

• PREFACE

The Most Fortunate Event

It is extremely rare for a Fully Self-enlightened Buddha to appear in the world, and it is extremely difficult to attain the human existence. So to come across the teachings of the Buddha, who is truly omniscient and omnipotent, in the present human existence is the most fortunate event for us!

The teachings of the Buddha reveal the true nature of existence in minute detail and provide us the most valuable knowledge how to lead a noble and happy life and how to gain our liberation from all suffering in order to enjoy the eternal peace and unique happiness of Nibbāna in this very life.

The Essence of the Buddha's Teachings

The essence of the teachings of the Buddha is the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path which consists of the Noble Threefold Training – the Training of Morality, the Training of Concentration and the Training of Wisdom. The Noble Threefold Training can totally purify the mind in seven stages by systematically developing morality, concentration and wisdom and eradicating all defilements (*kilesās*), such as *ignorance* of the Four Noble Truths, *craving* for sensual pleasure, *anger* and *hatred*, which are the root causes of all unjust, evil actions and all suffering in the world.

It is a glory of Buddhism to make intellectual enlightenment an essential condition of salvation. In Buddhism morality, concentration and wisdom are inseparable from one another. While morality forms the basis of the higher life, concentration and wisdom complete it.

Meditation Takes an Important Role

The guidance for undertaking the Noble Threefold Training is fully described in 'Visuddhi Magga', compiled by Venerable *Buddhaghosa* from Pāli Texts and Commentaries of Tipitaka. Visuddhi Magga has been translated into Myanmar language by Venerable *Nandamālā* and Venerable *Mahāsī Sayādaw*, and into English by *Pe Maung Tin* under the title of 'The Path of Purity' and into English by *Bikkhu Nānamoli* under the title of 'The Path of Purification'.

On the foundation of pure Morality, the Training of Concentration is accomplished by undertaking Tranquillity Meditation (*Samatha Bhāvanā*), and the Training of Wisdom is accomplished by undertaking Insight Meditation (*Vipassanā Bhāvanā*). So meditation plays the major role in the Noble Threefold Training.

Nowadays many people all over the world are enthusiastically undertaking meditation, usually without understanding the principles, procedure and objective of meditation. In order to make the exposition of the Noble Threefold Training in Visuddhi Magga clearly and easily comprehensible and readily accessible, 'The Essence of Visuddhi Magga' is now written in simple, plain language in two volumes.

'The Essence of Visuddhi Magga'

In Volume I the Training of Morality and the Training of Concentration (Tranquillity Meditation) has been clearly described. In the present Volume II the Training of Wisdom (Insight Meditation or Vipassanā) will be vividly and systematically described. In this description the teachings of the *Pa-auk Tawya Sayādaw*, Venerable *Ācīṇṇa*, *Dhammācariya* and *Aggamahākammaṭṭhānācariya*, will be incorporated. Pa-auk Tawya Sayādaw is teaching the Noble Threefold Training at the present time in more detail than Visuddhi Magga and he is teaching very successfully to meditators from all over the world.¹

The Field of Vipassanā Meditation

The field of vipassanā is entirely ultimate realities which make up mind and body and which really exist in the universe. They constitute the five aggregates which manifest as living beings, the twelve bases which give rise to consciousnesses and mental factors, the eighteen elements (*dhātu*) which show the absence of I, the twenty-two faculties which have control over their respective fields, and the twelve factors of Dependent Origination (*Paṭiccasamuppāda*) which beautifully explain the round of birth-and-death of all beings in the thirty-one planes of existence. As these entities represent the soil in which wisdom grow and the first two Noble Truths, they must be investigated penetratively and thoroughly in vipassanā.²

After developing the 'purity of morality' (*sīla-visuddhi*) by moral training³ and the 'purity of mind' (*citta-visuddhi*) by the training of concentration⁴, the mind becomes totally pure and sparkling, radiating

very bright and penetrative light. With the help of this light meditators can undertake insight meditation properly.

Then a meditator undertakes *meditation on defining materiality* (*rūpa-kammaṭṭhāna*) and *meditation on defining mentality* (*nāma-kammaṭṭhāna*). He analyzes mind and matter with wisdom, associated with the right concentration, into their ultimate components – consciousnesses, mental factors, and ultimate materialities (*cittas*, *cetasikas* and *rūpas*). He defines each of these ultimate realities by its characteristic, function, manifestation and proximate cause to develop the 'knowledge of defining mentality-materiality' (*nāmarūpa-paricchedaññāna*) and the 'purity of view' (*diṭṭhivisuddhi*)⁵ correctly.

The compactness of mental groups (minds) and material groups (*rūpa-kalūpas*) must be broken (*ghana-vinibbhoga*) to penetrate into the ultimate realities and the characteristic of not-self (*anatta*).^{6,7}

Next the four causes – *kamma*, *citta*, *utu* (heat), *āhāra* (nutriment) – that give rise to materiality, and the causes that give rise to the cognitive series of consciousness in the six sense-doors are discerned by direct knowledge. Also the causes and the effects of Dependent Origination (*Paṭiccasamuppāda*) are discerned and verified to clarify all doubts, pertaining to the past, to the present, and to the future, and to develop 'the knowledge of discerning the causes of mentality-materiality', (*Paccayapariggahaññāna*) and 'the purification by overcoming doubt' (*kaṅkhāvitarāṇa-visuddhi*).

It is clearly stated in *Visuddhi Magga*⁸ and *Abhidhamma Commentary*¹⁰ "that one cannot emancipate from the round of misery without discerning the causal relations of Dependent Origination.

Again, in undertaking vipassanā, all mentality and materiality, causes and effects, internal and external, pertaining to the past, to the present and to the future, are defined as impermanent (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and not-self (*anatta*) in turn as directed in *Paṭisambhida Magga Pāli*¹¹, *Saṃyutta Pāli*¹², *Visuddhi Magga*¹³, etc.

Many practical methods for investigating, discerning, and defining formations in various ways are employed to get the results described in Piṭaka literature, to develop ten insight knowledges, to achieve the total purification of the mind, and to realize the highest goal of emancipation from all suffering.

Try to Achieve the Best Goal

As this final goal of the liberation from suffering and enjoyment of eternal peace and bliss of Nibbāna is still possible in the Buddha's Dispensation (*Sāsana*), all upright and able persons should undertake the Noble Threefold Training enthusiastically and strenuously to achieve this best goal in this very life!

References:

1. 'Breakthrough in Samatha Meditation and Vipassanā Meditation' by Pa-auk Tawya Sayādaw and Dr. Mehm Tin Mon, Yadanar Min Literature, Yangon, Myanmar, Tel: 951-385261.
2. 'The Path of Purification' by Bhikkhu Nānamoli, pp. 479-678.
3. 'The Essence of Visuddhi Magga', Vol. 1, by Dr. Mehm Tin Mon, pp. 27-67.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 147-160.
5. 'Breakthrough in Samatha Meditation and Vipassanā Meditation' by Pa-auk Tawya Sayādaw and Dr. Mehm Tin Mon, pp. 52-64.
6. *Abh. A.* 2.47
7. *Vs.* 2.276
8. *Vs.* 2.233
9. *Vs.* 2.221
10. *Abh. A.* 2.189
11. *Ps.* 51-52
12. *S.* 2.258
13. *Vs.* 2.242-243, 265-267

A.	=	<i>Āṅguttara Nikāya</i>
Abh. A.	=	<i>Abhidhamma Commentary</i>
D.	=	<i>Dīgha Nikāya</i>
M.	=	<i>Majjhima Nikāya</i>
S.	=	<i>Saṃyutta Nikāya</i>
Ps.	=	<i>Paṭisambhida Magga</i>
Vs.	=	<i>Visuddhi Magga</i>
Ti	=	<i>Tīkā</i>
Mahāṭi	=	<i>Mahāṭīkā</i>