

Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammāsambuddhassa

Homage to the Blessed, the Worthy, the Perfectly Self-Enlightened One

How to Make An End to Suffering

Do you want to make an end to suffering? If you do, please listen to the Kūṭaghāra Sutta of Sacca Saṃyutta:

Kūṭaghāra Sutta

“Bhikkhus, if anyone should speak thus: ‘Without having made the breakthrough to the Noble Truth of Suffering as it really is, without having made the breakthrough to the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering as it really is, without having made the breakthrough to the noble truth of the Cessation of Suffering as it really is, without having made the breakthrough to the noble truth of the Way Leading to the Cessation of Suffering as it really is, I will completely make an end to suffering’ – this is impossible.

“Just as, bhikkhus, if anyone should speak thus, ‘Without having built the lower storey of a peaked house, I will erect the upper storey,’ this would be impossible; so too, if anyone should speak thus: ‘Without having made the breakthrough to the Noble Truth of Suffering as it really is ... I will completely make an end to suffering’ – this is impossible.

“But, bhikkhus, if anyone should speak thus: ‘Having made the breakthrough to the Noble Truth of Suffering as it really is, having made the breakthrough to the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering as it really is, having made the breakthrough to the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering as it really is, having made the breakthrough to the noble truth of the Way Leading to the Cessation of Suffering as it really is, I will completely make an end to suffering’ – this is possible.

“Just as, bhikkhus, if anyone should speak thus: ‘Having built the lower storey of a peaked house, I will erect the upper storey,’ this would be possible; so too, if anyone should speak thus: ‘Having made the breakthrough to the Noble Truth of Suffering as it really is ... I will completely make an end to suffering’ – this is possible.

“Therefore, Bhikkhus, an exertion should be made to understand: ‘This is suffering.’ An exertion should be made to understand: ‘This is the origin of suffering.’ An exertion should be made to understand: ‘This is the cessation of suffering.’ An exertion should be made to understand: ‘This is the way leading to the cessation of suffering.’

It is very important to know the Four Noble Truths to escape from the round of rebirths. This fact is clearly shown in the Koṭigāma Sutta of Saṃyutta Nikāya:

Koṭigāma Sutta

On one occasion the Blessed One was dwelling among the Vajjians at Koṭigāma. There

the Blessed One addressed the bhikkhus thus: “Bhikkhus, it is because of not understanding and not penetrating the Four Noble Truths that you and I have roamed and wandered through this long course of saṃsāra. What four?

“It is, bhikkhus, because of not understanding and not penetrating the Noble Truth of Suffering that you and I have roamed and wandered through this long course of saṃsāra. It is because of not understanding and not penetrating the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering ... the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering ... the noble truth of the Way Leading to the Cessation of Suffering that you and I have roamed and wandered through this long course of saṃsāra.

“That Noble Truth of Suffering, bhikkhus, has been understood and penetrated. That Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering has been understood and penetrated. That Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering has been understood and penetrated. That Noble Truth of the Way Leading to the Cessation of Suffering has been understood and penetrated. Craving for existence has been cut off; the conduit to existence has been destroyed; now there is no more renewed existence.”

This is what the Blessed One said. Having said this, the Fortunate One, the Teacher, further said this:

*“Catunnaṃ ariyasaccānaṃ, yathābhūtaṃ adassanā;
saṃsitaṃ dīghamaddhānaṃ, tāsū tāsveva jātisū.*

*“Tāni etāni diṭṭhāni, bhavanetti samūhatā,
ucchinnaṃ mūlaṃ dukkhassa, natthidāni punabbhavo.” --*

*“Because of not seeing as they are
The Four Noble Truths,
We have wandered through the long course
In the various kinds of births.*

*“Now these truths have been seen;
The conduit to existence is severed;
Cut off is the root of suffering:
Now there is no more renewed existence.”*

The Noble Truth of Suffering

What is the Noble Truth of Suffering (dukkha-sacca)? In the Dhammacakkapavātana Sutta, the Buddha explains it in a brief way thus: ‘*In short, the five aggregates subject to clinging are suffering.*’ The five aggregates subject to clinging are objects of insight knowledge.

What are the five aggregates subject to clinging? They are

*rūpupādānakkhandha, vedanupādānakkhandha, saññupādānakkhandha, saṅkhāru-
pādānakkhandha, viññāṇupādānakkhandha,*

which mean the clinging aggregate of materiality, the clinging aggregate of feeling, the clinging aggregate of perception, the clinging aggregate of formations, the clinging aggregate of consciousness.

What is the clinging aggregate of materiality? In Khandhā Sutta of Khandhā Vagga Saṃyutta (S22, 48) the Buddha taught:

‘Yaṃ kiñci rūpaṃ atītānāgatapaccuppannaṃ ajjhataṃ vā bahiddhā vā olārikaṃ vā sukkhumaṃ vā hīmaṃ vā paṇitaṃ vā yaṃ dūre santike vā sāsavaṃ upādāniyaṃ ayaṃ vuccati rūpupādānakkhandho.’

This is the explanation of the Buddha. The meaning is:

‘Whatever materiality there is, be it past, future, or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near, all these types of materiality that are the objects of clinging or grasping are called the clinging aggregate of materiality.’

In the same way the Buddha explains the clinging aggregates of feeling, perception, formations and consciousness. So you should understand that the dukkha-sacca-dhammas (things pertaining to the Noble Truth of Suffering) not only include the present five aggregates subject to clinging but also the future and past, internal and external, gross and subtle, inferior and superior, far and near five aggregates subject to clinging.

Why are these five aggregates subject to clinging? Beings’ mind and bodies are composed of five aggregates. Due to ignorance, worldlings identify materiality as ‘I’, ‘mine’ or ‘my self.’ In this way, craving and clinging towards materiality occur. The same applies to craving and clinging towards feeling, perception, volitional formations, and consciousness. So these five aggregates are subject to clinging for worldlings, who have not seen things or dhammas as they really are. Actually, except supramundane mentality all aggregates are aggregates subject to clinging.

Without realizing the Four Noble Truths, one cannot attain Nibbāna. If you want to attain Nibbāna, you should try to realize the Four Noble Truths. Among the Four Noble Truths, dukkha-sacca is one. dukkha-sacca-dhammas include the aforementioned eleven types of five aggregates subject to clinging. So if you want to escape from the round of rebirths, you should try to understand all of them.

The Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering

What is the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering (samudaya-sacca)? In the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta the Buddha taught that craving is Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering (samudaya-sacca). In Nidāna Vagga Saṃyutta the Buddha taught that the dependent origination is also samudaya-sacca. So ignorance (avijjā), craving (taṇhā), clinging (upādāna), volitional formations (saṅkhāra), and kammic force (kamma) are all samudaya-sacca. In short, all wholesome kammic forces that can lead to renewed existence and all unwholesome kammic forces are samudaya-sacca. In the Sacca Vibhaṅga the Buddha taught samudaya-sacca in five ways:

1. Craving (taṇhā) is samudaya-sacca.
2. The ten defilements (greed, hatred, delusion, conceit, wrong view, doubt, sloth, restlessness, lack of moral shame, lack of moral dread) are also samudaya-sacca.
3. All unwholesome states (akusala dhamma) are samudaya-sacca.
4. All unwholesome states and three wholesome roots (alobha, adosa, amoha) that can lead to renewed existence are samudaya-sacca.
5. All wholesome states that can lead to renewed existence and all unwholesome states, or all wholesome kammic forces that can lead to renewed existence and all unwholesome kammic forces are samudaya-sacca.

Both dukkha-sacca dhammas and samudaya-sacca dhammas are objects of vipassanā insight knowledge, so if you want to practice vipassanā to make an end to suffering, first you should try to understand them.

The Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering

What is the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering (nirodha-sacca)? In the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta the Buddha taught that the remainderless cessation of craving is nirodha-sacca. In some other Suttas the Buddha taught that the remainderless cessation of dukkha-sacca is also nirodha-sacca. Why did the Buddha teach it in two ways? They are the same. Because of the remainderless cessation of craving, or because of the remainderless cessation of ignorance, craving, clinging, formations and kammic force, the five aggregates (dukkha-sacca) will completely cease without remainder. The five aggregates completely cease without remainder because of the cessation of causes. If the causes completely cease without remainder, the five aggregates will also completely cease without remainder. So they are the same. That is why sometimes the Buddha taught that the remainderless cessation of craving is nirodha-sacca, and sometimes He taught that the remainderless cessation of the five aggregates is nirodha-sacca.

Actually Nibbāna is nirodha sacca. The two types of cessation arise due to the Noble Path Knowledge, which takes Nibbāna as an object. Four types of Noble Path Knowledge, taking Nibbāna as an object, destroy defilements without remainder stage by stage. Due to the remainderless cessation of defilements, kamma cannot produce any aggregates after Parinibbāna, the final cessation. So five aggregates also cease without remainder. But to understand Nibbāna is very difficult for some disciples. Because of this reason the Buddha taught either of the two types of cessation to be nirodha sacca. Sometimes Nibbāna is called asaṅkhata dhātu, unconditioned element. Therefore asaṅkhata, Nibbāna, is a cause, two types of cessation are effects. So Nibbāna can be considered either as a cause or as an effect.

Nirodha-sacca can be either a cause or an effect. Again, the remainderless cessation of defilements is called Kilesa-Parinibbāna = the final cessation of defilements without remainder. The remainderless cessation of five aggregates is also called Kandha-Parinibbāna = the final cessation of five aggregates without remainder.

Furthermore the remainderless cessation of defilements is also called Saupadisesa-Nibbāna = having the substratum of life remaining, which means that although the defilements cease completely without remainder, the five aggregates still exist. The remainderless cessation of the five aggregates is also called Anupadisesa-Nirodha = the final cessation without any substratum, which means the final cessation of the five aggregates without remainder.

For example, the Buddha's remainderless cessation of defilements arose in Him when He became the Enlightened One. His Four Noble Paths, taking the unconditioned element (Nibbāna) as object, destroyed all defilements stage by stage without remainder at Gāyā. Forty-five years later he took Mahāparinibbāna, the final cessation of five aggregates without remainder at Kusinārā .

Nibbāna is the unconditioned element, which is the object of the supramundane Four Noble Paths and Fruitions. However before realising Nibbāna, during vipassana practice, there are two types of cessation that are taken as object. i.e. the remainderless cessation of defilements and the remainderless cessation of the five aggregates . The insight knowledge that realizes these objects is called Udaya-vaya-ñāṇa (the knowledge of the rising and passing away of formations).

The Noble Truth of the way Leading to the Cessation of Suffering

What is the Noble Truth of the way Leading to the Cessation of Suffering (magga-sacca)? It is the Noble Eightfold Path. Sometimes the Noble Eightfold Path is called '*magga-sacca*'. But in the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta, the Buddha called it '*dukkhanirodhagāminī paṭipadā ariyasacca*' i.e. the noble truth of the practice leading to the cessation of suffering. These two names have the same

meaning.

There are two types of the Noble Eightfold Path: mundane and supramundane. To arrive at the supramundane Noble Eightfold Path, you must first develop the mundane Noble Eightfold Path. The supramundane Noble Eightfold path, arises only once in any individuals mind stream, and so is not itself developed. The mundane path however is developed gradually according to the cultivation of the individual. In the mundane Noble Eightfold Path, while you are practising vipassanā, there are five factors of the Noble Eightfold Path present at the same time. For example, if you can discern the five aggregates and their causes, then you must pay attention to the three characteristics of these saṅkhāra-dhammas (conditioned things). Both dukkha-sacca-dhammas and samudaya-sacca-dhammas are called saṅkhāra-dhammas, formations. By seeing their impermanent nature, you must understand them as anicca. By seeing their nature of being oppressed by the arising and passing away, you must understand them as dukkha. By seeing their nature of not having a permanent self, you must understand them as anattā. While you are contemplating in this way, you know the impermanent nature, unpleasant nature and non-self nature of these saṅkhāra-dhammas. This knowledge is called Right View. The application of the mind to these saṅkhāra-dhammas and the impermanent nature, unpleasant nature and non-self nature of these saṅkhāradhammas is called Right Thinking. Right Thinking always arises together with Right View. The effort you exert to see the impermanent nature, unpleasant nature and non-self nature of these saṅkhāra-dhammas is called Right Effort. Mindfulness on the impermanent nature, unpleasant nature and non-self nature of these saṅkhāra-dhammas is called Right Mindfulness. Concentration on the impermanent nature, unpleasant nature and non-self nature of these saṅkhāra-dhammas is called Right Concentration. So while a meditator is practising vipassanā, five factors of the Noble Eightfold Path are present. The three of Right Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood are the training of virtue. Before you practise samatha and vipassanā, you must have undertaken the training of virtue. Thus altogether there are eight factors of the Noble Eightfold Path. But the three factors of the training of virtue arise separate from the other five factors. These three do not arise together with the vipassanā knowledge. It means they cannot arise together in the same consciousness moment, or within the same cognitive-process, in mundane noble path.

At the end of vipassanā practice, when a meditator realizes Nibbāna, the eight factors of the Noble Eightfold Path are present. They are called supramundane Noble Eightfold Path. Realizing Nibbāna is called Right View. The application of the mind to Nibbāna is called Right Thinking. The effort to realize Nibbāna is called Right Effort. Mindfulness on Nibbāna is called Right Mindfulness. Concentration on Nibbāna is called Right Concentration. The defilements that can cause offences against Right Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood are destroyed by Path knowledge. So these three factors also arise together with Path knowledge. Thus while a meditator realizes Nibbāna, all the eight factors of the Noble Eightfold Path are present.

Samādhī Sutta

How should you practice to know the Four Noble Truths? Please listen to the following passage from the Samādhī Sutta of Sacca Saṃyutta:

“Bhikkhus, develop concentration. A bhikkhu who is concentrated understands dhammas as they really are.

“And what does he understand as it really is? He understands as it really is: ‘This is suffering (dukkha-sacca).’ He understands as it really is: ‘This is the origin of suffering (samudaya-sacca).’ He understands as it really is: ‘This is the cessation of suffering (nirodha-sacca).’ He understands as it really is: ‘This is the way leading to the cessation of suffering

(magga-sacca).’

“Bhikkhus, develop concentration. A bhikkhu who is concentrated understands dhammas as they really are.

“Therefore, bhikkhus, an exertion should be made to understand: ‘This is suffering (dukkha-sacca).’ An exertion should be made to understand: ‘This is the origin of suffering (samudaya-sacca).’ An exertion should be made to understand: ‘This is the cessation of suffering (nirodha-sacca).’ An exertion should be made to understand: ‘This is the way leading to the cessation of suffering (magga-sacca).’”

So to know the Four Noble Truths you should first develop concentration. There are forty samatha meditation subjects for concentration practice. You may choose any of them. Here I would like to first explain ānāpānasati meditation, mindfulness of breathing, and then explain how you should try to realize the Four Noble Truths.

I should like to explain how to practice according to the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta. In the Sutta, the Buddha says thus:

Mindfulness of Breathing

‘Bhikkhus, how does a bhikkhu abide contemplating the body in the body?’

Here, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu goes to the forest, or to the foot of a tree or to a secluded place. Then he sits down cross-legged, keeps his upper body erect and establishes his mindfulness to the object of his meditation. He breathes in mindfully; he breathes out mindfully. When he breathes in long, he understands: “I breathe in long.” When he breathes out long, he understands: “I breathe out long.” When he breathes in short, he understands: “I breathe in short.” When he breathes out short, he understands: “I breathe out short.” He trains thus: “I shall breathe in experiencing the whole breath (body) clearly.” He trains thus: “I shall breathe out experiencing the whole breath (body) clearly.” He trains thus: “I shall breathe in tranquilizing the whole breath formations.” He trains thus: “I shall breathe out tranquilizing the whole breath formations.”

Just like a skilled turner or his apprentice, while he makes a long turn he understands: “I make a long turn.” While he makes a short turn, he understands: “I make a short turn.” In the same way, when a bhikkhu breathes in long, he understands: “I breathe in long.” When he breathes out long, he understands: “I breathe out long.” When he breathes in short, he understands: “I breathe in short.” When he breathes out short, he understands: “I breathe out short.” He trains thus: “I shall breathe in experiencing the whole breath (body) clearly.” He trains thus: “I shall breathe out experiencing the whole breath (body) clearly.” He trains thus: “I shall breathe in tranquilizing the whole breath formations.” He trains thus: “I shall breathe out tranquilizing the whole breath formations.”

This is The Buddha’s instruction on mindfulness of breathing, specially for the attainment of jhāna. In the passage, the word ‘here’ means in this Dispensation of The Buddha. By the word ‘here,’ dispensations other than the Buddha’s are excluded as they do not teach mindfulness of breathing in the complete way as it is taught in The Buddhadhamma. Outside The Buddha’s dispensation there is no one who can teach ānāpānasati in the complete way. It is taught only in The Buddha’s dispensation. For it is said:

‘Here we find a true recluse (samaṇa); other schools are empty of recluses.’

Suitable Places for Meditation

The Buddha points out suitable places for meditators in the passage: *'A bhikkhu goes to the forest, to the foot of a tree or to a secluded place.'* This makes clear what is an abode appropriate to the meditator for the cultivation of mindfulness.

The mind of the meditator has dwelt on visual objects and other sensual objects for a long time before he comes to meditate. He does not like to enter the road of meditation, because his mind is not tamed is not used to living without sensual pleasures. He is like a wild young bull who if he is harnessed to a cart always wants to run off the road. Before he comes to meditate, his mind constantly came into contact with various kinds of sensual objects, such as movies, pleasant music, delicious food, and enjoyable social life. And his mind took great delight therein. But now there are no movies, no music, etc. to please his eyes, ears, etc., and thus his mind is just like a fish taken out from water and put on the dry ground, jumping about in distress and longing for water. Now in-and-out breath is just like the dry ground; it is too monotonous and unsatisfying to his mind which is ever longing for sensual pleasures. While sitting, instead of concentrating on the breath, he spends much of his time dwelling in past sensual pleasures that he enjoyed, or in future sensual pleasures that he expects to enjoy. But this is just a waste of time and is not helpful to mental cultivation. Even if he practices in this way for his whole life there will be no improvement for him.

The Simile of A Wild Calf

Thus, in order to overcome his bad habit he should repeatedly bring his mind back to the breath, keeping his mind on it as long as possible. In this way he begins to develop a new habit of concentrating on the breath. It is just like a cowherd who wishes to tame a wild calf nourished entirely on the milk of a wild cow. He leads that calf away from the cow to a stout post firmly sunk in the ground and then ties it to it. When that calf jumps here and there it finds that it is impossible to run away. Eventually it tires of struggling and crouches down or lies down at that very post. In the same way, he who wants to tame the wild mind that has for a long time been nourished on visible and other sensual objects leads the mind away from them and ushers it into a forest, to the foot of a tree or to a secluded place. Then he ties that mind to the post of the object of foundation of mindfulness, such as the breath, with the rope of mindfulness. His mind will also jump here and there. When it cannot obtain the objects it had long grown used to and finds it impossible to break the rope of mindfulness and run away, it will finally sit or lie down at that very object by way of access and full absorption.

Therefore, the ancient commentators said:

As one who wants to break a wild young calf
Would tether it to a stout stake firmly, here,
In the same way the meditator should tie fast
His own mind to the meditation object.

In this way this abode becomes appropriate to the meditator. Therefore, it is said, *'This makes clear what abode is appropriate to the meditator for the cultivation of mindfulness.'*

Mindfulness of breathing is not easy to accomplish without leaving the neighbourhood of a village because sound is a thorn to absorption. In a place that is uninhabited it is easy for the meditator to take up this meditation subject. Therefore, The Blessed One pointed out the abode suitable for that with the words, *'goes to the forest, or to the foot of a tree, or to a secluded place.'*

The Buddha is like a master of the science of building sites because he pointed out the suitable abode for meditators.

After a master in the science of selecting building sites has seen a stretch of ground good for building a town and has considered it well from all sides, he advises: ‘Build the town here.’ When the building of the town is completed he receives high honour from the royal family. In the same way, after The Buddha has well considered from all points the abode suitable for the meditator he advises: ‘This meditation subject should be chosen.’ When Arahantship has gradually been reached by the meditator, he expresses his gratitude and admiration with the words: ‘Certainly, The Blessed One is the Supremely Awakened One.’ The Buddha receives great honour.

The Simile of A Leopard

The bhikkhu is comparable to a leopard. Like the leopard he lives alone in the forest and accomplishes his aim by overcoming those contrary to him, namely, the passions.

A great king of leopards hidden in the forest in grass-bush, jungle-bush or hill-thicket, seizes wild buffalos, elks, pigs and other beasts. In the same way, the bhikkhu devoting himself to the meditation subject gains the Four Noble Paths and Fruitions one after another. Therefore the ancient commentators said:

As a leopard lies in ambush and captures beasts,
So does this son of the Awakened One,
The striving man, the man of keen vision,
Having gone into the forest seizes therein
Fruition that truly is supreme.

And so The Blessed One said ‘goes to the forest’ and so forth to point out the suitable place for fruitful exertion in meditation.

Although you are now neither in the forest nor at the foot of a tree, and the place here is crowded with many meditators, if you are able to ignore the presence of others, put aside all other things and just be aware of your meditation object, this place will be just like a secluded place to you. Furthermore, group meditation does help you arouse energy and progress faster in meditation.

To Breathe In and Out Mindfully

‘*Keeps his body erect*’ means to keep the vertebrae in such a position that every segment of the backbone is placed upright and end to end throughout. The body is held straight from the waist upwards. The Buddha recommends this posture because it is the most stable and comfortable posture, and helps to keep your mind calm yet alert.

What does ‘*establishes his mindfulness to the object of his meditation*’ mean? It means to fix the mind by directing it towards the meditation object. For example, if you are practising ānāpānasati, you must establish mindfulness towards the breath. If you are practising four-elements meditation, you must establish mindfulness towards the four elements. You should direct your attention towards your meditation object, not towards your family.

‘*He breathes in mindfully; he breathes out mindfully,*’ means that he breathes in and out without abandoning mindfulness. Mindfulness is very important. Here mindfulness means remembrance. If you keep remembering the breath around your nostrils or upper lip, your mindfulness as well as concentration will become stronger and stronger. When concentration improves, you will see a nimitta. If you concentrate on the nimitta firmly, you will attain all the four jhānas.

The Long Breath and Short Breath

How should you breathe in mindfully? How should you breathe out mindfully? The Buddha instructed that:

‘When he breathes in long, he understands: ‘I breathe in long.’ When he breathes out long, he understands: ‘I breathe out long.’

He breathes in a long breath during a long stretch of time, and he breathes out a long breath during a long stretch of time, and he breathes in and out long breaths during long stretches of time.

As he breathes in and out long breaths each during a long stretch of time, zeal (chanda), which is very important for meditation, arises in him. With zeal he breathes in a long breath finer than the last during a long stretch of time. With zeal he breathes out a long breath finer than the last during a long stretch of time. And with zeal he breathes in and out long breaths finer than the last, each during a long stretch of time.

As with zeal the bhikkhu breathes in and out long breaths finer than the last, joy (pīti) arises in him. With joy he breathes in a long breath finer than the last during a long stretch of time. With joy he breathes out a long breath finer than the last during a long stretch of time. And with joy he breathes in and out long breaths finer than the last, each during a long stretch of time.

To have joy (pīti) in meditation is very important for higher concentration. If you never have joy while meditating, your concentration cannot improve. When will joy appear? If you have removed agitation and wandering thoughts, and are able to concentrate on the whole long subtle breath completely, your concentration will improve. When your concentration deepens, joy will arise in your mind.

Then as the bhikkhu breathes in and out with joy long breaths each finer than the last, his mind turns away from the long in-and-out-breathings, but turns to the nimitta and with equanimity (upekkhā) stands firm.

The same meditation procedures hold for the passage for sometimes the breath will be short and sometimes long. This is natural.

‘When he breathes in short, he understands: “I breathe in short.” When he breathes out short, he understands: “I breathe out short.”’

The Whole Breath

As regards the passage:

‘He trains thus: “I shall breathe in experiencing the whole breath (body) clearly.” He trains thus: “I shall breathe out experiencing the whole breath (body) clearly.”’

He trains himself with the following idea: ‘I shall breathe in making known, making clear to myself the beginning, middle, and end of the whole body of in-breaths. I shall breathe out making known, making clear, to myself the beginning, middle, and end of the whole body of out-breaths. ‘ And he breathes in and out with consciousness associated with the knowledge that makes known, makes the breaths clear to himself.

In this case you should not misunderstand that you have to note the breath as: ‘this is the beginning, this is the middle, and this is the end.’ Just knowing the whole breath continuously is enough.

To a bhikkhu in the tenuous, diffused body of in-breathing or body of out-breathing only the be-

ginning is clear, not the middle or the end. He is able to take up only the beginning. In the middle and at the end he has trouble. To another only the middle is clear and not the beginning or the end. To a third only the end is clear. The beginning and the middle are not clear and he is able to take up only the breath at the end. He has trouble at the beginning and at the middle. But to a fourth all the three stages are clear and he is able to take up all. He has trouble nowhere. To point out that this meditation subject should be developed following the example of the fourth one, The Buddha said: *'He trains thus: 'I shall breathe in experiencing the whole breath (body) clearly.' He trains thus: 'I shall breathe out experiencing the whole breath (body) clearly.'*

At the early stage of this meditation there is nothing else to be done but just breathing in and out, as it is said: *When he breathes in long, he understands: 'I breathe in long' When he breathes out long, he understands: 'I breathe out long.' When he breathes in short, he understands: 'I breathe in short.' When he breathes out short, he understands: 'I breathe out short.'* Thereafter he should endeavour to bring about knowledge and so forth, therefore it is said, *'I shall breathe in experiencing the whole breath body.'* Knowing the breath clearly is the training of wisdom; concentrating on the breath is the training of concentration; restraining the mind from defilements is the training of morality. He should endeavour to fulfill the three trainings while breathing.

The Subtle Breath

As regards the passage:

'He trains thus: 'I shall breathe in tranquilizing the whole breath formations.' He trains thus: 'I shall breathe out tranquilizing the whole breath formations.'

He thinks: I shall breathe in and out, quieting, making smooth, making tranquil and peaceful the activity of the in-and-out-breathing. In that way, he trains himself.

In this connection, coarseness, fineness, and calm should be understood thus: Without contemplative effort, the body and the mind of this bhikkhu are distressed and coarse. The in-and-out-breathings, too, are coarse and do not proceed calmly. The nasal aperture becomes insufficient and he has to breathe through the mouth. But when the body and the mind are under control then the body and the mind become placid and tranquil. When these are restful, the breathing proceeds so finely that the bhikkhu doubts whether or not the breathings are going on.

The breathing of a man who runs down from a hill, puts down a heavy burden from his head, and stands still is coarse. His nasal aperture becomes insufficient and he breathes through the mouth, too. But when he rids himself of his fatigue, takes a bath and a drink of water, and puts a wet cloth over his heart and is lying in the shade, his breathing becomes fine. And he is at a loss to know whether it exists or not. Comparable to that man is the bhikkhu whose breaths become so fine after the taking up of the practice of contemplation that he finds it difficult to say whether he is breathing or not. What is the reason for this? Without taking up the meditation he does not perceive, concentrate on, reflect on, or think over, the question of calming the gross breaths. But with the meditation he does. Therefore, the activity of the breath becomes finer in the time in which meditation is practised than in the time in which there is no practice. So the ancient commentators said: *'In the agitated mind and body the breath is of the coarsest kind. In the unexcited body, it is subtle.'*

How does he train himself with the thought: *'I shall breathe in tranquilizing the whole breath formations. I shall breathe out tranquilizing the whole breath formations.'*? What are the whole breath formations (kāyaśāṅkhāra)? Those things of the breaths, bound up with the breath, are the whole breath formations. He trains himself in causing the whole breath formations to become composed, to become smooth and calm. He trains himself thinking thus: Tranquilizing the whole breath formations by (quieting) the bodily activities of bending forwards, sideways, all over, and back-

wards, and calming the moving, quivering, vibrating, and quaking of the body, I shall breathe in and out. I shall breathe in and out, tranquilizing the whole breath formations by way of whatever peaceful and fine bodily activities of non-bending of the body forwards, sideways, all over and backwards, of non-moving, non-quivering, non-vibrating, and non-quaking .

So far I have shown you the four stages of developing concentration using mindfulness of breathing: to concentrate on

- (1) the long breath,
- (2) the short breath,
- (3) the whole breath, and
- (4) the subtle breath.

To Combine in One

In this case you should understand that it is possible for three stages, the long, whole and subtle breaths, to combine in one. That means while you are breathing a long subtle breath, you must try to know the whole long subtle breath. If the breath is not yet subtle, you should incline your mind to have subtle breath. If you try in this way, when your concentration improves, the whole breath will become subtle. You should then try to know with strong zeal the whole long subtle breath. If you practise so, you may succeed in attaining jhānas.

It is also possible for three stages, the short, whole and subtle breaths, to combine in one. So while breathing a long subtle breath you should know the three, the long breath, whole breath and subtle breath, together. And while breathing a short subtle breath, you should know the whole short subtle breath. If you practise in this way with enough zeal and joy, your concentration will improve. When your concentration improves, the breath becomes finer and finer. At that time you should not become disappointed with the thought: ‘Oh, my breath is not clear.’ Because it will make you agitated. Consequently your concentration will decrease. In fact, it is good to have the breath become subtle. Why? If a nimitta appears then, and your mind sticks to it, you will not be disturbed by the breath. If, however, your breath is gross, you may know the nimitta as well as the breath; your mind will have two objects. With two objects your mind is not collected, and your concentration will not improve. So you should be happy when the breath becomes finer and finer.

You must, however, not purposely make the breath long, short or subtle. If you do so your effort and the enlightenment factor of investigation of dhamma will be excessive. When these two are excessive, concentration will decrease. So you should just let your breathing continue in a natural way. This is the best. Sometimes the breath is long, and sometimes it is short. No problem. Whether the breath is long or short you should try to know the whole breath (body) clearly. When your concentration improves further, you should try to know the whole subtle breath. When it is long you should try to know the whole long subtle breath. When it is short you should try to know the whole short subtle breath.

If you can concentrate on the whole subtle breath for more than one or two hours in every sitting your concentration will improve further. You should then take great care to practise continuously. Please stop thinking. Please stop talking. In every posture, standing, walking, sitting, or lying down, you must concentrate on only the breath. You should not pay attention to any other objects.

The Nimitta and Light

If you can concentrate on the whole subtle breath, whether it is long or short, continuously for more than one hour in every sitting, successively for more than three days, usually the nimitta will appear. For some meditators, the nimitta appears first. For some other meditators, however, light

appears first. You should differentiate the nimitta and light. They are two different things, just like the sun and sunlight.

Light is everywhere, in every direction surrounding your body. Except the rebirth-linking consciousness, every consciousness that arises dependent on the heart-base produces many kalāpas, small particles, called mind-produced kalāpas. If you analyse those kalāpas, you will see at least eight types of materiality, namely, the earth-element, water-element, fire-element, wind-element, colour, odour, flavour, and nutritive essence. If the consciousness is a concentrated and powerful one, the colour it produces is bright. Further, the fire-elements of those kalāpas produce many new kalāpas called temperature-produced kalāpas, which are spreading not only internally but also externally. In each of them there is also bright colour, the light. When the concentrated mind is very strong and powerful, the light spreads very far. When it is less powerful, the light spreads only a few inches. The colours of mind-produced kalāpas are only internal, whereas the colours of temperature-produced kalāpas are both internal and external. The collection of bright colours is the brilliant light that appears around your body in every direction.

Anyway you should not concentrate on the light, but only the breath. At that time the breath is usually subtle. To know the subtle breath strong and powerful effort, mindfulness and investigation of dhamma are necessary. If you know the breath clearly with these qualities, your concentration will improve. When your concentration improves, usually the ānāpāna nimitta appears, and it appears only at your nostrils.

What is the Ānāpāna Nimitta

What is the ānāpāna nimitta? When your concentration improves, your breath appears as a nimitta. The breath is also produced by mind. If you discern the four elements of your breath, you will see many kalāpas. If you analyse them, you will see at least nine types of materiality, namely, the earth-element, water-element, fire-element, wind-element, colour, odour, flavour, nutritive essence and sound. The colour is bright. As I explained before, the fire-elements of those kalāpas also produce many new kalāpas with bright colour. It is the bright colours of those kalāpas which produce the nimitta.

When the nimitta first appears, it is usually not stable. At that time you should not concentrate on it, but only the breath. When your concentration on the breath becomes stable and deep enough, the nimitta will also become stable. In the beginning the nimitta is gray. When concentration improves the nimitta becomes white, and then transparent; the transparent nimitta is called a paṭibhāga nimitta. Depending on your perception, the nimitta may change in shape and colour. Sometimes it may be long. Sometimes it may be round. Sometimes it may be red. Sometimes it may be yellow. But you should not pay attention to its colour or shape, otherwise it will keep on changing. If it is so, your concentration will decrease. You will not attain any jhāna. Thus you should concentrate on the breath until the nimitta unifies with the breath and your mind automatically sticks to the nimitta. You should then concentrate on only the nimitta, not the breath. If you sometimes concentrate on the breath, and sometimes concentrate on the nimitta, your concentration will diminish gradually.

Again you should not pay attention to the specific characteristics of four elements of the breath as well as the nimitta, such as – hardness, roughness, heaviness and softness, smoothness, lightness, flowing and cohesion, heat and coldness, supporting and pushing. If you pay attention to them, you are practicing the four elements meditation, but not ānāpānasati meditation.

Again you should not pay attention to the breath or nimitta as anicca, dukkha or anattā. These are general characteristics. Why? The objects of vipassanā are saṅkhāras, formations. They are ultimate materiality and ultimate mentality and their causes. The breath and nimitta are not ultimate realities, but are compactness. So they are not the object of vipassanā. If you pay attention to them

as anicca, dukkha, and anatta, you are neither practicing ānāpāna nor vipassana.

If your ānāpāna-nimitta is whitish colour and then if you concentrate on it well, it will become whiter and then as bright as the morning star. Your mind will then automatically sink into the nimitta. If your mind completely sinks into nimitta without moving for a long time, then that concentration is called absorption concentration. To beginners this is a very important stage. The same process applies to ānāpāna-nimitta of other colours.

Two Types of Absorption

There are two types of absorption; upacāra-jhāna and appana-jhāna. Appana-jhāna is the complete uninterrupted absorption of the mind with the object such as ānāpāna-paññā nimitta. At this stage there is no arising of the bhavaṅga mind state between consciousness moments that know the object. The jhāna factors are strong enough to hold the mind on the object without any interruption. In upacāra-jhāna or access jhāna, the mind begins to be absorbed into the object for increasing periods, but these periods are sometimes interrupted by the arising of bhavaṅga mind states. Here, because the five jhāna factors are not strong enough, the mind is not yet absorbed beyond any distraction.

The commentary explains this stage with the example of a baby universal monarch. The queen who bears a baby universal monarch sees her son in her womb with her physical eyes. At that time she carefully guards her son against misfortune. So too you should guard your nimitta with great care and respect. You must practise with ardour, comprehension and mindfulness, because a lazy, hazy and forgetful mind cannot attain any distinction in mental development. In every posture you must be mindful of and concentrate on the nimitta. For example, before you start to walk, you should stand at a corner of a walking path and concentrate on your breath. When the nimitta appears and is stable, you should concentrate on it. When your concentration becomes strong and powerful, you should walk slowly with your mind concentrating only on the nimitta.

To be able to concentrate on the nimitta in every posture is a kind of will power. You have this will power. So please practise hard. You can succeed. If you practise continuously very soon your mind will sink into the nimitta completely. This is absorption, also called jhāna. Although for the first few times the absorption does not last long, you should not give up. You should practise again and again. If you practise hard with strong and powerful comprehension and mindfulness you will succeed in maintaining your concentration on the nimitta for a long time. In the beginning stage, staying in absorption must be emphasised more. Reflecting on the jhāna factors, on the other hand, must be restrained. If you reflect on the jhāna factors frequently, your concentration will decrease. So please try staying in absorption for increasing length of time.

Reflecting on the Jhāna Factors

Your absorption must be deep and stable. When it is deep and stable for more than one or two hours, it is a good achievement. I would advise you to practise until you are able to stay in the absorption for at least three hours. If you are able to absorb in the nimitta for more than one, two or three hours in every sitting for three consecutive days, you may then reflect on the jhāna factors. To do so you must first stay in deep absorption for more than one hour. Having emerged from it, you should discern the interior of your heart to discern bhavaṅga, life continuum, which arises dependent on your heart-base. In the beginning, usually many meditators are not able to differentiate between bhavaṅga and the nimitta. When they discern bhavaṅga, they see the same ānāpāna nimitta inside the heart. They think that is bhavaṅga. Actually that is not bhavaṅga. Bhavaṅga is like a mirror inside the heart.

'Pabhāsara midam bhikkhave cittaṃ'—

'bhikkhus bhavaṅga consciousness is brilliant.'

This is mentioned in the accharāsaṅghāṭa chapter of the Aṅguttara Nikāya. Bhavaṅga is a kind of consciousness. It is not brightness, but it can produce brilliant light. It can produce many mind-produced kalāpas. And the fire-elements of those kalāpas further produce many temperature-produced kalāpas. The colours of those two types of kalāpas are bright. The degree of brightness depends on the power of wisdom associated with bhavaṅga consciousness. The higher the power of wisdom the brighter the light is. So if the force of kamma that produces bhavaṅga is that of insight knowledge, the power of wisdom will be very high, and the light will be very bright and powerful. Thus bhavaṅga is one thing, and light is another.

You should reflect on bhavaṅga for only a few seconds, because reflecting on bhavaṅga for a longer time, for example, two or three minutes, your heart may be painful and your concentration will decrease. So if you are able to discern bhavaṅga within a few seconds, it is fine. If not, you should again concentrate on the ānāpāna nimitta until your absorption is deep and the nimitta is brilliant. You may then try to discern bhavaṅga again. If you practise in this way again and again, you may understand bhavaṅga. When you are able to discern bhavaṅga, you should again concentrate on the ānāpāna nimitta until your absorption is deep and the nimitta is brilliant. Then when you discern bhavaṅga, you will see that the nimitta appears inside bhavaṅga, just like when you look into a mirror you see your face inside the mirror. You may then discern the five jhāna factors, namely, applied thought (vitakka), sustained thought (vicāra), joy (pīti), bliss (sukha) and one-pointedness (ekagata).

Applied thought is the application of the mind to the paṭibhāga nimitta. Sustained thought is maintaining the mind on the paṭibhāga nimitta. Joy is the liking towards the paṭibhāga nimitta. Bliss is happiness or pleasant feeling experiencing the paṭibhāga nimitta. One-pointedness is the unification of the mind with the paṭibhāga nimitta. When you discern the five jhāna factors, first you should discern them one by one. Having done this, you may discern the five jhāna factors simultaneously. If you are able to do so, you should then develop the five masteries, as follows:

The Five Masteries

First, you should practise entering jhāna whenever you want to enter jhāna. Second, you should try to emerge from jhāna whenever you want to do so. Third, you should stay in jhāna for one, two or three hours according to your determination. The fourth and fifth are actually done in just one step, that is to say, to reflect on the jhāna factors when you want to reflect on them. Reflecting jhāna factors by mind-door adverting consciousness (manodvārāvajjana) is called mastery of āvajjana, and by impulsion consciousness within the same process of the āvajjana is called mastery of pacavekkhana. This is the only difference. If you succeed in developing the five masteries, you can practise the second jhāna, the third jhāna and the fourth jhāna systematically. In the first jhāna the breath becomes very subtle; in the second it is subtler; in the third jhāna it is even subtler; and in the fourth jhāna it stops completely.

I have inquired of many meditators to find out which jhāna they consider the best. Many of them said the second jhāna is better than the first jhāna; the third jhāna is better than the second jhāna; and the fourth jhāna is the best of these four.

This achievement is due to will power. Everybody has the will power. You should practise diligently in The Buddha's dispensation which is a rare opportunity. (viriyavato kimana kammam na sijjhati ! / for the person who makes a strong effort , with enough determination and wisdom , there is nothing which is beyond his reach . If you practise hard everything is possible for you. You can

succeed in attaining all the four jhānas.

After attaining the fourth jhāna if you want to practise other samatha meditation subjects, such as the ten kasiṇas, four sublime states (brahmavihāra), you can do so easily. If you want to practise vipassanā based on the fourth ānāpāna jhāna, you can do so. There are two types of persons who practise vipassanā based on the fourth ānāpāna jhāna: an assāsapassāsakammika person and a jhānakammika person. They translate the assāsapassāsakammika person as an ānāpāna meditator and the jhānakammika person as a jhāna meditator. This translation is inaccurate. So I will explain how these two types of person practise vipassanā based on the fourth ānāpāna jhāna.

In samatha meditation there are forty subjects, whereas in vipassanā meditation there are only two subjects, namely the discernment of materiality (rūpakammaṭṭhāna) and the discernment of mentality (nāmakammaṭṭhāna). Sometimes they are called rūpa pariggaha and arūpa pariggaha respectively. If a meditator who has attained the fourth ānāpāna jhāna discerns materiality first, he is called an assāsapassāsakammika person. If he discerns mentality first he has to discern the five jhāna factors first, and he is called a jhānakammika person.

Assāsapassāsakammika Person and How to Discern Materiality

An assāsapassāsakammika person should, having emerged from the fourth ānāpāna jhāna, discern the twelve characteristics of the four elements in the breath, namely, hardness, roughness, heaviness, softness, smoothness, lightness, flowing and cohesion, heat and coldness, supporting and pushing. In terms of groups there are four elements: hardness, roughness, heaviness, softness, smoothness and lightness comprise the earth-element; flowing and cohesion comprise the water-element; heat and coldness comprise the fire-element; and supporting and pushing comprise the wind-element. He should discern the four elements of the breath systematically. If he does so he will see many kalāpas. If he analyses those kalāpas, he will be able to see that there are at least nine types of materiality in each kalāpa, namely, the earth-element, water-element, fire-element, wind-element, colour, odour, flavour, nutritive essence and sound. These nine types of materiality are called the body of in-and-out breath (assāsapassāsa kāya).

After discerning the body of in-and-out breath he should reflect thus: ‘Dependent upon what does it arise?’ While he is reflecting he sees that it arises dependent on a base. What is the base? According to the Abhidhamma there are six bases, namely, the eye-base, ear-base, nose-base, tongue-base, body-base, and heart-base. According to the Suttanta method the base is the produced body (karajakāya), which comprise of four types of materiality: (1) kammaja-rūpa – materiality produced by kamma, (2) cittaja-rūpa – materiality produced by mind, (3) utuja-rūpa – materiality produced by the fire-element, and (4) āhāraja-rūpa – materiality produced by nutritive essence. Why are they different? Because the Suttanta method is for practical study, whereas the Abhidhamma method is to show the exact meaning. For example, if you discern the four elements in your eyes systematically, you will see six types of kalāpas. One of them is the eye-decad kalāpa (cakkhudasaka-kalāpa). If you analyse it you will see its ten types of materiality, namely, the earth-element, water-element, fire-element, wind-element, colour, odour, flavour, nutritive essence, life faculty, and eye transparent-element (cakkhupasāda). Of the ten, only the eye transparent-element is the eye-base. Although the remaining nine types of materiality are not the eye-base, they are accompanied by the eye-base, because they all arise and pass away simultaneously, as a group. If you are unable to analyse them you cannot break down the compactness of group (samūha ghana) to see ultimate materiality. Since without analysing kalāpas we cannot see the eye-base, the Suttanta method says that the base is the produced body (karaja kāya). The explanation is the same for the ear-base, nose-base, tongue-base, body-base and heart-base.

Cakkhu-dasaka-kalāpa cannot arise alone. If you discern the four elements in your eye systematically you will see many types of kalāpas. If you touch your eye with your hand, you know the touching sensation, because in your eye there are the body-decad kalāpas (kāya-dasaka-kalāpa). The body consciousness (kāya-viññāṇa), which knows the touching sensation, arises dependent upon only the body-base. In your eyes there are also the sex-decad kalāpas (bhāva-dasaka-kalāpa). Because of its sex-determining materiality (bhāva rūpa) you can easily understand, ‘this is a woman,’ and ‘this is a man.’ The eye-decad kalāpa, body-decad kalāpa and sex-decad kalāpa are produced by past kamma, so they are called kamma-produced materiality (kammaja-rūpa). Because you can wink your eyes at will, so we know that in your eyes there is also mind-produced materiality (cittaja-rūpa) which causes the bodily intimation that results in winking. In every kalāpa there is the fire-element. The fire-element can produce many generations of kalāpas called temperature-produced materiality (utuja-rūpa). In every kalāpa there is nutritive essence (ojā). When nutriment-produced nutritive essence (āhāraja-ojā) supports this nutritive essence, it produces new generations of kalāpas called nutriment-produced materiality (āhāraja-rūpa). So in your eyes there are altogether six types of kalāpas. If you analyse them, you will see there are altogether fifty-four types of materiality. For the purpose of breaking up compactness you must try to see these fifty-four types of materiality.

Then you should discern the six sense bases and the forty-two parts of the body in the same way. In each part of the body usually there are four types of materiality: kamma-produced, mind-produced, temperature-produced and nutriment-produced.

Twenty-eight Types of Materiality

The commentary explains what the produced body (karaja kāya) is: ‘The produced body is the composed of the four great primaries and the materiality derived from these.’ What does this mean? In each kalāpa there are four primary elements, the earth-element (paṭhavī-dhātu), water-element (āpo-dhātu), fire-element (tejo-dhātu) and wind-element (vāyo-dhātu), and also derived materiality such as colour, odour, flavour and nutritive essence. In fact, altogether there are twenty-eight types of materiality: the four primary elements and twenty-four types of derived materiality. The twenty-four types of materiality are:

The Five Types of Transparent Materiality (pasāda-rūpa):

1. Eye transparent-element (cakkhu-pasāda)
2. Ear transparent-element (sota-pasāda)
3. Nose transparent-element (ghāna-pasāda)
4. Tongue transparent-element (jivhā-pasāda)
5. Body transparent-element (kāya-pasāda)

The Four Types of sense-field materiality (gocara-rūpa):

1. Colour (vaṇṇa)
2. Sound (sadda)
3. Odour (gandha)
4. Flavour (rasa)

Nutritive-essence (ojā)

Life-faculty (jīvitindriya)

Heart-base materiality (hadaya-rūpa)

The Two Types of Sex-Determining Materiality (bhāva-rūpa):

1. Male sex materiality (purisa-bhāva-rūpa)

2. Female sex materiality (itthī-bhāva-rupa)

The ten types of not-real materiality are:

1. Space element (ākāsa-dhātu)
2. Bodily intimation (kāyaviññatti)
3. Verbal intimation (vacīviññatti)
4. Lightness of real materiality (lahutā)
5. Softness of real materiality (mudutā)
6. Weldiness of real materiality (kammaññatā)
7. Accumulation of real materiality (upacaya)
8. Continuity of real materiality (santati)
9. Aging of real materiality (jaratā)
10. Impermanence of real materiality (aniccatā)

You must discern all these types of materiality.

If you contemplate only materiality as impermanent, suffering and non-self, it is not enough for you to realise Nibbāna. You must contemplate mentality also as impermanent, suffering and non-self. When you are discerning mentality, jhāna dhamma is the best for you to discern first since you are already proficient in discerning the five jhāna factors. Then you must discern sensual plane mentality (kāmvācaraanāma) according to cognitive-processes and process-free consciousnesses (vīthi and vīthimutta cittas). Therefore the commentary explains: Then he cognizes the mentality in the pentad of mental formations beginning with contact (phassapañcamaka), i.e. contact, feeling, perception, formations, and consciousness. Of the five, feeling is the aggregate of feeling; perception is the aggregate of perception; contact and formations are the aggregate of formations; and consciousness is the aggregate of consciousness. Altogether there are four types of mental aggregates. Twenty-eight types of materiality comprise the aggregate of materiality. Altogether there are five aggregates. Among the five aggregates, the commentary mentions only contact and volition for the aggregate of formations, because they are the predominant factors in the aggregate of formations. When these two predominant factors are mentioned, the rest of the formations are also included. It is like a royal procession and such like. When the king is mentioned his retinue is included.

After discerning materiality and mentality, he examines their causes. He sees that the main causes of the five clinging aggregates are ignorance (avijjā), craving (taṇhā), clinging (upādāna), volitional formations (saṅkhāra) and kamma. They were generated by him in his previous life. They produced the rebirth-linking consciousness together with the remaining four clinging aggregates in the present life. He should try to see the causal relationship between causes and effects. This is the principle of Dependent Origination. Then he concludes that materiality and mentality are simply conditions, and things produced from conditions, and that besides these there is neither a living being nor a person. He then transcends doubt as to the nature of materiality and mentality and their causes.

The meditator who has transcended doubt contemplates the three characteristics, impermanence, suffering, and non-self, of materiality, mentality and their causes, and gradually reaches Arahantship. This type of person is called an assāpassāsakammika person.

Jhānakammika Person

I should like to explain the jhānakammika person. Having attained ānāpāna jhānas, a jhānakammika person discerns mentality first before discerning materiality. Since when he was practising samatha meditation he could easily discern the jhāna factors, when he begins to practise vipassanā he discerns the jhāna factors first. Then he discerns the mental formations associated with the jhāna

factors. Those jhāna factors and mental formations are called jhāna dhammas. After discerning them he must examine thus: depending on what do these jhāna dhammas arise? Then he sees that they arise dependent on the heart-base. The heart-base is, according to the Suttanta explanation, the produced body (karaja kāya) comprising four types of materiality: kamma-produced materiality, mind-produced materiality, temperature-produced materiality and nutriment-produced materiality. Then he must also discern sensual plane mentality and all other materiality.

The jhāna dhammas and sensual plane mentality are mentality and the produced body is materiality. Having discerned them, he searches for their causes. He sees the causes by comprehending the sequence of dependent origination beginning with ignorance. He concludes that materiality and mentality comprise simply conditions and things produced by conditions and that besides these, there is neither a living being nor a person. Thus he transcends doubt.

The meditator who has transcended doubt contemplates the three characteristics, impermanence, suffering, and non-self, of materiality, mentality and their causes, and gradually reaches Arahantship. This type of person is called a jhānakammika person.

If you understand this explanation you will understand the following teachings of The Buddha. In the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta, The Buddha taught vipassanā meditation based on ānāpānasati as follows:

‘Thus he abides contemplating the body in the body internally. Or he abides contemplating the body in the body externally. Or he abides contemplating the body in the body both internally and externally.’

This is the beginning stage of vipassanā for a bhikkhu who has practised ānāpānasati up to the fourth jhāna. What is the ‘body (kāya)’? According to the Paṭisambhidāmagga there are three types of body:

- (1) the body of in-and-out breath (assāsapassāsa kāya),
- (2) the produced body (karaja kāya), and
- (3) the body of mentality (nāma kāya).

I have explained them before. I think you should have understood them by now.

How to Discern Mentality

I have explained how to discern materiality in brief. Now I should like to explain how to discern mentality. If you want to discern, for example, the first ānāpāna jhāna dhammas, you should first enter the first ānāpāna jhāna. Having emerged from it you should discern bhavaṅga, the mind-door. When the ānāpāna paṭibhāga nimitta appears in your bhavaṅga, you should discern the five jhāna factors. When you were practising samatha meditation, you were able to discern them, thus this is not difficult for you. The only difference is that you should discern the five jhāna factors occurring successively many times. If you discern them clearly, you can begin to discern, for example, consciousness. There are three ways to begin to discern mentality:

- (1) to begin with contact,
- (2) to begin with feeling, and
- (3) to begin with consciousness.

If you choose to begin with consciousness, which has the characteristic of cognizing the object, you should discern consciousness occurring successively many times. If you find yourself unable to

discern you should repeat the procedure just mentioned: enter the first jhāna, then emerge from it and discern bhavaṅga. When the ānāpāna paṭibhāga nimitta appears in bhavaṅga, the mind-door, you should discern consciousness occurring successively many times. If you are able to discern consciousness you should increase the number of mentality you discern one at a time, to two (consciousness and contact), three, four...up to all the thirty-four mental formations of the first jhāna. What are the thirty-four mental formations? They are consciousness, contact, feeling, perception, volition, one-pointedness, life faculty, attention, applied thought, sustained thought, decision, energy, joy, desire, faith, mindfulness, shame of wrongdoing, fear of wrongdoing, non-greed, non-hatred, neutrality of mind, tranquility of mental body, tranquility of consciousness, lightness of mental body, lightness of consciousness, malleability of mental body, malleability of consciousness, wieldiness of mental body, wieldiness of consciousness, proficiency of mental body, proficiency of consciousness, rectitude of mental body, rectitude of consciousness, and wisdom faculty.

Of the three types of body I mentioned just now, the body of in-and-out breath (assāpassāsa kāya) and the produced body (karaja kāya) are the body of materiality (rūpa kāya). So we can say that there are only two types of body: the body of materiality (rūpa kāya) and the body of mentality (nāma kāya). Why are they called a body? The reason is that they cannot arise alone but must arise as a group. Please notice that here body (kāya) means the body of ultimate materiality and the body of ultimate mentality.

Contemplating the External Body

You must contemplate these bodies in the bodies. To contemplate only the internal body, however, is not enough for you to realise Nibbāna. You must also contemplate the external body. Why? You have attachment, conceit and wrong view not only towards your own body, but also towards many external bodies. To remove the attachment, conceit and wrong view towards those external bodies, you must contemplate the external bodies also in the bodies. You may have pride depending on your son, husband or wife's achievement. To remove this pride you must contemplate their bodies as impermanent. To remove the attachment towards the external bodies you must discern them as suffering. You may think, 'this is my son, this is my daughter, this is my wife, or this is my husband.' To remove these wrong views you should contemplate their bodies as non-self. If you discern the external world with insight, you will see only ultimate materiality and mentality. The ultimate materiality and mentality are impermanent because as soon as they arise they pass away, suffering because they are always oppressed by the arising and passing-away, and non-self because there is no permanent self or stable substance that you can call, 'this is my son, this is my daughter, this is my husband, this is my wife, etc.' If you contemplate in this way, this contemplation will reduce your attachment, pride and wrong view. So The Buddha instructs:

'Thus he abides contemplating the body in the body internally. Or he abides contemplating the body in the body externally. Or he abides contemplating the body in the body both internally and externally.'

Why does The Buddha instruct this? For beginners to contemplate the body in the body internally for only one sitting is not enough. You must practise for many days, or even many months. Then you should discern externally also. For beginners this practice will take a few days. After that, in one sitting you should contemplate body in the body both internally and externally again and again. To contemplate only once is not enough. Repeated contemplation is necessary. Only when you contemplate again and again can you suppress attachment, conceit, wrong view and other defilements.

Four Stages of Analysing Mentality-Materiality

According to the classification of insight knowledges, this is only the Knowledge of Analysing Mentality-Materiality (nāmarūpa-pariccheda-ñāṇa). It is only the beginning stage of the purification of view (diṭṭhi-visuddhi) and the foundation of vipassanā. This insight knowledge can be divided into four stages: (1) the knowledge discerning materiality (rūpa-pariggaha-ñāṇa) whereby you discern materiality separately, (2) the knowledge discerning mentality (arūpa-pariggaha-ñāṇa) whereby you discern mentality separately, (3) the knowledge discerning mentality-materiality (rūpārūpa-pariggahañāṇa) whereby you discern materiality and mentality together, and (4) the knowledge distinguishing mentality-materiality (nāma rūpa vavaṭṭhāna ñāṇa or nāma rūpa pariccheda ñāṇa) whereby you discern materiality and mentality together, and see that there is no self, no person, no being in them, but only materiality and mentality.

Therefore at this stage you should practise the following four steps: (1) to discern materiality internally and externally, (2) to discern mentality internally and externally, (3) to discern materiality and mentality together internally and externally, and (4) to distinguish materiality and mentality internally and externally. This is the first stage of vipassanā mentioned in the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta.

‘He abides contemplating the arising phenomena in the body. Or he abides contemplating the passing-away phenomena in the body. Or he abides contemplating both the arising and the passing-away phenomena in the body.’

In this stage three insight knowledges are combined together:

1. The Knowledge of Discerning Cause and Condition (paccaya pariggaha ñāṇa) which discerns causes and effects.
2. The Knowledge of Comprehension (sammasana ñāṇa) which comprehends the impermanent, suffering and non-self natures of formations (saṅkhāra).
3. The Knowledge of Arising and Passing-Away (udayabbaya ñāṇa) which comprehends the arising and passing-away of formations as impermanent, suffering and non-self.

Two Types of Arising and Passing-Away

There are two types of arising and passing-away (udayabbaya) of formations (saṅkhāra): (1) causal arising and passing-away (paccayato udayabbaya), and (2) momentary arising and passing-away (khaṇato udayabbaya). Causal arising and passing-away can be divided into two parts: causal arising and causal passing-away. Because of the arising of causes, the five clinging aggregates arise. This is causal arising. Because of the remainderless cessation of causes, the five clinging aggregates completely cease without remainder. This is the causal passing-away.

The five clinging aggregates are the same as mentality-materiality. Twenty-eight types of materiality comprise the aggregate of materiality. Feeling is the aggregate of feeling. Perception is the aggregate of perception. The remaining mental concomitants comprise the aggregate of formations. The six types of consciousness comprise the aggregate of consciousness. Feeling, perception, formations and consciousness are mentality. So the five clinging aggregates are the same as mentality-materiality. How should you discern the causal arising of mentality-materiality or the five clinging aggregates? This is the second stage of vipassanā taught by the Buddha in the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta. You should not skip stages in your practice. Please listen to what is the first stage again: You

must discern materiality internally and externally. You must discern mentality internally and externally. You must discern materiality and mentality together internally and externally. You must distinguish materiality and mentality internally and externally. Only after this can you proceed to the second stage.

The Causal Arising of Materiality and Mentality

How should you discern the causal arising of materiality and mentality? After discerning materiality and mentality internally and externally, you should discern the nearest past materiality and mentality, for example, immediately before you began your sitting. Before sitting, please offer the Buddha candle light or water, wishing to become a bhikkhu in future life. After you begin your sitting, please notice the mental processes while offering and wishing for bhikkhu life. These are nearest mentalities. They are kamma-round (kamma-vatta) and defilement-round (kilesa-vatta). They arise depending on their respective bases, which are materialities. You must discern both the past materiality and mentality as if you were discerning external materiality and mentality. After discerning the nearest past materiality and mentality, you should slowly discern backwards to further past time, up to the rebirth-linking moment (paṭisandhi), the first moment of your present life.

If you are able to discern materiality and mentality at the rebirth-linking moment, you should discern further backwards to materiality and mentality in your past life. If you discern in this way, you may discern materiality and mentality at near-death moments of your past life. At that time one of the three signs usually appeared in your mind door (manodvāra). The three signs are kamma, the sign of kamma (kamma nimitta) and the sign of the destination where you will be reborn (gati nimitta).

I will try to explain this with an example. A meditator discerned materiality and mentality at near-death moments in his past life. He saw a kamma nimitta that a man was offering candlelight to a Buddha image. After seeing the sign he discerned the materiality and mentality of the image of the man who was offering candlelight. How did he discern? He discerned the four elements in that image systematically. He saw kalāpas and then analysed those kalāpas to see ultimate materiality. Then he discerned mainly the fifty-four types of materiality in the heart, and then emphasised the heart-base because every mind door consciousness arises dependent upon heart-base. When he did so he saw bhavaṅga, the mind-door, clearly. Different objects appeared in bhavaṅga. He discerned bhavaṅga forwards and backwards again and again. Why? Between bhavaṅgas cognitive-processes usually occur. When he discerned those bhavaṅgas he could easily discern those cognitive-processes. He found that when he was offering candlelight to The Buddha image, he wished to become a meditator bhikkhu in the next life. The mind making the offering arose as mind-door cognitive-processes. Each cognitive-process consisted of a mind-door adverting consciousness (manodvāravajjana) and seven impulsions (javana). In the mind-door adverting consciousness there were twelve mental formations. They are consciousness, contact, feeling, perception, volition, one-pointedness, life faculty, attention, applied thought, sustained thought, decision and energy. In each impulsion there were thirty-four mental formations. They are consciousness, contact, feeling, perception, volition, one-pointedness, life faculty, attention, applied thought, sustained thought, decision, energy, joy, desire, faith, mindfulness, shame of wrongdoing, fear of wrongdoing, non-greed, non-hatred, neutrality of mind, tranquility of mental body, tranquility of consciousness, lightness of mental body, lightness of consciousness, malleability of mental body, malleability of consciousness, wieldiness of mental body, wieldiness of consciousness, proficiency of mental body, proficiency of consciousness, rectitude of mental body, rectitude of consciousness, and wisdom faculty. Those thirty-four mental formations are called volitional formations (saṅkhāra). Of the thirty-four mental formations, volition was predominant. The volition was kamma. As soon as those volitional formations arose they passed away because they were impermanent. But they left behind the force of kamma in his mentality-materiality process. In the Kammappaccaya Section of the Patthana, the

force of kamma is called kamma.

Then he discerned the mind making the wish to become a meditator bhikkhu. It also arose as a mind-door cognitive-process. Each cognitive-process consisted of a mind-door adverting consciousness (manodvārāvajjana) and seven impulses (javana). In the mind-door adverting consciousness there were twelve mental formations as mentioned above. In each impulse there were twenty mental formations. They are consciousness, contact, feeling, perception, volition, one-pointedness, life faculty, attention, applied thought, sustained thought, decision, energy, joy, desire, delusion, lack of moral shame, lack of moral fear, restlessness, greed and wrong view. Of the twenty mental formations ignorance (avijjā), craving (taṇhā), clinging (upādāna) are predominant. What is ignorance? According to The Buddha's teaching, our body and mind are only ultimate materiality and mentality. If we know them as materiality and mentality, it is correct. This is insight knowledge, Right View (sammā-diṭṭhi). But if we see them as a man, woman, bhikkhu, or bhikkhuni, this is wrong. This is called ignorance or delusion. Depending on the ignorance, he wished to become a meditator bhikkhu; this is craving. He clung to that meditator bhikkhu's life; this is clinging. Ignorance, craving and clinging are called the defilement round (kilesavaṭṭa), the defilements that produce the round of rebirths.

Altogether there were five past causes, ignorance (avijjā), craving (taṇhā), clinging (upādāna), volitional formations (saṅkhāra) and kamma.

Then he discerned the five aggregates at the rebirth-linking moment (paṭisandhi) in his present life. At that moment, there were thirty types of materiality. They arose as three types of kalāpas, namely, the body-decad kalāpa, sex-decad kalāpa and heart-decad kalāpa. In each type of kalāpa there were ten types of materiality.

Then he discerned back and forth between those thirty types of materiality and the five past causes, ignorance, craving, clinging, volitional formations and kamma. He paid special emphasis on the force of kamma to check whether it produced those thirty types of materiality. He checked this again and again, and was able to see that it did. This is the example of a meditator.

If you practise in this way you can easily understand that the force of kamma accumulated in your past life produced the materiality aggregate at your rebirth-linking moment. How? At that time you should have already understood how does the consciousness arising dependent on the heart-base produces mind-produced materiality, and have already known their causal relationship. In the same way, there is a causal relationship between the force of kamma and kamma-produced materiality. If you see the causal relationship, you should discern that because of the arising of ignorance, craving, clinging, volitional formations and kamma, materiality arose at the rebirth-linking moment.

Then you should also discern the causal relationship between the force of kamma in your past life and the present life mentality at the rebirth-linking moment. Then you should discern the causal relationship between the force of kamma and the resultant aggregates throughout your present life. Especially you should emphasize the six door cognitive-processes (citta-vīthi). You discern that because of the arising of ignorance, craving, clinging, volitional formations and kamma the aggregate of materiality arises. Ignorance, craving, clinging, volitional formations and kamma are the causes, and the aggregate of materiality is the effect. This is the discernment of causal arising of formations. The insight discerning this is the Knowledge of Discerning Cause and Condition (paccaya-pariggaha-ñāṇa).

Contemplating the Passing-Away Phenomena

Having taught the discernment of causal arising of formations, The Buddha taught: '*Or he abides contemplating the passing-away phenomena in the body.*' This means that you should also

discern that because of the remainderless cessation of the five causes the five aggregates cease completely without remainder. This is *paccayato vaya dassana ñāṇa*, the insight knowledge that sees the remainderless cessation of causes and effects.

When will the five predominant causes, ignorance, craving, clinging, volitional formations and kamma, cease completely without remainder? According to The Buddha's teaching, the defilements will cease completely without remainder when you attain Arahantship. Because of the remainderless cessation of defilements, kamma cannot produce any results after Parinibbāna. Your Arahanta Path will completely destroy the five causes without remainder. Because of the remainderless cessation of the five causes, after Parinibbāna all five aggregates will cease completely without remainder. You must try to see this cessation, because The Buddha instructs in the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta* that '*he abides contemplating the passing-away phenomena in the body.*' You should not forget that here the 'body' means the body of materiality (*rūpakāya*) and the body of mentality (*nāmakāya*).

Now you are not Arahants yet. When will you attain Arahantship? Will it be in the present life or in one of the future lives? If you practise hard and if you have enough *pāramī*, you may attain Arahantship in this very life. Even then it is also called the future from the view of momentary arising and passing-away, because now you are still a worldlying. If you will attain Arahantship in one of the future lives, the time up to that life is also your future. When you attain Arahantship all the five causes will completely cease without remainder. You should try to see this cessation. And again when you take Parinibbāna, all the five aggregates will completely cease without remainder. You must try to see this cessation too. If you see these two types of cessation, you should contemplate that because of the remainderless cessation of the five causes, the five aggregates also completely cease without remainder. This type of insight knowledge is called *vayato udayabbaya dassana ñāṇa*, the insight knowledge that sees the remainderless cessation of causes and their effects.

So if you want to know the causal relationship between cause and effect with your direct insight knowledge, you should discern the past, present and future materiality and mentality. Do you think that in the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta* The Buddha taught only about the present? If you understand the meaning of The Buddha's teaching, you would not think so. The past, present and future materiality and mentality are to be discerned with insight knowledge. They are the objects of insight knowledge. Without discerning the past, present and future materiality and mentality, you cannot understand the principle of dependent origination with your direct insight knowledge. If you do not understand it, you cannot escape from the round of rebirths. You cannot discern the arising and passing-away of causes and effects. You cannot contemplate both causes and effects as impermanent, suffering and non-self. If you cannot do so, you cannot escape from the round of rebirths because the Buddha mentions so in the *Mahānidāna Sutta*.

Contemplating Both the Arising and Passing-Away Phenomena

Then The Buddha taught: '*Or he abides contemplating both the arising and passing-away phenomena in the body.*' This means that you must discern the arising and passing-away by way of causal relationship and by way of momentary existence. How should you discern? For example, because of the arising of the five causes, the five aggregates arise; because of the remainderless cessation of the five causes, the five aggregates completely cease without remainder. This is the Knowledge of Causal Arising and Passing-Away (*paccayato udayabbaya ñāṇa*). As soon as the five causes arise they pass away, so they are impermanent. As soon as the five aggregates arise they pass away, so they also are impermanent. To know this is the Knowledge of Momentary Arising and Passing-Away (*khaṇato udayabbaya ñāṇa*). In this stage you must discern both causal and momentary arising and passing-away in detail.

Before you see the arising and passing-away clearly from moment to moment, if you contemplate both cause and effect as impermanent, suffering and non-self, that insight knowledge is called the Knowledge of Comprehension (*sammasanañāṇa*). When you see the arising and passing-away in each consciousness moment clearly, that insight knowledge is called the Knowledge of Arising and Passing-Away (*udayabbaya ñāṇa*).

The Causal Arising and Passing-Away for Ānāpāna

Now I want to give the commentary's explanation about this arising and passing-away. Since this is the ānāpāna section, the commentary also explains the causal arising and passing-away only for ānāpāna.

'He abides contemplating the arising phenomena in the body.' Just like air moves back and forth depending on the smith's bellows' skin, the bellows' spout, and appropriate effort, so too, depending on the produced body, nasal aperture, and the mind of the bhikkhu, the body of in-and-out breath moves back and forth. The produced body etc. are the origin. One who contemplates thus abides contemplating the arising phenomena in the body.

You may not understand its meaning, I think. I should like to explain a little more. When you discern the four elements in your breath, you will see many kalāpas. If you analyse them you will see nine types of ultimate materiality. Why do they arise? If you remove your whole body, can the breath arise on its own? Without your body the breath cannot arise. If you analyse your body you may see the four types of materiality: kamma-produced materiality, mind-produced materiality, temperature-produced materiality and nutriment-produced materiality. These four types of materiality are called the produced body (*karaja-kāya*). Without the produced body the body of in-and-out breath cannot arise. So it is a cause for the arising of breath. Without the mind the breath also cannot arise, so the mind is another cause. The produced body is like the smith's bellow; your nasal aperture is like the bellow's spout; and the mind is like the appropriate effort. The produced body, mind and nasal aperture are the causes for the body of in-and-out breath to arise. You should discern the arising phenomena. Among these causes mind is the most important. But the mind arises depending on the produced body. So inevitably the produced body is also a cause. This is the causal relationship for in-and-out breath.

However, to discern the in-and-out breath in this way alone is not enough. You must also discern the causes for the five clinging aggregates, namely, ignorance, craving, clinging, volitional formations and the force of kamma. These five past causes produce the present five clinging aggregates. In the same way, the five past causes in the second past life produced the five clinging aggregates in the first past life. The five present causes will produce the five clinging aggregates in the future life. You should discern causes and effects in this way, past, present and future.

Then the commentary explains the causal passing-away for in-and-out breath. *'Or he abides contemplating the passing-away phenomena in the body.'* In whatever way, the air does not proceed when the bellows' skin is taken off, the bellows' spout is broken, and the appropriate exertion is absent. In the same way, when the produced body breaks up, the nasal aperture is destroyed, and the mind has ceased to function, the breath stops. Thus through the ending of the produced body, the nasal aperture and the mind there comes to be the ending of respiration.

Then you should discern that because of the remainderless cessation of the five causes, the five aggregates also will cease completely without remainder in the future. If one contemplates thus we say that one abides contemplating the passing-away phenomena or the causal passing-away of the body. You should also contemplate both the arising and passing-away phenomena in the body. Then The Buddha continues to teach the third stage of vipassanā:

The Third Stage of Vipassanā

‘Or mindfulness that ‘there is only the body’ is established in him just to the extent merely necessary for further measure of knowledge and mindfulness.’

Mindfulness is established for the meditator through careful scrutiny. He thinks: There is only the body, that is, only the materiality and mentality, but there is no being, no person, no woman, no man, no self, nothing pertaining to a self, no ‘I’, nothing that is mine, no one, and nothing belonging to anyone.

What does it mean? This passage refers to the higher insight knowledges from the Knowledge of Dissolution (bhaṅgañāṇa) to the Knowledge of Equanimity Towards Formations (saṅkhārūpekkhāñāṇa). If a meditator contemplates both the arising and passing-away of formations as I mentioned before, when his insight knowledge becomes sharp, he should pay attention to only the passing-away. Slowly he will no longer apprehend the arising stage, but only the passing-away. At that time he will not see kalāpas. He will see only ultimate materiality and mentality. These dhammas are always passing-away. At that time he will see no beings, no person, no woman, no man, no self, no I, nothing that is mine, no one and nothing belonging to anyone, because he sees only the passing-away of ultimate materiality and mentality. He does not even see kalāpas then.

‘Mindfulness that ‘there is only the body’ is established in him just to the extent merely necessary for further measure of knowledge and mindfulness.’

The passage ‘to the extent merely necessary’ denotes the purpose. This is said: The mindfulness established is not for any other purpose. What is the purpose for which it is established? ‘For further measure of knowledge and mindfulness’ means that it is just for the sake of a wider and wider, or deeper and deeper measure of knowledge and of mindfulness. For the increase of mindfulness and clear comprehension is the meaning.

If a meditator sees only the passing-away and contemplates both ultimate materiality and mentality as well as insight knowledge as impermanent, suffering and non-self alternately, slowly his insight knowledge will become mature. As a result his controlling faculties also will become mature, whereby he will attain the path knowledge and fruition knowledge, which take Nibbāna as object. If he realises Nibbāna stage by stage, finally he will attain Arahantship. With regard to Arahantship The Buddha explains as follows:

‘And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world.’

‘And he abides independent’ means that he abides freed from dependence on craving and wrong views. ‘Not clinging to anything in the world’: In regard to materiality, feeling, perception, formations or consciousness, he does not think, ‘this is my self or this belongs to my self’. Why? Because his path knowledges have completely destroyed both craving and wrong view.

This is a brief way from ānāpānasati to Arahantship. If you practise systematically in this way and if you have enough pāramī, you will realise Nibbāna in this life.

As a conclusion to the ānāpāna section The Buddha says:

‘Bhikkhus, this is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating the body in the body.’

The Four Noble Truths

In this section on mindfulness-of-breathing, the mindfulness which examines the respiration is the Truth of Suffering (dukkha-sacca). The objects of mindfulness, the five clinging aggregates, are also the Truth of Suffering. The five causes, ignorance, craving, clinging, volitional formations and kamma are the Truth of the Origin of Suffering (samudaya-sacca). The non-occurrence of both is the Truth of Cessation (nirodha-sacca). This refers to Nibbāna, the Supramundane Truth of Cessation. When you cultivate the Knowledge of Arising and Passing-Away, you discern that because of the remainderless cessation of the five causes, the five aggregates will cease completely without remainder after Parinibbāna. These two types of cessation are also called Truth of Cessation, but only the Mundane Truth of Cessation. If you realise Nibbāna with the path knowledge and the fruition knowledge, you know the Supramundane Truth of Cessation, Nibbāna. You should distinguish these two types of Truth of Cessation.

The Noble Path, which understands suffering, abandons origination and takes cessation as object, is the Truth of the Path (maggā-sacca). Here you should also distinguish between the mundane path knowledge and supramundane path knowledge. The mundane path knowledge that sees the five clinging aggregates is the insight knowledge of the truth of suffering. The mundane path knowledge that sees the origin of suffering is the insight knowledge of the truth of the origin of suffering. The mundane path knowledge that sees that because of the remainderless cessation of the five causes the five aggregates will cease completely without remainder after Parinibbāna is the insight knowledge of the truth of cessation. The mundane path is the path factors of the insight knowledges just mentioned. Right View (sammādiṭṭhi) is insight knowledge, and right thought (sammāsaṅkappa), Right Effort (sammāvāyāma), Right Mindfulness (sammāsati) and Right Concentration (sammāsamādhi) are associated with it. Before practising meditation you have already observed morality consisting of Right Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood. Therefore, there are altogether eight factors of the mundane path.

Sometimes meditators must contemplate insight knowledge as impermanent, suffering and non-self. At that time he also understands the mundane path. So the mundane Right View knows the mundane Four Noble Truths.

The supramundane noble path that takes Nibbāna as object arises together with the path knowledge and the fruition knowledge. At that time supramundane Right View knows Nibbāna, right thought applies the mind to Nibbāna, Right Mindfulness remembers Nibbāna, Right Effort is the effort to realise Nibbāna, Right Concentration is the concentration on Nibbāna, and Right Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood are also present. When a meditator realises Nibbāna, why are Right Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood also present? The noble path knowledge destroys the defilements that can produce wrong speech, wrong action and wrong livelihood, so Right Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood are automatically present.

Thus having endeavoured by way of the Four Noble Truths, a person makes an end to suffering and arrives at peace (Nibbāna). This is the doorway to liberation for the meditator devoted to mindfulness of breathing, ānāpānasati. The way to produce vipassanā based on other samatha meditation subjects should be understood in the same way.

Therefore, to make an end to suffering, we have to realize the Four Noble Truths. To realize the Four Noble Truths, we have to produce samatha and vipassanā systematically in accordance with the Buddha's teaching.

May all of you realize the Four Noble Truths and make an end to suffering as soon as possible!