, there is nothing. Everything we are involved with in this lifetime is cast off completely. Even though we may not want to cast off these things, we must give them up. We are dead, we have to part company with everything, without exception. This is why I say that Marana Sati is the summit of Kammathāna (the complete practice of meditation). It doesn't matter

who investigates this, if they practice Maraṇa Sati, but the Citta is yet to converge, is yet to be solitary, is yet to let go, is still unable to disentangle itself⁷, then their meditation is up the spout.

With regards to Maraṇa Sati, Lord Buddha asked his monks how they considered death. Some monks responded saying, “When investigating death, we fear our lives won’t last a day or a night. We fear we will die before we have a chance to finish eating our alms food.” Other monks said, “They investigated death as they ate, and they feared they would die before they finished eating.” At this stage the Lord interrupted and instructed these monks, saying they were heedless (in their examination of death).

He instructed them saying, “Whoever investigates death sees death in every breath. This is how one who is not heedless investigates. If the in-breath comes in but does not go out, death occurs. If the out-breath goes out but there is no in-breath, death occurs. This is the way things are and this is what it means to be heedful.”

On a daily basis, how often do we think about death? You know, some people let days, months and years go by without giving death a single thought. This is why they are called heedless. Heedlessness amounts

⁷ From external objects.

to negligence and loss of awareness. Sati (mindfulness) has gone out the door.

Heedlessness, wherever it is, is a support for death. The saying, “the path of death” has not actually reached death, you know. However, the heedless believe it to be death because lacking Sati is the same as someone who has died.

The opposite of heedlessness, being attentive, is having Sati at all times, in every posture, standing, walking, lying down and sitting. This is “the path to the deathless”. It is the path that has Sati, which is aware of the body at all times. This is what I am talking about. Such a person is one gone beyond death.

We are dying from the moment we are born. We are constantly changing. You could say the child dies and becomes the teenager, a young woman, until they reach forty to fifty years of age and become old and decrepit. These changes occur gradually until right up to death. The mental component that frets and gets involved in all manner of things does not remain static. It jumps from one sense object to another, to another. This can also be referred to as dying. **The death of one sense object in pursuit of another. This is also a death but a death without dying⁸.**

⁸ That is, the physical body has not yet died.

I call on you to investigate the implicit nature of death. When the time of death actually arrives, that's a whole other matter. Dying is not a simple thing. It's not as easy as we may imagine.

Sometimes a blood vessel haemorrhages, and we die. Heart attacks happen. There are sudden deaths where you don't hang around at death's door. There are deaths considerably more torturous than this. Then there's the case of experiencing pain and illness over many years before death. Sometimes there is paralysis, where you cannot move. You cannot lift your hands and feet. You cannot eat or defecate without assistance. Now, this is the worst of deaths, where we face the Deity of Death⁹ first.

Ordinarily, we strike our enemy. He hits us from the flanks, from the left and from the right. He cuts a path to transport his weapons and supplies before he, little by little, starts to destroy us. But it is not all over, this is when the great army storms into attack. This is facing up to the Deity of Death. For example, having a broken arm, or a broken leg could be a prelude to death. Sometimes it is a pain in the head, or stomach-ache. Sometimes it's a bowel infection. There are all sorts of things it could be. All these are pain and agony whether we are sitting or lying down because we are unable to eliminate them by changing posture, but the heart is yet to crumble.

⁹ The Thai equivalent of the Devil.

This is extreme torture, not being able to swap posture to get relief. It doesn't matter how much (other) meditation you have done, when it comes to this moment, it is extremely difficult to establish Sati within the body. It was for this very reason that the Lord Buddha taught the recollection of death, Maraṇa Sati, to enable you to establish Sati when death comes.

In truth, death is no big deal. Before you die, the most important thing is to protect the Citta from all conditions by firmly establishing Sati. You cannot let the Citta become confused. This is critically important!

When minor pain and sickness arises in the body, you must use it to train your investigation of death, recollecting, "This is the way it must be. At present, the truth is, we have not yet reached the point of death. When that point does occur, everything will decay and decompose. The eyes will not see the way. The ears will hear no sounds. The body won't feel but the mind will be in a state of confusion and panic. Trepidation will be present."

When we finally get to the real point of death, all attachments will be severed. Even the Sati that has protected the Citta well will disappear. What does arise is the Kamma Nimitta (a sign/vision of some past kamma), or the Gati Nimitta (a sign/vision of where rebirth will take place). In Sukati

(righteousness) or Dukati (depravity) there will arise a Kamma Nimitta consistent with one's Kamma. For example, killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, etc., which is referred to as depraved kamma.

Kamma Nimitta: An example would be seeing an animal that we killed. It is in our heart that we see the animal, chasing us, encircling us, hurting us until we cry and moan in distress. This carries on until a sound arises. Sometimes this sound is for all to hear. The sound is just like one made at the time when we were still alive.

Gati Nimitta: In the case of depravity, a vision could appear in the heart of the wrong doer. The vision is of someone who has committed the exact same transgressions. Having died, they experienced great suffering and torture in various situations, such as seeing their body as a skeleton, void of flesh, while those with flesh have it ripped apart and eaten by other animals. This is just the beginning. The body is not dead. When a Gati like this appears, specific to oneself, there is great and endless fear. There is a fear that the same fate awaits the wrong doer. There is a certainty that the wrong doer must go down this path because causes and conditions dictate this.

The Gati Nimitta associated with goodness and virtue are the opposite of this. When those who do good deeds in this lifetime, like someone who has offered cloth (to monks) at Kathina (end of rains retreat

ceremony for monks), or various other deeds, are about to die without Sati, the Kamma Nimitta or the Gati Nimitta appears in the same way as it would with those with bad kamma. However, in this case, the good kamma causes rapture and joy which nourishes the heart. As an example, someone, during this life, providing alms to monks. Even if the offering was only a small amount, in the Kamma Nimitta or the Gati Nimitta the amount appears to be stupendous. So much so, there is much food left over, they cannot fully describe it. When they see this, they desire this outcome. They wish for this one day in the future when conditions truly make it possible.

Some say, when we are about to die, we should put away our Sati. We should not think about depraved kamma. That depraved kamma is the individual's own heedlessness (the extent of which) he can only guess about. How can we take care of this situation if we have no Sati? The Kamma Nimitta is an enticement in its own right when it comes to letting go. There's no going back, no returning to the body to make excuses. You need to take action while you are still human. If you do this, when death comes calling, things will take care of themselves. Doing great good or great evil, what happens will be determined by what you do. This occurs by itself, in its own way.

It is true that we humans do die when breathing stops. However, the breath and the heart/mind are totally different things. What doctors call a “coma” is when we reach the end of our life in this body but we are not quite there. In Buddhism we are taught that the breath begins with the diaphragm. The diaphragm expands and contracts and this is the cause of the breath. This in turn gives rise to warmth. When there is warmth, the body still has reflexes, while there is air. However, the Citta is now disassociated. Wherever rebirth is to take place, that has now happened. The Citta’s disassociation occurs simultaneous with the Kamma Nimitta or the Gati Nimitta. Nothing remains, except the corpse.

If there was no Kamma Nimitta or Gati Nimitta, then the person may be revived because the air was not exhausted. Modern science applies oxygen to assist the process, but it only assists breathing. The Citta will go wherever its conditions take it.

Maraṇa Sati is of paramount importance because we are yet to die. We just assume what death is like. When we investigate, there arises sorrow and lamentation. The Citta becomes resolutely focused on the one spot. **This is why I implore you to examine Maraṇa Sati as this will be of great benefit. You will see death clearly, as it really is.**

Practise to become proficient in Maraṇa Sati. But even at this level, when the death knell strikes, it is

no guaranteed that you will be able to retain your Sati.

Sati Protects the Citta

Wat Hin Mark Peng

November 15, 1980



3 3 Lunag Poo With Ajahn Kow (behind) and Ajahn Om (far right)

Focus your attention on the Citta.

When we practise meditation, we rely on Sati.

Sati is important.

Consistently focus mindfulness on the Citta. Confine your attention to the Citta. When you see the Citta, focus your attention there and then you will understand what this desana¹⁰ is about. This Citta is the only thing that you need to take care of. Nothing else matters!

The Citta is superior to the sense organs and every part of the body. It rushes about all over the place and delivers anxiety, worry, pain and suffering. This is all because of the Citta. If we take care of the Citta and have it behave with propriety, it will see the suffering and white-hot trouble that it brings and, when we do, these things will cease. Happiness will be achieved.

¹⁰ Dhamma talk.

In so much as we do not understand the Citta, not having Sati there to protect it, the Citta flits from one form of suffering to another. It stays in this state until it understands what's going on. When it does understand what is happening, happiness follows. At present, it does not have a clue as to what is going on, so it continues to flit about. This is why the Citta is our number one priority for care and protection. Every aspect of meditation converges on this single spot, the Citta. So, you only have one thing to take care of. I want you to earnestly and sincerely protect your Citta.

Right now, we are going to sit in meditation and listen to a desana. We are going to take control of the Citta and place it in a cocoon of Sati. Sati is the one that watches over the Citta. When the Citta rests in the cocoon of Sati, job done.

Sati is the one who continually protects and cares for the Citta. Sati is mindfulness. The Citta is the one who thinks, who ruminates, who flits about. In these circumstances, this is how we define Sati. If there was no Citta, there would be no Sati. If there was no Sati, there would be no Citta. In truth, they are one and the same but they exhibit different characteristics. They have different functions.

Sati is like a nursemaid. The Citta is like a toddler. Sati looks after the Citta all the time. The nursemaid has to be watchful of the naughty child, else it may get

into trouble or fall and hurt itself. Whatever happens, one must maintain Sati. The nursemaid must be ever-present! Before the toddler can face danger, a little time must be spent raising the child. Several years may pass as the child grows up. When some maturity has been reached, there are other things to look out for, such as being mischievous and playing around all the time. One must guard against these things. This is necessary because you are still dealing with a child. Caution must be exercised at all times as the child develops through teenage years and onwards. When it misbehaves badly, Sati must be applied constantly, until the child is grown up. Sati must be aware from the very first thought right through to the flitting around and the chasing down of every possible avenue for suffering. Sati must provide non-stop protection.

As far as the child is concerned, it has a physical body and when we cocoon the Citta (with Sati) it's like it too has a body. It becomes clear to see. Whether the Citta is at home or away or running around all over the place, all becomes crystal clear. It really does seem to have an embodiment.

When we look after the Citta and cocoon it with Sati firmly established, it will converge into a single

spot¹¹, the Heart. That is to say, it will be centred¹². Then, it has no whereabouts. Wherever this singularity is encountered, that is where the Heart is, right there. It is neither inside or outside, above or below. The Heart is centred. Where is it? Right in the middle.

Train Sati to cocoon the Citta so that it consistently reaches the singularity. Then it will gradually obtain the strength and ability to investigate various things. It will be able to overcome and extinguish all manner of suffering. There is no possibility that inflamed passion or anxiety could arise.

Right now, we are not centred and so we cannot let go of suffering. Suffering is anxiety, trouble and strife. In our state of delusion, happiness is seen as pleasure, but this doesn't lead to the singularity, ever.

When you have reached the singularity, whatever suffering is, you will know as suffering. You will be able to cast aside suffering. You won't be fooled by happiness and pleasure won't intoxicate you. You will be centred. You won't be happy or discontent or confused. You won't suffer.

¹¹ In other text Luang Poo Tate refers to this as Ekaggatācitta, a Citta that is one-pointed, with no external object.

¹² A singularity as opposed to the duality of opposites that define the conventional world, e.g. hot and cold, up and down, etc..

Sati is one thing. The Citta is one thing. Sati cocoons the Citta. When they come together in this way, they become the Heart, singular. There is nothing more important than the Heart. The Citta breaks out from the Heart. If there is no Heart, there is no Citta. Wherever there is a Citta, there is a Heart. Wherever the Heart is, that's where the Citta is. This is where you will find them. To all intents and purposes, they are defined in the same way.

So, why did the Lord Buddha call it the Heart? Why did He call it the Citta? He explained that the Heart is a singularity that does not go flitting about. It has no evil or unwholesome thoughts. It does not think about merit or anything else for that matter. The Heart is centred and that's it. It has nothing. It does not think. It does not rationalise. It does not invent. It does not embellish. Because of this, it does not give rise to Paññā (wisdom). Put this aside for a moment and stick with being centred. Paññā arising or not arising, is not the point. Before you reach the point of singularity, you have to use an enormous amount of Paññā. You must investigate every aspect of every (worldly) theme¹³ with all the force that you can muster. At this stage Paññā has been used extensively. When every avenue has been exhaustively investigated, the singularity is entered.

¹³ Although not referred to specifically, the themes are Impermanence, Suffering and Not-Self.

People think that this singularity has no Paññā but, in reality, Paññā has been used extensively in order to get there. When centred, there is no activity.

If you want to get a feel for what it is like to be centred, just try this exercise. Give it a go. Hold your breath for just a second. There's no activity. There is stillness and an awareness of the stillness. There's no thinking or pondering but there is an awareness that there is no thinking. There is no flitting about, going backwards and forwards. There is no consideration of what is wholesome and what is unwholesome at all. The one aware of the stillness, that is the singularity, that is the Heart¹⁴. But it's only momentarily there, as we hold our breath.

When you latch onto this, you will be able to say, this is the Heart.

The time comes when this state breaks up. It becomes the Citta when it starts staggering about, thinking. Sati still envelops and tends to the Citta. The emphasis is then on washing away all unwholesome states; relinquishing phenomena that lead to poor karmic results. That which is meritorious and virtuous must also be abandoned. Merit is no longer wanted.

¹⁴ That is the Heart for the purpose of this exercise, for the purpose of this metaphor. The exercise also assumes that the practitioner has Sati at the time that the breath is held. This position was also qualified in the written transcription of the desana.

Unwholesomeness is not wanted. This allows you to reach the singularity (again). If you still hold on to merit, you won't become centred. If you want for unwholesome states, then you won't become centred. It is when you give up both of these conditions that you become centred. So, exercise Paññā extensively and develop skilful ways of investigation until you reach the Heart.

It is natural for the Heart and the Citta to engage with each other. The Citta enters the state that is the Heart but stays for only a short time and then it is off again. It's off busying itself with things, as is its want. But if we have Sati firmly established and aware of what is the Heart and what is the Citta, when the Citta is naughty, chasing after various objects, we will comprehend what is happening. Comprehending here means to abandon whatever is no good. When you get rid of all that is no good, you revert to being centred again.

When you practise Samādhi Bhavanā (meditation), if you practise in this manner often and consistently, you won't get exhausted racing off after the Citta which has no rest station, no break. Racing around does not work. Explore until all avenues of investigation have been exhausted. If you get this right, you will be back for more, back to the Heart. If you get this wrong, you will be running flat out in a gigantic way.

No matter what, I want you to understand what it means to consistently reach the Heart. Achieving the peace and quiet associated with being at one is the best kind of work. Even if there is no Paññā, take whatever you can get. Accept this for the time being. Accept the peace and quiet. If you are steadfast in your practise, these things will happen by themselves.

Have no fear. Don't be afraid that the Citta will stop thinking. Don't be afraid your imagination will be gone. Thinking, pondering and imagining, your understanding will keep pace with them if you have been able to reach the Heart. This is the kind of work you have to put in to train in meditation. It doesn't matter whether it is Ānāpānasati (meditation on the breath), Maraṇasati (meditation on death), or Buddho (repetition of a mantra), or whatever meditation subject you use, their purpose is to take you to the Heart. Their purpose is to develop the protection of Sati. If you cannot have Sati protect the Heart, or if the protection isn't fixed, it does not matter what else happens, it will be completely useless.

We only have one Citta associated with this body, and it is the most important thing there is. Everyone across the world is the same, each with their own Citta. This is where all the turmoil comes from. If everyone looked after their own Citta, there wouldn't

be any turmoil. There would be nothing but contentment. If everyone cared for their own Citta and had Sati protect it, this would be sufficient. The reason for turmoil, confusion and entanglement is a lack of understanding of our own Heart. When none of us can take care of our Heart, there is greed and animosity, cutting through everything. All this arises from the Heart¹⁵. Just the Heart.

So, what has the Heart got? Does Lobha (greed) creep into the Heart. How could Lobha get there? Where does Dosa (anger) come into things? Does this reside in the Heart? Is there Moha (delusion) in the Heart? I don't see where there is a storage place for these in the Heart. I don't see the Heart as having substance. So, what has it got? The Heart is a void. It is empty. It has no substance.

People think (Lobha, Dosa and Moha) are good things but what is good about them? Anger, greed, delusion, people think themselves wonderful because of having these traits. They consider themselves to be good people. But what is good about them? How can they be wonderful? All they have are troubles and strife.

For example, our possessions. Lobha makes us greedy for them. What is that all about? You want to eat,

¹⁵ These expressions stem from the Heart but, in the context of this text, would be considered as associated with the Citta.

consume or use them. And what is it that makes use of these possessions? It is this body, which gets large, fat and obese, isn't it? You don't see a problem with that, but old people are decaying by the day.

The same is true for Dosa and Māna (conceit, pride). False views arise but you think they are the real thing. You believe there is a "self", a "me" a "them" in corporeality. Mānaditthi (conceited false views) having arisen are held onto stubbornly. What is this about? You don't see a problem with this? Does this corporeal body not grow and expand? Is it now¹⁶ better, more special than the old one? Is it younger and prettier than the old one? Or what's the deal if the body is not more beautiful? If all you have is a sullen look, a disfigured face or the countenance of a demon or the devil, isn't it better just to live a good life?

Moha, delusion, is no different. Before Lobha can arise, there has to be Moha, delusion. After Moha appears greed, animosity and misunderstanding occur. I implore you to investigate and see this for yourself. When you have managed to achieve this, job done. Moha, Dosa and Mānaditthi will cease. There will be a void, empty of anything. You dwell indifferent to everything. Isn't this better?

¹⁶ Referring to the body before and after the wrong view of self has arisen.

Get to the Heart, the singularity. You will be happy, in good health and nothing will threaten you. There will be no inconvenience wherever you go. You won't be attached to the world. People with Dosa and Mānaditthi are completely attached. They won't give in and will be troubled wherever they go.

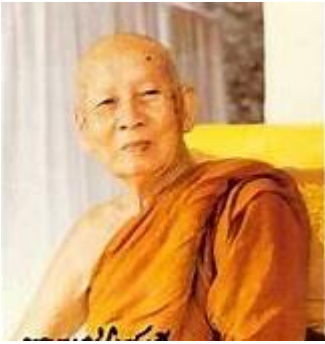
I implore you to investigate in this manner. If you examine things in the right way, this way, (your Citta) will converge and become the Heart.

That's it for now. Investigate in this way!

Reflection on Nibbāna

Wat Hin Mark Peng

18 November 2522BE



4 Luang Poo and His Ever-Present Smile

Upasamānusati is the recollection of the tranquillity of Nibbāna. Some amongst us may think this is too lofty an ambition. The Lord Buddha was not able to display His tranquillity¹⁷ so we are not able to gauge the subtlety of His level of peacefulness, right up to Nibbāna. He did, however, bid us to reflect on the serenity of Nibbāna, as follows.

We must all endeavour to become peaceful! To be aware of complete freedom from all objects, everything. If you grasp the meaning of this right now, you will reach Nibbāna. Whatever happens is fine. It's up to you whether you reach Nibbāna or not, however, **I implore you to recollect peacefulness because recollecting peacefulness makes the mind**

¹⁷ Tranquillity not being a physical object that can be displayed for all to see and measure.

rock solid. This is what the Lord Buddha meant when he beseeched us to recollect in this way. If your reflection is not peaceful, confusion will set in.

When we are calm, but not as calm as the Lord Buddha, we experience a fraction of His Nibbāna. That said, we are happy with this, which is enough for the time being. This is just freedom from Ārammaṇa (the six sense objects). It is peacefulness by temporary relief from the five Nivaraṇa (hinderances). This kind of tranquillity is still associated with Loba (greed), Dosa (ill-will) and Moha (delusion). The defilements are plentiful. When we are peaceful in this manner, we have no idea of the depth of our tranquillity. But this is still good. The Lord Buddha still referred to this as being tranquil.

Lord Buddha said to reflect on Nibbāna as your object (Ārammaṇa). “The peace of Nibbāna is probably like this¹⁸. **Nibbāna is void of Loba, Dosa and Moha.” It is that moment and no other, when one is free from greed, ill-will and delusion that real peacefulness and tranquillity arises. This is what the Lord Buddha meant by Nibbāna. This is why He implored one to ponder on tranquillity.** Nibbāna is hard to make sense of, but we believe in our own peacefulness. We know we can achieve at least some level of calmness. Even if we cannot reach the same level of tranquillity as the Lord Buddha, we may be able to come close to

¹⁸ An example of a possible reflection on Nibbana

Nibbāna. If you can sustain peacefulness, your reflection on Nibbāna will be sustained. If your peacefulness is fleeting, your reflection on Nibbāna will be fleeting. The Lord Buddha's Nibbāna was truly the pinnacle of tranquillity. His only thoughts were Nibbāna. He had no thoughts of Kilesa (defilements). Any thoughts He did have were about tranquillity and that's it.

Typically, the Citta tends to think, constantly. But Sati (mindfulness) keeps the mind protected, allowing the Citta to be observed at every level. The Lord Buddha's Citta did not stray outside its boundaries. It was under His control. It was not a source of Kilesa. All thoughts were equanimous. It is apposite for us all to emulate Him, at least somewhat, even if we only achieve a tiny amount of peacefulness. We will accept this for the time being and we will guard this tranquillity so that it becomes solid. We will then see for ourselves, that, if peacefulness is sustained for long periods, great tranquillity and happiness will be experienced. The same is true for Nibbāna¹⁹. **If the mind is calm, both Nibbāna and unwholesome states can be teachers. If the mind is disturbed, then neglect has set in.** Hell and Nibbāna are at opposite ends of the spectrum,

¹⁹ We will see the tranquillity of Nibbana for ourselves.

polar opposites. The battle between them is what it is all about²⁰.

Wherever we come from, after we are born, we are met with nothing but a vast array of confusion, such as countless thoughts and imaginings. **When we get tranquillity, even just a little bit, we feel relaxed and comfortable. This state is worth preserving, making it a permanent fixture (of one's mind). That way, it will be for our own happiness and happiness is what everyone around the world desires.** When this level of happiness arises, we must look after it. Things are easy to seek but difficult to maintain. With regard to this happiness, those who will obtain it will do so moment by moment, those that do not, won't.

Maintaining this level of happiness for long periods is the hardest thing to do. Why is this? Well, for a start, our mood is constantly changing. Standing, walking, sitting or lying down; speaking, chatting, eating, every activity, it is all about what contacts the Āyatana (senses). The Citta chases after what makes contact with the Āyatana and this what makes maintenance difficult.

If someone is experienced and masterful (in this practice), they will know its ins and outs. They will be able to keep pace with everything they know and see, no matter how these things arise. The surveying Citta

²⁰ The inner battle of the Dhamma over the Kilesa.

will be Dhamma. Thinking will be Dhamma. Imagining and formulating will be Dhamma. **If you know what is going on, it is all Dhamma, everything. One who practises will see their own virtue and their own vice right there. What is Dhamma and what is worldly will be seen right there.**

If your thinking is worldly, everything becomes about the world. There is no Sati to cocoon and protect the Citta. On the other hand, if your focus is on Dhamma, you will follow cause and effect constantly and that focus will remain as long as you wish. Thinking will not exceed boundaries. You can withdraw into this stillness, this peace, at any time. This can be compared with raising cattle. The farmer feeds them in a wide pasture. He climbs a tree to observe each one. He knows the location of them all. In the evening, he brings them into the barn and locks the barndoor. Their owner then sleeps soundly because he knows he does not have to mind them.

This is it, Upasamānusati, recollection of the peace of Nibbāna as the object. No matter what the Lord Buddha's object was, we first need to settle for (the limited peacefulness that has been detailed here). If you do manage to reach the same object as the Lord Buddha, you will know this for yourself²¹. No one can tell you or instruct you (that this is the case). You

²¹ Sandiṭṭhiko

cannot make a comparison. Whoever experiences this will know for themselves.

If you think this is going to be as you learned from the text and manuals, you will realise that reality is something else. However, when you have studied, then doing a comparison is not wrong. When you do this, you realise that (actually) there is not the slightest difference²².

All practitioners want to achieve (increased) levels of practice. They want these stages to be firmly established. They want to achieve Sotāpanna, Sakidāgāmi and Anāgāmi. They can close their eyes and, momentarily, envision this. However, when they withdraw from Samādhi, they find that various Kilesa still trouble them. The Kilesa are all still there, just as they were in the beginning. The Lord Buddha, on the other hand, did not engage with the Kilesa once He had seen (the truth). For Him every Kilesa was expunged. He said, a Sotāpanna is like one who has fallen into the stream of Nibbāna and taken a vague look but has not reached Nibbāna. A Sakidāgāmi has gotten closer and sees Nibbāna much clearer. An Anāgāmi sees it at an even closer distance. They see it vividly. It is only clearer when the stage of Arahant is reached. At this stage, Nibbāna is seen with

²² In other words, you only truly understand the text when you have experienced these phenomena yourself. Then the text makes perfect sense.

absolute clarity. The Arahant sees clearly that it is following the Dhamma that has made him/her an Arahant, without the need to believe in or listen to anyone else. They see everything is in perfect alignment with what the Lord Buddha taught.

Most people would like to be Sotāpanna, Sakidāgāmi, Anāgāmi or Arahant. People think that if they forsake some Kilesa they will be a Sotāpanna. If they forsake some more, they will be a Sakidāgāmi or an Arahant just like the Lord Buddha. But they do not abandon the Kilesa as He did. Instead, they collect them, while extolling the Lord Buddha. How on earth will they reach the Lord Buddha? Even at this stage they still do not want to give up craving. As the ancients said, “Those who want, don’t eat. Those who are eating, don’t want.”

5 Bala (Strengths)

Wat Hin Mark Peng



5 Luang Poo Full of Metta

Today, I am going to talk about “strengths”. There are two kinds of strength. Physical strength can be developed by maintaining good health. Strength of mind, however, is something much

harder to see. It has to be composed of the “5 Bala”. As far as taking care of the mind is concerned, the 5 Bala are not its strengths. Instead, they are the means to develop strength of mind. Taking care of the mind is done via “Saddhā (faith) Bala”. Faith is a great source of strength. “Viriya (diligent effort)” is another source of strength. “Sati (mindfulness) Bala” and “Samādhi (firm concentration) Bala” and “Paññā (wisdom) Bala” are other facets of strength of mind. When these five Dhamma appear together they make the heart bold and fearless. They also have the power to propel us to Magga (path), Phala (fruit) and Nibbāna - cessation (of suffering). It can then be said

that one has achieved the goal that one set out to achieve.

In terms of what is sometimes said, such as you don't have enough Parami (perfection) or your merit is too little, it all stems from these 5 Bala. You simply don't have them in sufficiency.

Saddhā Bala

Saddhā means faith, strong belief in doing good. Belief that doing good begets good and doing evil begets evil. Belief that no one else can take your place (in this cycle of good and evil). Belief that the perpetrator of the deed is the one who receives the result.

The Lord Buddha was full of energy. So much so that He was able to sacrifice everything and give away all his possessions. Having made this commitment, He was able to sustain it. To begin with, we must be completely satisfied with giving alms. We must lend our full strength to this. Later, we can channel this Saddhā into other things. Reckless people don't care for Saddhā and become noncommittal when it comes to doing good. Later on, the Saddhā that would be born from Sila (morality), Samādhi and Paññā is also exhausted. Belief in self-sacrifice is gone and so is the merit that goes with it.

I want you to have firm Saddhā in looking after your Sila, regardless of whether you keep 5 precepts or 8

precepts or 10 precepts with good kamma. But don't set your sights on 227 precepts like monks unless you have strong faith because that would be a waste of time.

The same can be said of Samādhi. If you are not satisfied with having just a little Khanika Samādhi or a little Upacāra Samādhi, you won't practise further. You will abandon Samādhi. On the other hand, if you are gratified by the amount of Samādhi that you have, you should resolve to develop steadfastly, to the best of your ability. Progress will naturally follow.

Paññā is no different. If we don't resolve to examine the little insights that we get, if we don't drive Saddhā to be fearless, then it will all be for naught.

The reason why people cannot be bothered is because they don't have Saddhā. They are uncertain about what they are doing because they lack Saddhā. They make excuses. They let things slip their mind. They are confused. They forget. This is because their Saddhā is lacking. This is how Saddhā is lost. Because of this you should promote Saddhā. Making Saddhā fearless and nurturing it is the first step.

Develop Saddhā as much as you can. When you have Saddhā, Viriya will be encouraged and this will assist in performing a whole host of tasks, such as being philanthropic and seeking out opportunities to be generous. No matter how small or great that

generosity may be, always have it at the forefront of your thoughts. Having Saddhā, supports acts like these.

Viriya Bala

Diligent effort, try to maintain it constantly.

When you have Sila established, work at keeping it and don't let it lapse. At first, looking after Sila is intermittent. Work hard to keep it for longer. Try to make Sila become your second nature. As its purity increases, keep Sila at the forefront of your thoughts. Know what is flawed and what is perfection. Those that don't consider Sila can have goodness inside them, but they don't see the value of it. In the olden days they used to say, this is like a monkey having glass, or a chicken having gemstones. Try to see the value of maintaining Sila. Try to see the value of Paññā and Samādhi.

However much you practise Samādhi, a lot or a little, just think back to the time when you didn't practise at all. If you've meditated a few times, it's good that you see what Samādhi is. Those who don't see the value of Samādhi will never practise. Experiencing Samādhi gives rise to perseverance and effort. If you keep trying, one day you will succeed, for sure. Bala are the powers that make things happen.

Sati Bala

Sati means firm mindfulness of various objects.

When Saddhā and Viriya have been present, there may be times when delusion causes you to believe in the wrong things. Your effort becomes ill-directed, towards unwholesome things. If there is no Sati cocooning the heart, there will be nothing watching over it, determining what is proper or improper, right or wrong, or what is in accordance with the Dhamma, the teaching of the Lord Buddha, or not.

Listening to the directions of a teacher or his admonishment must be done with Sati protecting the heart so as to determine if the words are correct. This way, you will travel the right path. Most of us just have Saddhā, but Saddhā must be supported by Viriya in order to provide the most assistance in seeing what is improper.

When we do do something improper, it is not up to someone else to admonish us. Taking responsibility is the right thing to do. It is not appropriate for someone else to reprimand us. Someone else doing so is not the same as doing it ourselves because it is we who have the strong Saddhā and much Viriya.

Those who have Sati walk evenly. They don't lean to one side or the other. This is called "Majjhima Patipada (the Middle Way)". Ordinarily, those with Sati don't see themselves as being good. People are generally not good. Because of this we have to be careful, paying close attention to things when taking instruction from others. As I have said consistently,

“Someone who says they are a good person is yet to be a good person. Those who think they are special or super smart, are stupid.”

Samādhi Bala

Samādhi is one of the most important foundations (of Dhamma). Saddhā, Viriya and Sati must come together in order to achieve Samādhi. If these factors don't come together, then there will be great confusion. Wherever Buddhism goes, it teaches. If that teaching does not penetrate your heart, you haven't reached the essence of Buddhism. All the factors must coalesce in order for the teaching to enter the heart.

Everything in this world has to have a point of origin. Making a living, whether by trading or working in government, in whatever city, the commonality is we do it to feed ourselves. The point is to make money. We make money and put it all together in a wallet or purse. Even with farming, for example rice farming, the rice has to be carried and mixed together in the rice yard, then it has to be gathered into the barn. It then must be dehusked. Then it has to be boiled before it is concentrated in the mouth and then the stomach. And that is an end of the matter.

Buddhism's teachings are very broad. If the factors don't coalesce and achieve Samādhi, then you won't

reach the heart of Buddhism²³. This is why I have consistently said, “Buddhism teaches that there is a point of convergence that is the ultimate, beyond doubt. The end of the line. This is unlike other philosophies of life which teach eternalism.” Just as the 84,000 stanzas of the Dhamma can be summed up in a single word, “vigilance”. Magga is the path to tread to reach Magga, Phala and Nibbāna, which coalesce at the singularity of Maggasamaṅgi (the coalescence of the Eightfold Path). So, it is said that Buddhism teaches about reaching the end but there is no “traveller²⁴” that follows this path and reaches the end.

Paññā Bala

Paññā investigates our Sankhāra (conditioned phenomena²⁵) and body. Whatever is seen, we focus the magnifying glass on it. Right in front of our eyes we see old age and dysfunctional disintegration; a body withered and wrinkled. This is Aniccaṃ (impermanent), Dukkhaṃ (suffering) and Anattā (void of self). This is all you need to see. There is no need to look elsewhere. Try to focus your attention

²³ In the same way as all the stages of rice production are necessary before the rice is of value when it is eaten.

²⁴ Buddhism teaches Anattā (not self) or no personal substance in any conditioned phenomena.

²⁵ In this case, the term is more specific and relates to mental phenomena.

on this consistently. Through doing so, you will see the root cause of aging and disintegration.

The deterioration of Sankhāra is not so easy to see. Sometimes they go through their whole lifecycle, and we don't even notice. Even when we are old and near death, we are still intoxicated by the idea of youth. Those who scrutinise aging, dilapidation and withering away see the investigation as wonderful. They see it as being *the* way to freedom.

Samādhi won't arise if there is no Paññā. Without Paññā there is no Saddhā, no Viriya. The Saddhā that I am talking about is not some sort of mystical Saddhā. The notion to give alms and make merit is an aspect of Paññā, causing us to seek out such opportunities. This is Paññā. Putting in the effort to make merit is also called Paññā. The reason that the Citta can converge (into a singularity) is because of Paññā. Samādhi is achieved because of Paññā. These types of Paññā are weak types. When convergence²⁶ happens, it's called Paññā. If the highest level of Paññā is reached, this is called "Vipassana Paññā".

These Five Bala encourage the heart to have fierce and solid energy. So much so that Samādhi is

²⁶ Luang Poo talks about two types of convergence. The first is when the meditation object and the Citta coalesce into a singularity. This is Jhāna or Appanā Samadhi. The second is when the 8 factors of the Eightfold path converge. This is called Maggasamaṅgi. Both required Paññā as an enabler.

achieved. This Samādhi is then capable of developing Paññā at the most advanced level, which, in turn, can lead to Magga, Phala and Nibbāna.

PART TWO

The Value of a Book in the Opinion of the Author

- 1. A BOOK IS LIKE EYES**
- 2. A BOOK IS LIKE AN EYEGLOSS**
- 3. A BOOK IS LIKE A MAGNIFIER**
- 4. A BOOK IS LIKE A KEY**
- 5. A BOOK IS LIKE A TEACHER**
- 6. A BOOK IS LIKE A GOOD
COMPANION**
- 7. A BOOK IS LIKE A COMPASS
NEEDLE**
- 8. A BOOK IS LIKE A SIGNPOST**
- 9. A BOOK IS LIKE A BRIGHT LIGHT**

Translator's Introduction to Way of the Path

This text is the second revision of the translation of Tan Acharn²⁷ Tate's Magga Vidhi. It differs from the previous versions by being less literal in some aspects and by providing increased explanation through the use of additional footnotes. These refinements have been made in order to improve the reader's understanding of the subtleties of the subject matter.

In the text Tan Acharn makes extensive use of Pali terms. To assist the reader a Glossary of terms has been provided at the end. There was no Glossary in the original. If Tan Acharn provided an explanation of a Pali term in the body of the text, this explanation has been retained in the text.

When Pali terms appear in the body of the text for the first time, they are printed in capital letters, thereafter they appear with only the first letter in capital.

The photographs have been added by the translator. The original Thai version of the document does not contain photographs.

Even though this is the second revision and therefore the third version of this translation, being worldly it will still suffer from some imperfections. The translator asks for forgiveness from the reader for any imperfections and hopes that these do not cause harm or misunderstanding to the reader.

This essay is for free distribution and should not be sold like goods in the marketplace because it is beyond worldly value.

May all those who read the essay be happy and benefit from the knowledge contained herein in the way that the author intended that knowledge to be shared.

²⁷ Acharn or Ajahn is the Thai word for teacher. As an Acharn gets older, the lay people tend to change and call them Luang Poo or Luang Ta (Holy Grandfather).

The Way of the Path

*This short discourse is a practical guide for experienced meditators. It is not intended for novices in the practice of meditation nor is it intended to be an academic treatise on the subject.*²⁸

A Buddhist Adage



An adage in Buddhism maintains that the body and the Citta work together but the body is under the authority of the Citta; the Citta being the one that orders the body to perform various activities. However,

when the body is defective the Citta also suffers. The body is not under the authority of the nervous system, although the brain could be considered to be like the Head Office.

The body perishes and decomposes in accordance with the nature of its various elements but when the Citta still has causes and conditions (AVIJJĀ, TANHĀ, UPADĀNA and KAMMA)²⁹ it must be born in various realms of existence and experience DUKKHA (suffering) again and again³⁰.

²⁸ This is a note from the translator consistent with the views of the author as expressed in the many conversations between the two.

²⁹ Avijjā, ignorance; Tanhā, craving; Upadāna, attachment; Kamma, volitional action.

³⁰ This is NOT a reference to a permanent “self” but rather a statement that cause and effect is not interrupted by death. The Citta has NO permanent component. It changes as the conditions that form it arise and pass away.

1. In Order To Abolish Avijjā, Tanhā, Upadāna And Kamma

In order to abolish Avijjā, Tanhā, Upadāna and Kamma (which are causes) one must train oneself to forsake vices that may be committed by way of body and speech. This is achieved initially by maintaining SILA (moral precepts) in keeping with one's status i.e., a layperson must maintain five precepts and UPOSATHA SILA (depending on the occasion); a SĀMANERA (novice) must maintain ten or twenty precepts and a BHIKKHU (monk) must maintain the two hundred and twenty-seven precepts of the PATIMOKKHA discipline and also AJIVA PARISUDDHI SILA³¹, INDRIYA SAMVARA SILA³² and PACCAYA SANNISSITA SILA³³. This is in accordance with the ordinances of the Lord Buddha.

If Sila is not maintained purely, then the Citta is still not suitable to receive training. Even if one were to train it would not be for the development and advancement in the path of DHAMMA. This is because the Citta's foundation would not be stable enough to enable it to proceed along MAGGA (the path). One could consider that such a Citta has not yet come to the Triple Gem³⁴. A Buddhist devotee has to be steadfast in the Triple Gem and practising Sila is a prerequisite to this.

The Three Admonitions³⁵ (the basis of the Lord Buddha's teaching) or the Eightfold Path must first be established in Sila. Thus, according to the Lord Buddha's teachings, Sila is the beginning of BRAMHACARIYA (living the holy life with chastity). After one has established Sila one can train the Citta in the development of JHĀNA/SAMĀDHI (which is referred to as SAMATHA). Then, when

³¹ Purity of Livelihood.

³² Restraint of the Sense Faculties.

³³ Restraint in using and consuming the 4 Requisites ie, robes, food, shelter and medicines.

³⁴ The Buddha, the Teachings of the Buddha (Dhamma) and the Community of Monks (Sangha)

³⁵ This refers to: giving up evil; promoting good and purifying one's heart

the Citta is steadfast and experienced, one can develop VIPASSANĀ (with the aid of TILAKKHANA ÑĀNA as its basis) until one sees clearly with pure ÑĀṄADASSANA (knowledge and insight). One will have then reached VIMUTTI, freedom from all KILESA (defilements) and unwholesome Dhammas.

2. The Practice Of SAMATHA

The genuine wish of Buddhism with regard to the practices of Samatha (which is referred to as Jhāna/Samādhi) is namely wanting peace in the Citta in order to concentrate the power of the heart and give it forceful energy in the one spot (which is called EKAGGATĀRAMMAṆA). This is the foundation that gives rise to the knowledge and skilfulness that, with Ñāṇadassana, allows one to see and know clearly the truth in all SABHĀVA DHAMMAS³⁶.

It is also the foundation for eliminating all Kilesa and unwholesome Dhammas, bringing them to an end.

Samatha is not meant to be used for any other purpose, such as reasoning in the various branches of science. It has the specific function of rinsing out the heart (e.g. rinsing out the Five NIVARANA³⁷), enabling it to be clear. However, when one is experienced, one will be able to use it in any way one wants, provided that its use does not cause harm to oneself or others.

3. Training The Citta, Which Is NĀMADHAMMA

Training the Citta, which is NĀMADHAMMA, cannot be done by devices such as shackles. It must be drilled through a method of training. One must listen to people who are skilled in explaining the way of training, then one must resolve to practise accordingly

³⁶ Natural phenomena.

³⁷ Hindrances to meditation.

(initially by having faith and strong conviction). One will not succeed if one uses intellectual reasoning. Generally speaking, people who apply only intellectual reasoning do not attain the results they seek because their approach lacks a proper foundation. This is the wrong path and is more likely to make one become side-tracked.

If one first plants SADDHĀ (faith) and strong conviction in the teacher and the Dhamma that one is training in, so that the Citta is stable and concentrated, one can then use mental reasoning in the investigation of reality. When one does this, the results obtained are most satisfactory. This is because, as explain previously, when one starts with intellectual reasoning one generally goes chasing after external conditions, e.g. this person says that, that persons says this. However, if one investigates cause and effect just inside one's body, saying to oneself such things as:

1. What is the body composed of?
2. How was it born having all its necessary parts functioning so well?
3. For what purpose was the body born?
4. Upon what does it depend for its existence?
5. Is it here to regress or to progress?
6. Does it truly belong to us or not?

and one also examines Nāmadhamma, saying:

1. Do such things as greed, anger, delusion, love and aversion arise in the body or in the Citta?
2. What are their causes?
3. When they have arisen, are they SUKHA (happiness) or Dukkha (suffering)?

this introspective research becomes a means of training the Citta.

However, when the power of the Citta is not strong, **DO NOT** investigate in accordance with books that you have read nor the words of others that you have heard. If one does investigate in this manner one shall not obtain the truth i.e., it is a cause of boredom, and could cause one to give up.

One should investigate the causes and effects that arise in a Citta that is truly in the present³⁸.

4. When The Citta Researches One's Causes And Effects

When the Citta researches one's causes and effects as explained above, it will be in a state of focused investigation, specifically at one spot and one object (this is EKAGGATĀSAMĀDHI). This is the concentration of the Citta's energy, giving it forceful strength. This energy is then able to uproot Upadāna and misconceptions. It is able to cleanse the Citta, making the Citta of that moment bright and clear. At the very least one will receive much calmness, bodily pleasure and contentment of the heart.

Maybe some kind of knowledge will arise at this time and this knowledge will be something strange and wonderful. This is because this knowledge does not arise from one's imagination. It is knowledge that arises in the present from SACCADHAMMA (the truth) in a way that never happened previously. Even if one comes to know concealed stories that one had known before but that knowledge had never been PACCATTAM³⁹, that knowledge makes

³⁸ "a Citta that is truly in the present." This refers to having one's mind focused simply on what it is doing "now", neither thinking of the past or concocting the future.

³⁹ From memory, one may know of a point of Dhamma through what one has read or heard but this knowledge was not truly known by the Citta, only remembered. However, when these points arise in the present and one sees them clearly for oneself (PACCATTAM) they become truly known.

the Citta bright and can dispel doubts and suspicions in objects about which the heart is uncertain. One will then make an exclamation in one's heart, "So, it is like this!" At the same time enjoyment will arise.

Someone who is a dullard⁴⁰ will only become bold and daring when someone else confirms this knowledge or, they read about it in various books on Dhamma that bear witness to that knowledge.

If there is a lot or a little, if it is broad or not, the knowledge that has been mentioned will not disturb one's nerves. It is true peace and happiness and will greatly improve the sharpness of one's nerves. At the same time as this it will make the heart and character of that person meticulous, pleasant and worthy of great respect. When they speak, do or think anything, SATI will always be present. They will hardly ever be inattentive.

Just cultivate the conditions that have been mentioned above. DO NOT BE NEGLIGENT!



Knowledge like this is something that arises in certain individuals. It will not always occur like this to everyone but, no matter what, when we develop our Citta as explained above, even if we do not receive the results entirely, we will still receive calmness and happiness in a wonderful way that is appropriate to our meditation practice. We should therefore look after our Cittas', not allowing greed, covetousness or sadness and despondency to arise. The disposition of the heart should be neutral⁴¹. When it is neutral, one should practise as was explained at the outset, with faith and strong conviction, using Sati to watch out and be aware at

⁴⁰ A dullard meaning someone who is not quick-witted, who is uncertain about things they see and experience and so need that knowledge confirmed.

⁴¹ In the middle of the pairs of opposites, e.g. good and bad; glad and sad.

every stage of our meditation practice. One will then obtain the results that one desires.

5. If Training The Citta As Explained In 3-4 Does Not Show Results

If training the Citta as explained in sections 3-4 above does not show results one should establish Sati on a single NIMITTA, making it the target of the Citta. An example of this would be gazing at parts of the body, such as the bones or any part of the body, seeing the body as being loathsome. If one does not like this, then one can focus specifically on the Citta.

The Citta is not something seen with the eyes, and so, if one does not focus on a single spot, one will not know if the Citta is where it should be or not. The Citta is like the wind, if the wind does not blow against something we do not know if there is a wind or not. If a new trainee's Citta does not have a target they will be unable to grasp hold of the genuine Citta.

The author requests that, in choosing your target Nimitta, you do not choose one that is external to the body! One should have an internal Nimitta as one's target (as explained) and the Nimitta at which one gazes should be compatible with one's disposition. Avoid swapping Nimitta's, jumping from one to another.

The gazing should be done in accordance with the way of SATIPATTHĀNA i.e., analyse the parts by seeing them as "not us" and "don't belong to us".

This kind of investigation can be done in two ways namely:

1. When the investigation is directed just at the target do not think, "What is this target and who is the one looking at it?" There should just be "the one that knows" and the viewing. One should not place importance on anything else at all.

Then there will be something that just lets one know that it is the disposition associated with the target.

2. When the investigation is directed just at the target one should, at the same time, be aware that: this is the target of the Citta; this is the Citta (the one who is investigating); this is Sati (the one who recollects) and this is PAÑÑĀ (the one who knows all things in accordance with reality).

Either of these two approaches can be used but point 1. is fitting for someone of dull wit or training at the first level. Point 2. is fitting for someone who is of quick wit or is already experienced. For someone who trains without being negligent both of these two methods will produce the same results i.e., Samādhi and Paññā.

6. Regarding The Training That Has Been Mentioned So Far

With regard to any of the training methods mentioned so far, the author begs you not to be doubtful, thinking, “Shall I obtain Samādhi and Paññā or not?”

Eradicate all yearning for the various things that one has been told about and then do things correctly; in accordance with the way outlined in point 5, and this will be sufficient.

At the same time, we should notice the way we trained, saying, “Which means did we use? What did the Citta investigate? How was Sati nurtured in order to make the Citta like this?”

If it (one’s experience⁴²) is not like this i.e., it is the opposite, then rush to resolve the situation anew, making use of the observations described above.

⁴² Translator’s insertion.

Some people notice the method of the Citta's training at the same time as they are having the experience and some people take note of it after they have withdrawn. Either one of these methods can be used. These idiosyncrasies tend to be consistent with each individual's level of intelligence.

If one does not take note at all it will be difficult to train the Citta. Even if it has already been trained it will be difficult to maintain that state permanently.

7. Something May Arise While Developing The Citta

At the same time as one is training the Citta in the ways mentioned above, some things may arise that are strange and wonderful. Even though one does not intend such things to occur they still happen. This is the Citta withdrawing from external objects, coming together to be a single mass. It lets go of SAÑÑĀ (recognition) and attachment to things in the past and future. At this time there will just be "the one who knows" as one of a pair with the object of the present. This is something that is neither external nor internal but is a condition that is a characteristic peculiar to the Citta.

This is like the practice of giving up everything and is namely, 'THE CITTA ENTERING THE BHAVANGA'. Everything that is there at this time will be of the Citta exclusively. When the Citta has reached this level, even though one is still alive, it will give up all attachments to the body. The Citta will come to experience its own disposition while

being separate from this state⁴³. This is called “The World⁴⁴ of the Citta”.

This World of the Citta still has the five KHANDHAS (which are subtle and internal) perfectly complete. Therefore, the Citta of this level still has becoming⁴³ and life⁴⁵, causing it to be re-born again later on.

The characteristics that have been spoken of are similar to those of someone who falls asleep and dreams. Therefore, the case of the Citta entering into the Bhavanga (through the training mentioned above) may have varying symptoms, depending on whether there is much or little Sati.

When this occurs at first, someone with Sati and of keen intelligence will be aware of what they are and what they are seeing and will not be scared. Someone who has little Sati and who is generally easily taken in will be like someone sleeping and dreaming. When they wake up, they may become scared or delusional, believing in their Nimittas. However, when these people train and are like this often, to the extent that they become experienced, Sati will improve and these conditions will disappear. Paññā will then gradually arise,

⁴³ Translator’s Note: This point is an important point but the text is difficult to translate simply as there are two valid, yet subtly different, ways of interpreting the original Thai. The first being that the Citta experiences the state it is in yet remains separate to that state. The second being that the Citta experiences the state it is in by means of being separate to that state. Both statements are valid.

What the author is referring to is the notion of the “pair” mentioned in the previous paragraph, where the Citta, “the one that knows”, is one of two things that exist at this time; the other thing being the object and, in this case, the object is the nature of the Citta itself. Effectively, the disposition of the Citta and the “one who knows” that disposition are both aspects of the Citta yet separate from each other.

⁴⁴ “World” is the usual translation of the Thai word ‘Pop’ which is used as the Thai translation of the Pali word ‘BHAVA’, which in English is often translated as ‘Becoming’.

⁴⁵ This is a translation of the Thai word ‘Chart’ which is derived from the Pali word ‘JĀTI’ which is usually translated as ‘Birth’ in English.

investigating the causes and conditions of those Dhammas – knowing and perceiving the reality of Sabhāva-Dhammas.

8. Characteristic Expounded in Item 7

Even if the characteristic expounded in Item 7 does not give rise to a vast amount of Paññā (clever research into cause and effect) it is still the preliminary stage of training the Citta. It is an instrument that can dispel the five Nivarana and cause peace and happiness in the present. If this training has been done properly and has not deteriorated, it will make for rebirth in a joyful state (SUGATI) in the future in a manner that corresponds to one's level of training.

Visions and Nimittas of various kinds generally arise in these moments that are being discussed here. However, this does not mean that visions and Nimittas must arise or arise to every person when the Citta has reached this level. With some people they sometimes arise and with others not. It depends on one's personality and on circumstances.

If one were to say that visions and Nimittas that arise in meditation were good things, then this would only be true for people who see them with Sati. These people will see them as just Nimittas, as tools to anchor the heart, and will discard them. They will not deludedly grasp hold of these Nimittas and take them to be a 'self' or take them to be 'theirs'.

If one is not very clever and one's Sati is not very good and one is a SADDHĀCARITA⁴⁶ also, when such Nimittas arise one will be very excited. One may even become mentally abnormal⁴⁷. This is

⁴⁶ One who has a faithful nature.

⁴⁷ Here mentally abnormal refers to someone who is "caught up in their own little world" i.e., mild psychosis.

because the heart credits these Nimittas with being true. (The way to treat Nimittas is explained later in Item 10.)

In addition to this, the opinions of people who have trained to this level are generally radical because of the power of the Citta's energy. That is, when they think about anything they usually see only one side of things and so do not believe people easily because they believe their own opinions are reasonable. Despite the fact that these opinions are deeply rooted they still lack reason and so are likely to cause VIPALLĀSA⁴⁸ and misunderstanding can easily occur.

No matter what, if visions and Nimittas arise or not, they are not what is desired here. This is because, apart from the fact that they are hindrances, concealing Paññā, they are also obstructions to the development of Vipassanā⁴⁹.

The intention regarding this training is to forsake the five Nivarana and then to investigate the Khandhas, seeing them clearly in accordance with reality, so that one is tired of them and has diminished sensuality. One will then be able to discard these Khandhas, never again to be attached to them!

9. When The Citta Is Trained To Be Firmly Established And Concentrated In Jhāna-Samādhi

When the Citta is trained to be firmly established and concentrated in Jhāna-Samādhi, so that the five Nivarana have been suppressed, one should develop Vipassanā. Vipassanā may arise at the same time as one is developing Samatha. That is, in the moment that one

⁴⁸ Corruptions of insight.

⁴⁹ Insight into impermanence, suffering and non-self.

is developing Samatha, Paññā may arise as a bright light, knowing clearly and seeing the truth that:

“All SANKHĀRAS⁵⁰ that become manifest tend to perish and deteriorate; they are unable to last; they do not belong to us and are not ourselves; they are just their own Sabhāva-Dhammas; after they have arisen, they break up in accordance with their nature.”

When knowledge like this has arisen, it will cause the Citta to be tired of, and will diminish sensual desire for, all Sankhāras. There will be just sorrow and remorse anchoring the Citta. No matter what one sees and hears these symptoms will be there throughout. This is called, “Vipassanā arising together with the development of Samatha”.

If Vipassanā does arise like this, then, when one has developed Samatha so that the Citta is firmly concentrated, one should just take any part of the body (e.g. bones, large intestine or small intestine) or, take the object that the Citta is thinking about at that moment, and investigate it. Consider that the nature of all these things that the Citta latches onto, believing them to be truly permanent and the cause of Sukha (happiness) is, in truth, the Ti-Lakkhana⁵¹. The suppositions that we make in accordance with our own imagination i.e., this is this and that is that, are not real at all.

All Sankhāra arise from their own causes and conditions (namely Avijjā, Tanhā, Upadānā and Kamma). When their causes and conditions are exhausted, they pass away in accordance with their nature; without anyone forcing them to. Even ourselves, our bodies, are of this nature. They are able to survive because they have conditions such as air and food. If these conditions become exhausted, then things become meaningless.

⁵⁰ Conditioned phenomena.

⁵¹ The Three Characteristics of Being: ANICCA (impermanence); DUKKHA (suffering); ANATTĀ (not self).

Investigating in this manner depends on having complete peacefulness of the Citta as one's support. Afterwards, one shall reach the end of the path of "body training Citta". This is to say, the brilliant light of Paññā, which constitutes the reasons that the Citta has investigated, will arise in a way specific to oneself. One will not latch on to Saññā, namely that which is remembered from other people, as being one's own knowledge. This will be knowledge that arises specifically from probing inside one's own heart. The Citta will never again be deluded by, attached to, desire or be pleased or displeased with any Sankhāra Dhammas.

If it were said that a Citta that still does not know the reality of the KAMMATTHĀNA⁵² that it is investigating (as has just been explained) is one that is not truly collected, the reason for concluding that this was not Vipassanā would be because the Paññā of such a Citta is still weak and lacks circumspection.

Summarising the meaning of what has been dealt with so far:

1. Cleansing of bodily actions and speech must be done by a method of training that has Sila as the first stage.
2. Cleansing the Citta, to make it pure, must be done by training to the extent of Jhāna-Samādhi (Samatha) so that the Citta has vigorous energy and can suppress the five hindrances.
3. When the Citta is skilled and clever in entering and staying in Jhāna-Samādhi in accordance with one's wish, only then shall Paññā (namely a bright light, knowledge of the reality of all Sabhāva Dhammas) arise. It will arise together with the causes and conditions of the becoming and ending of those Sabhāva Dhammas in a way that is of great splendour.

It may be that the knowledge that has been spoken of here will only arise in this way and only with some people. But it does not matter how! If the trainee has reached this level, they should know that

⁵² Literally, the foundation for action. Colloquially, the meditation subject.

they have and that the Citta is ready to be trained in Paññā and Vipassanā. One should then just take a part of the body or an object that the Citta is absorbed with and examine it using the Ti-Lakkhana as one's basis. As has been explained already, one shall then obtain the bright light of Paññā (seeing clearly that all Sankhāra Dhammas have the same characteristics) and one shall root out all attachment to NĀMA-RUPA⁵³.

Even though the Citta has no body and cannot come into contact with things, it has power that is superior to the body and anything else in this world. It has the ability to make everything in this world come under its influence. However, the Citta is not so cruel and base that it does not know what is good or bad.

When someone who means well comes to train the Citta in the correct way, following the teaching of the Lord Buddha, the Citta will be easily trained and will become clever. It will have the Paññā to bring the wickedly behaving body back to behaving well. Apart from this it will also have the ability to make itself pure and clean, free from blemishes. It will know clearly and see for itself the truth in deep and profound ATHADHAMMAS⁵⁴. At the same time, it will be able to bring to the world (which is shrouded, making it dark) brightness and clarity.

This is because the real substance of the Citta was bright and clear from the beginning. However, it is impregnated by moods which taint it. These moods make the brilliant light of the Citta completely dark in a single moment and consequently make the world dark also. If the Citta had been completely dark since the time of its origin⁵⁵, then probably there would be no-one capable of cleansing it and making it clear and clean; causing the brilliant light of Paññā to emerge. Therefore, whether this world shall be dark or whether

⁵³ Mind and body.

⁵⁴ Synonymous with Dhamma, but also refers to the headings for various groups of Dhamma.

⁵⁵ The Lord Buddha said the Citta's fundamental nature was bright and clear but this has been compromised by the defilements.

it shall be bright, whether it shall receive happiness or whether it shall receive sorrow, depends on the Citta of each individual.

It is thus appropriate for people to first make their own Citta well trained and then to train the Cittas' of others afterwards. Then, later on, this world will be free from turbulence and confusion.

10. The Case of Visions/Nimittas

The case of Visions/NIMITTAS which arise to meditators because of their training is strange and amazing. These visions/Nimittas may easily fool someone of little Paññā into believing in them. One can be deluded by them, taking them to be real thus forgetting oneself and losing Sati. Therefore, one who trains in meditation should be careful and contemplate on what the author will explain next.

Nimittas that arise in meditation are of two kinds, namely Visions and Nimittas.

1. When the Citta becomes concentrated and is in the Bhavanga, visions may appear as pictures. For example, someone who investigates ASUBHA (loathsomeness of the body) may see their own body as being Asubha, completely rotten, or they may see it as simply being a skeleton, or they may see it as a heap of ashes. They may see this to the extent that it is a cause of weariness, and they commit suicide.

Sometimes one may see visions of DEVAS, INDRIYA, BRAHAMA, hell, PRETA or BUTTA⁵⁶.

2. With these Nimittas, when the Citta has become concentrated, then maybe a whispering sound will manifest itself. Maybe it will be the sound of someone whom one respects reminding one to investigate Dhamma or to be cautious. If it is not like this, then maybe it the sound of an enemy with wicked intent who will endanger one. This Nimitta highlights the flow of the Citta, the two being connected to each other.

The opposite, a well-wisher, is of a similar manner. Sometimes the sound floats up and illustrates an Athadhamma which is worth thinking about and investigating. This is in keeping with the meditation idiom that, “ **Dhamma is an incentive or an ABHIÑÑĀ**”.



Visions/Nimittas are not something that appear to all meditators everywhere. With some people, no matter how concentrated their mind becomes, visions and Nimittas never arise. Some people, however, only have to be concentrated for a very short time and many visions/Nimittas appear. **Be careful; do not try to make them appear.**

This is all to do with the different characters that people have.

Generally speaking, a gullible person, not given to reasoning, will have visions/Nimittas occur quickly and will usually expand on them beyond their limit. These vision/Nimittas thus become a cause for such persons to become engrossed, forgetting themselves and losing Sati. Sometimes these people become unbalanced. Because

⁵⁶ Devas – heavenly beings; Preta – hungry ghosts; Butta – ghosts of the dead

of this visions/Nimittas are something with which one should be careful.

Are visions/Nimittas real?

One can answer that by saying that some are and some are not. This is because these visions/Nimittas arise from Jhāna and Jhāna is LOKIYA (mundane) and therefore uncertain. This is the same as when the Cittas' of some meditators become collected, attain the Bhavanga and are in Jhāna, the meditators themselves do not know where they have arrived, nor at what level they are on, nor what they are investigating, nor their own disposition.

If visions/Nimittas arise intentionally or not, they are still comprised of a lot of Sankhāra and Upadāna so one cannot be certain of them. Because these vision/Nimittas occur in the Bhavanga there is a comparison between this state and someone asleep or someone who is dozing off and dreams. Therefore, when they occur at first, there are generally some that are real, but this is the minority.

Is Jhāna Lokiya or LOKUTTARA (supramundane)?

One can answer that Jhāna has only 12-13 factors⁵⁷ and these are Lokiya. However, if the person who enters Jhāna is an ARIYA (noble one) using Jhāna as a tool, as their VIHĀRA DHAMMA (place for the mind to rest), they are able to use that Lokiya Jhāna at will and with certainty. This is similar to someone experienced in firing a gun compared to a beginner. It is like a king carrying an ornate sword while the commoner carries a plain one⁵⁸.

Are Nimittas good things?

⁵⁷ The factors of all of the first four Jhānas added together.

⁵⁸ In Thai, the Royal language is different to the common language so, in the case of this simile, the word for a king's sword is different to that of a commoner's sword. However, in English they are both swords so, showing a good comparison in this simile is difficult.

One can answer that they are only good to someone who is able to use them. This person is able to use them in a way that is proper and fitting, not being deluded by them or addicted to them.

Nimittas are no good to people who are unable to use them or, are unable to use them correctly. To such people Nimittas become the cause of delusion because they take them to be real. When Upadāna has seized hold of the vision/Nimitta, Sankhāra expands on it, making it pervasive, until it makes the meditator incapable of retaining Sati. It is therefore appropriate to be careful with regard to visions/Nimittas in the way that will be explained next.

Visions/Nimittas appear by the power of Lokiya Jhāna and continue because of Sankhāra-Upadāna. They therefore have the characteristics of the Ti-Lakkana i.e., they are Anicca (impermanent, being unable to last), Dukkha (suffering) and Anattā (not self, not belonging to you or anyone). They are always in the condition of arising and passing away and it is proper to examine them in this way (in accordance with reality) and to let go of them.

Do not be deluded and put your faith in these vision/Nimittas which are the end result, instead practice the primary cause i.e., Jhāna. Become experienced and able to enter Jhāna at will, then visions/Nimittas will arise by themselves.

One should also see the harm of these visions/Nimittas. If, when visions/Nimittas arise, we are absorbed and deluded and attached to them, Jhāna will deteriorate. As a simile, visions/Nimittas are like sound waves which tend to hinder someone who is trying to become calm in order to examine subtle and profound Dhammas; or they are like waves which prevent us from seeing our reflection in clear water.

When visions/Nimittas arise to trainees who are new to Jhāna, they will be very strange and marvellous and Sankhāra-Upadāna will tend to latch onto them tenaciously. Those visions/Nimittas will then be constantly impressed upon one's (inner) eyes and Citta. If one cannot resolve this situation by the methods mentioned

previously, then prevent the Citta from entering Jhāna by being inattentive or, by not allowing the Citta to become calm or, by not allowing oneself to be pleased with those Nimittas. One should eat and sleep contentedly and undertake many other activities so that the body becomes exhausted. Send the mind to objects that give rise to the Kilesa, such as beautiful shapes and pleasant sounds, so that such things as love and strong desire arise in the Citta. When the Citta has receded from Jhāna, all the visions/Nimittas will disappear by themselves.

When the pupil cannot resolve things himself, as explained here, it is fitting for their teacher to try to help in a similar way. The best and quickest way for a teacher to resolve such a situation is for him to find a subject that:

1. incites the pupil addicted to the visions/Nimittas to recede from Jhāna, or
2. gives rise to vehement anger.

The visions/Nimittas will then disappear completely.

11. The Foundation That Gives Rise To Knowledge In Athadhamma Is UPACĀRA Samādhi And There Are Two Types

1. When people interested in meditation come to develop any of the Kammatthāna subjects, their Citta gradually becomes peaceful and free from external objects. They become collected just at the Citta but are not completely free from all objects; there is still feeling, thinking and consideration. When they try to forsake these subtle objects but are still unable to do so completely, this is called Upacāra prior to attaining APPANĀ.

2. The Citta becomes subtle until it completely forsakes the object that it is investigating. Even the breath that one breathes in and out will be indiscernible. This is called Appanā. With these symptoms there is, however, complete Sati, which does not take anything as its perch but it is aware of itself. When the Citta withdraws from this state and investigates objects and reasons about all Athadhammas, this is Upacāra after withdrawing from Appanā.

Upacāra Samādhi of both kinds is the best foundation for knowledge of Athadhamma and various conditions. This knowledge, however, is different to the knowledge that arises from visions/Nimittas, which has been dealt with already. This is because visions/Nimittas arise from Lokiya Jhāna and so are uncertain. In the case of the knowledge that is being referred to here, even if it arises from Lokiya Samādhi, the results are still certain (scientist use this level as their means of intellectual reasoning). If the knowledge arises from Lokuttara Samādhi it will bring about the extinction of the ĀSAVA (taints, such as sensual desire and ignorance).

To sum up, the knowledge that arises from visions/Nimittas and the knowledge that arises from Upacāra Samādhi is different in both value and grounding.

A subject that is worth further explanation here is “Appanā Samādhi”. Appanā Samādhi is Lokuttara⁵⁹. Most people who enter Appanā generally contemplate the in and out breaths as their object. When one gazes at the breath as one’s object and one comes to see the arising and the passing away or just the passing away, the Citta will gradually become finer until it successively lets go of all objects. It then comes together and is Appanā, as has been explained.

This state of Appanā puts an end to the breath being the measuring stick. Sometimes this is referred to as “Appanā Jhāna” because when the Citta is concentrated at this spot, there is no breath but

⁵⁹ When used by an Ariya.

there is complete Sati. At this stage the Citta is extremely pure and so one is unable to investigate anything.

Later, when the Citta has receded and is in Upacāra, as has been explained, it will be in a position to examine things. It will know all SABBA-ÑĒYYADHAMMAS⁶⁰ clearly and other things as well. It will have no visions/Nimittas, which were explained at the outset, but it will have knowledge which has reason as its foundation. This can be compared to relieving doubts completely.

Meditators sometimes attain Appanā Jhāna by investigating subjects other than ĀNĀPĀNASATI (mindfulness of the breath) as their Kammattāna. This is because when they focus on the breath as their object Appanā Jhāna does not happen. Later, when the Citta has become collected to the extent that the breath has disappeared, this is Appanā Jhāna.

This is the opinion of the author. It is not appropriate, however, for all meditators to take the opinion of the author as their guide because the ideas and opinions of everyone in the world are different. Even if people see the same thing at the same time, they may have varying understandings or make different suppositions about its description. This is then the cause of quarrels and arguments which have no end. The author thus begs you to train your meditation to the extent of Appanā and then compare this experience – with a Citta that has Dhamma – to the many ordinances laid down in textbooks. Do not be prejudice! The comparison will then be Paccattāṃ, arising just for oneself. This is the wish of the author.

⁶⁰ The five neyyadhamma, i.e. conditioned phenomena, the distinctive qualities of certain material phenomena (nipphanna), the conditioned characteristics of mind and matter, nibbāna, and concepts.

EPILOGUE

All Lokuttara Dhammas are established on the foundation of Lokiya Dhammas. The thirty-seven BODHIPAKKIYA which are classified in sections as Lokuttara arise first in RUPA NĀMA i.e., the body, which is Lokiya.

Visions/Nimittas and various knowledges that arise from Jhāna are a hindrance to people who are one eyed (that is focused on the development of Jhāna) but are a cause for the development of Paññā for people who have two eyes (that are focused on development with Samādhi and Paññā as its components). Swords and axes are of different kinds, some short, some sharp, etc., and are used for different kinds of work. However, people use them for the wrong purpose and so, apart from the fact that success will not result, this use may be harmful to the work or dangerous to the user.

VIPASSANU (false insights) and Vipassanā arise from the same base. When someone with no Paññā investigates incorrectly things become VIPASSANUPPAKILESA (corruptions of insight). However, when one investigates correctly, with YONISO MANASIKARA⁶¹ the situation can change and become Vipassanā.

When one examines Lokiya so that one knows it clearly that is:

1. seeing its causes in accordance with reality,
2. seeing its ill-effects and being tired of them, and
3. not being deluded or attached to it,

Lokiya changes and becomes Dhamma. However, when one misunderstands and is firmly attached, refusing to let go of Lokiya, then one's world will not remain the same. BRAHMALOKA may recede and become DEVALOKA. Devaloka may recede and become MANUSSALOKA and Manussaloka may become APĀYALOKA. Fluid

⁶¹ "The means which one prefers". This is a translation from the author's explanation. Normally rendered as, "wise consideration".

things tend to flow down to the lowest level in this manner. The hearts' of all beings tend to gravitate to low levels (namely evil) in a similar way.

When the situation is like this when one trains in meditation, even if one trains on one's own, one must be prepared to put one's life on the line. At the very least if one does not advance one must wish that one will never regress⁶². **Someone who cannot be so resolute can only hope to be a slave of the Kilesa throughout time!**

⁶² Upon being questioned the author said that this means that one must resolve never to regress by severing all paths that lead backwards.

Glossary

APĀYALOKA	The four realms of woe; being the hell realm, the animal realm, the realm of hungry ghosts and the demonic realm.
ĀNĀPĀNASATI	Mindfulness of the breath
APPANĀ	Absorption; the third level of concentration
ARIYA	Noble ones; those who have eliminated some or all of the ten spiritual fetters
ĀSAVA	Cankers; taints i.e., sensual desire, desire for existence, wrong views and Ignorance
ASUBHA	Loathsomeness; the ten contemplations of the foulness of the body
ATHADHAMMA	Titles or heading of Dhammas, such as Khandha or Bala; Dhamma
AVIJJĀ	Ignorance of reality; ignorance of the four Noble Truths
BHAVANGHA	A vacant mental state, empty of objects; in Abhidhamma it is the life-continuum or stream of consciousness
BHIKKHU	A monk
BODHI	Enlightenment

BODHIPAKKIYA	The 37 things pertaining to Enlightenment; 4 Foundations of Mindfulness, 4 Right Efforts, 4 Roads to Power, 5 Spiritual Faculties, 5 Spiritual Powers, 7 Factors of Enlightenment and the 8-fold Path.
BRAMHACARIYA	The holy life; chastity
BRAHMALOKA	The Brahma realm of existence
DEVALOKA	The Deva or, heavenly being, realm of existence
DHAMMA	All conditioned and unconditioned phenomena; the teachings of the Lord Buddha
EKAGGATĀRAMMAṆA	A state in which the Citta is one-pointed or, focused on a single object
EKAGGATĀSAMĀDHI	Synonymous with EkaggatĀrammaṇa
JHĀNA	Absorption gained by just gazing at an object
KĀMA	Sensuality
KĀMALOKA	Sensual realms
KAMMA	Volitional action; action that causes results
KAMMATTHĀNA	Subjects of meditation
KHANDHA	The five Aggregates: 1) Form 2) Feeling 3) Recognition 4) Mental formations and 5) Consciousness

KILESA	Defilements: Greed, Hatred and Delusion
LOKIYA	Mundane; worldly
LOKUTTARA	Beyond the mundane; non-worldly
MAGGA	The Noble Eightfold Path
MANUSSALOKA	The human realm
NĀMADHAMMA	Mental; of the mind; not of a physical or bodily nature
NĀMA-RUPA	Mind and body, even the very subtle manifestations of mind and body
ÑĀNA	Knowledge
ÑĀNADASSANA	Knowledge and insight
NIMITTA	Mark; sign; vision
NIVARANA	Hindrances to meditation: 1) sensual desire 2) ill-will 3) sloth and torpor 4) worry , and 5) doubt
PACCATTAM	Known by oneself, in the present
PAÑÑĀ	Wisdom
PATIMOKKHA	The two hundred and twenty seven precepts recited on the new and full moon days.
RUPA	Body; form; material
SABBAÑĒYYADHAMMA	Dhammas that are appropriate to know, to develop and to forsake; the teaching of the Lord Buddha

SABHĀVA DHAMMAS	Natural phenomena
SACCA	Truth; honesty
SADDHĀ	Faith
SAMĀDHI	Concentration
SĀMANERA	A novice
SAMATHA	Calmness
SANKHĀRAS	All condition phenomena; mental formations
SAÑÑĀ	Recognition; perception; memory; the third Khandha
SATI	Mindfulness; attentiveness
SATIPATTHĀNA	Establishing the four foundations of mindfulness
SILA	
SUKHA	Happiness
TANHĀ	Craving; the second Noble Truth
TILAKKHANA	ANICCA – Impermanence DUKKA – Suffering ANATTĀ – Not-self; without ownership
UPADĀNA	Attachment; clinging
UPOSATHA	Observance day; the full and new moon days
VINAYA	Law; the Bhikkhu discipline

VIMUTTI	Freedom; deliverance from suffering
VIPALLĀSA	Abnormalities; perversions
VIPASSANĀ	Meditation on the Tī-Lakkhana; development of insight
VIPASSANUPPAKILESA	Imperfections of insight

Thai Forest Tradition Terminology



6 Luang Poo Tate and Luang Dta Maha Boowa

A few terms used by the Thai forest meditation masters appear to cause confusion and controversy amongst some western Buddhist. This Appendix is the translator's attempt to clarify some of these terms. While this text is the work of the translator, it is primarily compiled from desanas (talks) and books by Luang Poo Tate and Luang Dta Maha Boowa.

The terms that seem to cause the most confusion and commentary, in Anglicized Thai, are Cit, Cit Derm, Jai, Cit Tae and Poo Roo.

I have to agree with some of the criticism, particularly the that the forest masters are often inconsistent in the way they use these terms. However, I think the inconsistencies are overcome if a basic understanding of the terms is the starting point. I hope that this Appendix can be the starting point for anyone who thinks that some of these terms are controversial or heretical.

The best place to start is with the term "Cit Tae". Cit is Thai for the Pali word Citta (discussed later), which is usually translated into English as "mind". Tae is often translated into English as "true" or "real" or "genuine". So, Cit Tae is often translated as the Genuine Citta. Or, if the Pali is translated into English, then the translation would be Genuine Mind. I prefer to retain the Pali and so I will refer to this term in English as "the Genuine Citta".

The Genuine Citta is "knowingness". It is the quality of awareness. It is free of defilement. It is boundless and timeless. It is void of any signs or expressions. It is the Citta that has been purified of all

Ignorance. It has become Nibbana/Dhamma Dhatu, beyond eternalism or annihilationism. The light that does not land on anything.

In the book *Arahattamagga Arahattaphala*⁶³, Luang Dta Maha Boowa is translated as saying, “The term “Genuine Citta” refers solely to the absolute purity, or sa-upādisesa-nibbāna, of the Arahant.”

Luang Poo Tate also defines this as the purest and real form of the Citta. He says it is attained at the time of *Maggasamangi*, when the components of the Eightfold Path coalesce into a single point. He defines it as a neutral singularity that is beyond the conventional world.

Where these two teachers may appear to differ is when describing the Genuine Citta as being *Anattā* (void of self) or not. Luang Dta Maha Boowa says that the laws of *Anicca* (impermanence), *Dukkha* (suffering) and *Anattā* only apply to the conventional world and not to the Genuine Citta. Luang Poo Tate says, “Even the quality of deathlessness - which is a quality or phenomenon free from fashioning conditions, and which is the only thing in a state of lasting oneness - is also said to be not-self, because it lies above and beyond everything else. No one can think it or pull it under his or her control.”⁶⁴

At first glance it may seem that the two teachers disagree. However, I think that any disagreement is purely linguistic and not conceptual. Luang Poo Tate’s description is entirely consistent with the words of the Lord Buddha when He said, *Sabbe Dhamma Anattā* (All phenomena, conditioned and unconditioned, are void of self). Luang Dta Maha Boowa is simply stating that the laws that govern the conventional, everyday world do not apply to the Genuine Citta and therefore there is no point in trying to describe the Genuine Citta in these terms. My opinion is that there is no disagreement between these two teachers on this matter.

⁶³ Translated by Ven. Silaratano.

⁶⁴ From the *Anatta* section, translated by Ven. Thanassaro, of *Autobiography of a Forest Monk*.

The next term that needs clarification is Cit, or Citta (I prefer to retain this Pali word as the translation of “mind” is not satisfactory). The Genuine Citta described above is a pure Citta. When used without qualification, the word Citta refers to the workings of a polluted “mind”, one driven by ignorance and defilement. The workings of the Citta are described as Nama Dhamma (mental phenomena) and consist of four factors; Vedanā (feelings), Sannā (perceptions), Sankhāra (moods and thoughts) and Viññāna (consciousness).

These four factors are only expressions of the Citta, they are not the Genuine Citta. Just like a smile or a frown is not the face, but neither can exist without the face. The forces that drive these expressions are ignorance, craving and clinging. When these forces have been eliminated, the Genuine Citta can shine through. When the forces are still active, the wheel of life continues, from birth of birth.

Cit Derm is a term that seems to cause the most confusion. It is often translated as the “Original Citta”. I believe that this is an inaccurate translation. The correct translation is “the Originating Citta”. This translation is consistent with Luang Poo Tate’s description when he quotes the Lord Buddha saying, “Manopubbangama dhamma” (All Dhammas are preceded by the heart). Luang Dta Maha Boowa says that the Originating Citta is the cause of Sammuti (conventional reality). Both teachers say this Citta is radiant but not pure. If it was pure, then there would have been no original birth.

Unfortunately, the term Originating Citta and Genuine Citta are sometimes interchanged and I think this is what some westerners find confusing. Clearly, when the Originating Citta is cleansed of ignorance and defilement at the time of Arahant’s Maggasamangi moment, it becomes the Genuine Citta, pure knowingness, the true nature of the Citta. This is why the terms may be interchanged.

Some critics of the Thai Forest tradition argue that the terms Genuine Citta and Originating Citta imply some sort of “self” or “atta” that gets reborn and is thus heresy. Neither of these terms implies any such notion. The pure Citta belongs to no one. It is not under the control of anyone. It is beyond conventional reality and therefore cannot be reborn. The Thai Forest tradition is therefore not heretical.

Jai is translated as Heart. Here Heart refers not to the physical organ but to the mental states associated with mood, emotion and feeling. Again, this term has caused some confusion because it is sometimes used to describe the neutral singularity achieved through concentration and sometimes as a synonym of Citta. Its most common use is to refer to the tranquil state of temporary relief from the gross defilements that is achieved through Jhana (absorption) and Appana Samadhi (One-pointedness). In these states, the Citta withdraws from sense objects and becomes focused on itself. This state of one-pointedness is referred to as the Heart. This is because, prior to absorption, consciousness appears to be in the chest and not the head.

The singularity here should not be confused with that of the Maggasamangi singularity. The singularity of the Heart is temporary and repeatable. The singularity of Maggasamangi is permanent⁶⁵ and only happens once for each stage of Ariya (Noble One) attainment.

Poo Roo translates as “the One Who Knows”. The One Who Knows is the Citta. It is the Viññāna component of the Citta. However, this must not be confused with the knowing nature of the pure Citta. Viññāna simply knows the six types of sense objects. It is impermanent and driven by ignorance, desire and clinging.

This term also seems to cause confusion as the “one” who knows seems to imply a part of our being, a self, that knows all. In reality, the Thai teachers use this concept as a clever means to train the mind to free itself from flitting from one sense object to another. It is a trick to get the meditator to withdraw from the outside world and concentrate on the internal world. By focusing on the one who knows the meditation subject the Citta is able to withdraw from all external sense objects to become the Heart. No permanent entity or being is implied by the term “The One Who Knows”.

Having said this, Luang Poo Tate said the real “One Who Knows” or the true nature of the Citta is not the same as the neutral singularity that is referred to as Heart. Luang Poo Tate said that, while the

⁶⁵ While the moments of Maggasamangi (one per stage of Ariya) are fleeting, the results of Maggasamangi are permanent and irrevocable.

singularity of the Heart energises the Citta, it is only when Maggasamangi and Maggapahāna (the moment the defilements are destroyed) of the Arahant is achieved that ignorance is destroyed. This is a unique singularity. This is when the real Knowingness emerges. This is unlike any other experience and so is indescribable.

It is my fervent wish that these interpretations assist in the reader's understanding of the Thai Forest Tradition. If I have fallen short, then I ask for your forgiveness.

Metta

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