

SAMATHA AND VIPASSANA

# SAMATHA AND VIPASSANA

Ven. Dhammavuddho Thero

*Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Samma Sambuddhassa*

## INTRODUCTION

There are very many books published purporting to be the Buddha's words or in conformity with the Buddha's words. If one takes the trouble to study them carefully (which may take some years) one will find in many of the books contradictions and inconsistencies mixed with good Dhamma. The two main schools of Buddhism - Theravada and Mahayana (which includes Tibetan Buddhism or Vajrayana) - are at variance with each other over many important teachings. Unfortunately it must be admitted that wrong teachings exist in both Theravada and Mahayana schools.

The only set of books that both schools accept to be the Buddha's own words, and which are consistent and without contradictions are the early four Nikayas (Collections) of discourses of the Theravada school (Digha Nikaya, Majjhima Nikaya, Samyutta Nikaya, Anguttara Nikaya) which correspond to the Agama Sutras of the Mahayana school. This set of books is accepted by many monks and scholars to be the original teachings of the Buddha. Any other books can be accepted if they do not contradict this set of books. It is important to understand the true and original teachings of the Buddha if we aim to achieve the ultimate goal of the Buddha's teaching - to end the cycle of birth and death.

Most Buddhists accept many teachings to be true because they have learnt them from monks, not realising that some of the teachings may come from a Commentary or other book and that

## SAMATHA AND VIPASSANA

it contradicts the Nikayas. For example, most of us believe the episode of how Siddhattha Gotama (the layman who was to become Sakyamuni Buddha) stole off at night, after taking a last sad look at his sleeping wife and son, to go forth into the homeless life as a renunciant. The account of what actually happened is told by the Buddha in MN26, Ariyapariyesana Sutta: “Later, while still young, a black haired young man endowed with the blessing of youth, in the prime of life, though my mother and father wished otherwise and wept with tearful faces, I shaved off my hair and beard, put on the yellow robe, and went forth from the home life into homelessness.” So here we have an instance of a wrong understanding planted into people's minds without their knowing it. There are several other more important teachings contradictory to the original Four Nikayas that we would like to discuss below.

### **BODHISATTVA PATH AND ARAHANT PATH ARE NOT DIFFERENT**

Another inconsistent teaching is that there is a Bodhisattva or Bodhisatta Path as distinct from the Ariyan or Arahant Path. The Bodhisattva Path, the ideal of the Mahayana school, and also accepted by some Theravadans, is supposed to be the path to become a Samma Sambuddha for the purpose of teaching and liberating living beings, and is to be achieved by making a vow to become a Samma Sambuddha, and cultivating the paramitas or paramis (perfections of character) for many aeons of time. So, according to those who believe in this, our Buddha in one of his previous lives was an ascetic by the name of Sumedha who met Dipankara Buddha and made the vow to become a Samma Sambuddha. Following that he was supposed to have cultivated the paramis for 4 Asankheyya Kappas (Countless Aeons) and 100 Maha Kappas (Great Aeons) of time, and met 24 Buddhas altogether who predicted that he would one day become the Buddha Sakyamuni (or Gotama). When we investigate the Four

## SAMATHA AND VIPASSANA

Nikayas we find certain Suttas (discourses) that contradict this belief.

Firstly, in the Nikayas we find the Buddha calling himself Arahant and did not use that term for his Arahant disciples, calling them 'Ariyan disciples liberated by insight' instead. Next we find that the Buddha possessed the ability of retrocognition and he said in MN4 that he recollected many aeons of his past lives, yet he never mentioned having made any vow to become a Buddha in the past. In fact in AN 5.5.43 the Buddha said that prayers and vows will not get us what we want, only Kamma (action or deed) does. The Buddha attained enlightenment by the Ariyan Eightfold Path, as does his Arahant disciples.

In SN 22.6.58 the Buddha said that the difference between him and his Arahant disciples is that he is the first to walk the Ariyan Eightfold Path (note here that a Samma Sambuddha walks the Ariyan Path) and his Arahant disciples walk the same path after him - not saying that there is any other major difference between himself and them. In DN 14 the Buddha said he only recollected 91 aeons of time and knew of only 6 Buddhas within that time - no mention of 24 Buddhas. In MN 26 our Buddha said that after he became enlightened he refused to teach the Dhamma and only did so after being persuaded by Brahma Sahampati. Had he actually made the vow in the past we would have expected him to immediately go about his missionary work after enlightenment, since this was the objective he had been working towards for countless aeons of time.

In MN 116, Isigili Sutta, the Buddha referred to the hill Isigili outside Rajagaha and said that 500 Pacceka Buddhas had once resided on that hill and he named the Buddhas. So we find that many Pacceka Buddhas exist compared to a Samma Sambuddha. Even our Buddha Sakyamuni on attaining enlightenment refused to teach, intending to be a Pacceka

## SAMATHA AND VIPASSANA

Buddha, but was finally persuaded by Brahma to turn the Dhamma wheel. So most Buddhas are reluctant to teach the Dhamma because comparatively few living beings can actually practise it, and a Pacceka Buddha and a Samma Sambuddha is basically the same except that the latter teaches the Dhamma. From this we find that to differentiate the Bodhisattva Path from the Arahant Path on the basis that the Arahant is selfish is not valid because most Buddhas refuse to teach the Dhamma.

The fatal blow to this theory that there is a Bodhisattva Path as distinct from the Ariyan Path is delivered by MN 81, Ghatikara Sutta. In this Sutta the Buddha recalls his past life as the Brahmin Jotipala who had a good friend called Ghatikara, a firm supporter of Buddha Kassapa (the previous Buddha). Ghatikara asked Jotipala to meet Buddha Kassapa many times in vain - which shows that even if any vow was made in the past it would have been useless because there is no recollection of it. Later when he was pulled (literally) into it and he came to meet Buddha Kassapa, he refused to pay respect to the Buddha (so much for the vow!). However, after hearing a discourse from the Buddha Kassapa, Jotipala became a changed man completely. He renounced his Brahmin religion and became a monk under Buddha Kassapa - which shows that he attained Stream Entry (Sotapanna), for who would be more likely to attain Stream Entry after hearing the Dhamma from a Samma Sambuddha himself than our Bodhisatta Jotipala?

After that life he was reborn in Tusita Heaven and later came down to become the Buddha Sakyamuni. And it is most probable for a Sotapanna or Sakadagami (Second Fruit Ariya) to later become a Buddha because when he is reborn back into the human realm, the Buddha and the Dhamma would most likely not be around anymore since he had spent millions of years in the heavens, but his time for enlightenment is due. So from this Sutta, we find that it is an Ariya who becomes a Buddha. As to

## SAMATHA AND VIPASSANA

whether the Buddha is a Pacceka Buddha or a Samma Sambuddha - they are basically the same as seen in our Buddha Sakyamuni's case, except that one does not want to teach the Dhamma and the other is persuaded to - that depends on the individual.

So we find in the Nikayas the Buddha never taught that the path to Buddhahood is separate from the Ariyan Path, only later books did. Cultivating the paramis do not bring us out of Samsara (the cycle of birth and death), it only brings us up to the heavens and down to the woeful planes later, and this repeats. This was what happened to our Bodhisatta for countless aeons of time until he met Kassapa Buddha who taught him the Ariyan Eightfold Path, the only way to get out of Samsara.

Also the stories of how the so-called Bodhisatta cultivated the paramis are found in the Jatakas. When we examine the Jatakas, it is obvious that they are fables created to teach children good values, just like Aesop's Fables and Grimm's Fairy Tales ... how else can animals talk and behave like humans except in fairy tales. Even in stories like Vessantara Jataka where the Bodhisatta in order to perfect his Dana parami, gave away his wife and two children to a heartless beggar who beat them is contrary to Dhamma. The Buddha said that a good man's gift should not harm himself or others.

The above highlights the importance of the fact that the Buddha only taught the Ariyan Eightfold Path as distinct from any other path for the attainment of enlightenment and the ending of suffering.

### **SAMATHA AND VIPASSANA**

Now we would like to discuss another problem area - Samatha and Vipassana - which we would like to go into some detail.

## SAMATHA AND VIPASSANA

There is now a general belief that there are two separate groups of meditators, what they call Samatha Yanika and Vipassana Yanika and this has its origins in the Commentaries. The Commentaries say that there are two types of Arahants - one that cultivates Samatha meditation and the other that cultivates Vipassana meditation. And out of this hypothesis or assumption, they say that the Arahant might be enlightened with the four Jhanas / 3 Jhanas / 2 Jhanas / 1 Jhana or even 0 Jhana. Even if he has no Jhana, he can still be enlightened - but this has no basis in the four Nikayas. They call this person the Suddhavihāra Arahant, i.e. 'Dry Vision' Arahant.

Once they have this kind of view that there is a Samatha Yanika as separate or independent from the Vipassana Yanika, then they start differentiating: they say that the Samatha Yanika has no wisdom, whereas the Vipassana Yanika is cultivating wisdom. This is similar to the differentiation of the Bodhisattva Path as distinct from the Arahant Path.

### **VIPASSANA LEADS TO WISDOM**

Now one of the Suttas that led to this kind of belief is found in the Anguttara Nikaya. There is one Sutta AN 2.3.10 that says: Two things (note, not one) contribute to knowledge, one is Samatha and the other one is Vipassana. It is stated there that the result of practising Samatha is the development of mind, and the result of development of mind is that lust is abandoned; the result of abandoning lust is that you get liberation by mind. Then the Sutta says that Vipassana leads to the development of wisdom, which in turn results in ignorance being abandoned and which in turn results in liberation by wisdom.

'Samatha' literally means suppression or pacification or tranquillization; and so the better word to use is tranquillization - the process of making the mind tranquil. And this leads to the

## SAMATHA AND VIPASSANA

development of mind which basically means concentration or tranquillity, and the result of tranquillity according to this Sutta is that lust is abandoned, Now 'Vipassana' should be translated as contemplation, but some people translate it as insight. This should not be correct because the word Vipassana consists of two words 'Vi' and 'Passana', and 'Vi' is a prefix meaning separation, and 'Passana' is to see, to observe. So when you observe and separate, that is contemplation. The result of practising Vipassana is development of wisdom, i.e. insight. So if you practise Vipassana and you can get insight, Vipassana should not mean 'insight', Vipassana should mean 'contemplation' and that will lead you to insight, and the result of insight is that ignorance is abandoned, and then you get liberation by wisdom.

### **SAMATHA LEADS TO WISDOM**

Now if you are not careful, you may come to the conclusion that according to the above Sutta, Samatha will give you concentration which results in abandoning lust and Vipassana gives you development of wisdom, and then you might think that Samatha does not give you wisdom. But if you study more, there is another Sutta in the Anguttara Nikaya AN 6.29 that talks about a few states of ever-minding and it says that if you cultivate your mind to be concentrated until it becomes very bright (i.e. the state of Jhana), that is the best condition for insight (Nana Dassana). In other words, here, this second Sutta is saying Samatha or concentration will give you insight. In this same Sutta it says that if you contemplate the 32 parts of the body, lust is abandoned. So in this second Sutta it is stated that Samatha will give you insight and contemplation of body or Vipassana will abandon lust, which is quite the opposite of the first Sutta which says that Samatha will abandon lust, whereas Vipassana gives you insight. So you see, if you don't study enough of the Suttas you can come to the wrong conclusion.

## SAMATHA AND VIPASSANA

Now if you take these two Suttas and compare them you will find that Samatha gives you wisdom in one Sutta, and in the other Sutta, Vipassana gives you wisdom. So how is this to be reconciled? For this, we have to see another Sutta (SN 12.23) which says that to get ‘Yatha Bhuta Nana Dassana’ (seeing things as they really are, i.e. insight), there is a condition. The condition for seeing things as they really are is Samadhi, and Samadhi is always defined in the Four Nikayas as the four Jhanas or as one-pointedness of mind which means Jhana. Thus, when we consider these three Suttas we must conclude that both Samatha and Vipassana are needed to attain insight or wisdom (as stated in the first Sutta, AN 2.3.10). This is again confirmed by Sutta MN 149 where the Buddha said that when a person develops the Ariyan Eightfold Path fully, Samatha and Vipassana are led to work together in him. So Samatha and Vipassana should not be separated as independent practices, and both are needed for insight.

### **LIBERATION BY MIND AND LIBERATION BY WISDOM**

Now there is another place where this view comes about that there can be an Arahant liberated by wisdom who does not have any Jhana. This concerns liberation by mind and liberation by wisdom. MN 70 (Kitagiri Sutta) talks about the 7 types of individuals. There it mentions the two types of Arahant: two-ways liberated Arahant and the Arahant who is liberated by wisdom. This Sutta does not mention the Arahant liberated by mind. There are other Suttas that talk about the two types of Arahant: liberated by wisdom and liberated by mind.

There are some writers who say that when the Buddha mentions liberation by wisdom and liberation by mind, he is referring to one Arahant. Sometimes, the Buddha might mean that, but there is actually one Sutta, Majjhima Nikaya 64, where it is very clear that liberation by mind and liberation by wisdom refers to two



## SAMATHA AND VIPASSANA

types of Arahant. In that Sutta, the Buddha said a person gets rid of the five lower fetters (state of Anagamin and also Arahant) only by the Jhanas. So Ananda asked the Buddha why is it that there are some monks liberated by wisdom and some monks liberated by mind. Then the Buddha said that it is because there is a difference in the faculties of beings. In that Sutta, the Pali words are 'Ekacce bhikkhu ceto-vimuttino, ekacce bhikkhu panna-vimuttino', meaning 'there are some monks liberated by mind and there are some monks liberated by wisdom'. From here, you can see that liberation by mind and liberation by wisdom refer to two types of Arahants.

How are we going to reconcile that there are two types of Arahant mentioned here - liberated by wisdom and liberated by mind - whereas in the Majjhima Nikaya 70, it says liberated by wisdom and two-ways liberated. When we investigate further, we find there is actually one Sutta in the Digha Nikaya that says that the liberated by mind Arahant actually refers to the two-ways liberated Arahant. In the Digha Nikaya No. 15 the Buddha said that there is a person who is liberated by mind and liberated by wisdom, therefore he is called two-ways liberated. So you can see when the Buddha said two-ways liberated he meant a person who is liberated by mind as well as liberated by wisdom. Therefore liberated by mind Arahant in MN 64 refers to the liberated by mind and liberated by wisdom Arahant which is the two-ways liberated Arahant in DN 15.

In MN 70, it is stated that the two-ways liberated Arahant is a person who attains the 8 deliverances (Vimokkha). The 8 deliverances refer to 8 things: one is being able to see the inside of his body, during meditation. The second deliverance is that he can see outside even with his eyes closed. The third is the contemplation of the beautiful – meditation on a beautiful colour Kasina. And the fourth onwards refer to the Arupa Jhanas and cessation. So the two-ways liberated Arahant or the Arahant

## SAMATHA AND VIPASSANA

liberated by mind is supposed to attain up to all the Arupa Jhanas. It is also stated that the Arahant who is liberated by wisdom does not attain or experience the 8 deliverances. So because it is stated that the Arahant liberated by wisdom does not attain the 8 deliverances, some Commentaries assume that he does not have the Arupa Jhanas. We will show you later why this is a mistake.

The Commentaries state that the Arahant liberated by wisdom can only have at the maximum the 4 Rupa Jhanas. So the Commentaries say that there are 5 types of Arahant liberated by wisdom: one who has attained all the 4 Jhanas, one who has attained 3 Jhanas, one who has attained 2 Jhanas, one who has attained 1 Jhana, and one who has not attained Jhana. And this is a big mistake. In the Majjhima Nikaya Commentary, it is stated that if wisdom is to the forefront, such a monk is called liberated by wisdom; if his one-pointedness of mind is to the forefront he is called liberated by mind; and Sariputta was liberated by wisdom and Moggallana was liberated by mind. It appears that this Commentary is referring to the moment of liberation. At the moment when an Arahant is liberated, if his wisdom is used more he is called liberated by wisdom; if he is using strength of mind more, then he is called liberated by mind. And this is substantiated in the Nikayas.

If we examine all the Suttas in the 4 Nikayas, we will find that Arahants are liberated in the Nikayas by 3 ways. One attains all the Arupa Jhanas up to cessation of perception and feeling when his consciousness stops, and then after that when he comes out of cessation, he contemplates and by his wisdom he becomes liberated - that is one type of Arahant, and he is known as the two-ways liberated Arahant by definition.

The second type of Arahant which is mentioned in the 4 Nikayas is like the Buddha (MN 4). He attains the 4 Jhanas and then he

## SAMATHA AND VIPASSANA

contemplates his past lives. After that he contemplates the arising and passing away of beings according to Kamma. Then he contemplates the 4 Ariyan Truths and from that he attains the destruction of the Asava. Now this second type of Arahant is mentioned in MN 71 as liberated by mind and liberated by wisdom, i.e. two-ways liberated.

The third type of liberation is as in the case of Ven. Sariputta. In MN 74, Sariputta was said to be fanning the Buddha, and the Buddha was talking to an ascetic Dighanakha. At that time, Sariputta had just followed the Buddha, about 14 days after he first came to the Buddha, and being new and having a lot of respect for the Buddha, he was attending to the Buddha and fanning him. He was not meditating, but was listening to the Buddha talking to the ascetic. From listening to the Buddha talking to the ascetic Dighanakha, suddenly he became enlightened, i.e. became an Arahant. According to the Majjhima Nikaya Commentary, Sariputta was liberated by wisdom, meaning he did not use his Jhana at all. He only used his wisdom and at that moment when he became liberated he was not meditating.

This type of Arahant who is liberated by wisdom did not use Jhana at the time he was liberated, but that does not necessarily mean that he does not have Jhana or he does not have Arupa Jhana. In the case of Sariputta, it is mentioned in MN 111 that Sariputta had attained all the 8 Jhanas and the cessation of perception and feeling. But in spite of the fact that Sariputta had all the Jhanas, he did not have any psychic power. Apparently, some Arahants attain psychic power, but some do not. So in the case of Sariputta he had all the Jhanas, yet he was called liberated by wisdom. This is where the discrepancy comes in. Some later books say that an Arahant liberated by wisdom does not have any Arupa Jhana, because they use the Kitagiri Sutta which says that the Arahant liberated by wisdom does not attain

## SAMATHA AND VIPASSANA

the 8 deliverances. Actually what is meant is at the moment of liberation, he did not attain the 8 deliverances, it does not mean he does not have the 8 deliverances. This is a very serious mistake. It is this mistake which led to the mistaken view that you can have an Arahant liberated by wisdom who does not possess any Jhana.

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF JHANA IN THE NIKAYAS**

There are several Suttas that confirm that concentration (Samadhi) in the Suttas always refer to the Jhanas, e.g. AN 5.14; 7.4. There is one Sutta (AN 3.9.88) that talks about the three fold training - the training in the Adhisila (the higher morality), the Adhicitta (the higher mind), the Adhipanna (higher wisdom). There the Adhicitta Sikkha, the training in the higher mind is defined as the four Jhanas. There is another Sutta (AN 4.20.194) that talks about utter purification of mind and there it is defined as the four Jhanas. In the Majjhima Nikaya, there is one Sutta (No. 24) that talks about the seven purifications, the Rathavinita Sutta, and there it is not defined what is meant by purification of mind. But in AN 4.20.194, it is very clearly stated that purification of mind is the four Jhanas.

In the Sutta MN 52, Ananda was asked what is the one thing the Buddha taught that is needed to win liberation. Ananda replied 1st Jhana, 2nd Jhana, 3rd Jhana, 4th Jhana, ..... . There is a Sutta, MN 64, where the Buddha taught the only way to get rid of the five lower fetters. When you get rid of the five lower fetters you become an Anagamin; and the Buddha said the only way is 1st Jhana, 2nd Jhana, 3rd Jhana, 4th Jhana, ..... . Then there is a Sutta (SN 53.1.1), where the Buddha said that 'by cultivating the four Jhanas, by making much of the four Jhanas, (one) flows to Nibbana, slides to Nibbana, tends to Nibbana'. In Sutta AN 4.61 the Buddha said that the perfection of wisdom is the abandonment of the hindrances, which means the Jhanas.

## SAMATHA AND VIPASSANA

There is a Sutta MN 108 where Ven. Ananda was asked what kind of meditation was praised by the Buddha and what kind of meditation was not praised by the Buddha. Ananda replied that the kind of meditation praised by the Buddha is the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th Jhanas; the kind of meditation where the five hindrances are not abandoned is not praised by the Buddha. In AN 9.4.36 the Buddha said, “Truly I say, Asava destruction depends on the 1st Jhana; Asava destruction depends on the 2nd Jhana; ....3rd; ....4th Jhana; etc.” Then in Sutta AN 6.70 the Buddha said, “Verily, monks, that a monk without the peace of concentration in high degree, without winning one-pointedness of mind, shall enter and abide in liberation by mind or liberation by wisdom - that cannot be.”

Then there are two Suttas in the Anguttara Nikaya (3.85 and 9.12) where the Buddha talked about the three fold training - Sila, Samadhi and Panna. The Buddha said that the Sotapanna and the Sakadagami have perfect Sila - that means they possess Right Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood. The Anagami has perfect Sila and perfect Samadhi. When you say perfect Samadhi that means the four Jhanas - that is why generally Anagamis are reborn in the 4th Jhana plane. Then the Buddha said the Arahant has perfect Sila, Samadhi and Panna. That means the Arahant also must have the four Jhanas. So how can the Commentaries say that there can be an Arahant without Jhana attainment? From this Sutta we see that meditation using Threshold Concentration (Upacara Samadhi) may bring about the attainment of Sakadagami (who has destroyed 3 fetters and attenuated sensual lust and ill-will). From this Sutta we can also see that some monks who say that we can do away with Sila and Samadhi, and need only cultivate Panna are totally wrong.

In several Suttas (e.g. MN 8) the Buddha advised his disciples to ‘cultivate Jhana’ (jhayati). Some books have translated this term as ‘meditate’, if one is not careful, one may not realize that

## SAMATHA AND VIPASSANA

when the Buddha says to meditate, he means to cultivate Jhana. In MN 27 the Buddha calls the Jhanas the Tathagata's footprints. In AN 6.6.64 the Buddha said "concentration is the Way, non-concentration the no-wither Way". In AN 9.4.37, it is said that stable concentration has enlightenment as its fruit.

In Sutta AN 9.4.33, the Buddha said that when a person attains the 1st Jhana, "he has gone to the other shore (paragata), he is cooled (nibbuta)." These terms are normally reserved only for the attainment of Arahant hood. This shows that the Buddha had such a high regard for the Jhanas that he has likened them to supramundane states. In MN 66, he shows such esteem for the Jhanas again by calling their abiding "the bliss of enlightenment".

In the Majjhima Nikaya, there is a Sutta (No. 149) where the Buddha said when a person develops the Ariyan Eightfold Path fully, at the same time he develops fully the four Satipatthana, four Iddhipada, four Sammappadhana, five Bala, five Indriya, and the Seven Bojjhanga. In other words, if a person develops the Ariyan Eightfold Path, all the 37 Bodhipakkhiya Dhamma at the same time are developed. You cannot say for example, that you only want to cultivate the four Satipatthana but don't want to cultivate the four Iddhipada, because you do not want psychic power. In fact later we will quote you a Sutta where it is stated that the cause of psychic power is Satipatthana, because Satipatthana is not separate from Jhana.

All the foregoing Suttas show the necessity of Jhana for liberation (Arahant attainment). Nowadays some books teach that Momentary Concentration (Khanika Samadhi) is sufficient for liberation by introducing such concepts as Vipassana Jhana and Samatha Jhana which are unheard of in the Nikayas. Momentary Concentration is not mentioned at all in the Nikayas. The danger here is that the importance of Jhana (one-

## SAMATHA AND VIPASSANA

pointedness of mind) as taught in the Nikayas would be downgraded and is one of the factors mentioned in Sutta SN 16.13 leading to the disappearance of the True Dhamma.

### **NIBBANA AND JHANA**

When we examine how an Arahant finally attains cessation of consciousness and enters Parinibbana we can see again clearly why Jhanas are necessary. In DN 16, Maha Parinibbana Sutta, we find that when the Buddha entered Parinibbana he attained Jhanas 1, 2, 3, ... up to 8, and then down to 1 again, then up to 4, and finally passed into Parinibbana. Why he entered Parinibbana from the 4th Jhana can be understood from MN 44 and SN 41.6. In these two Suttas it is explained that to attain cessation of consciousness one must attain first the cessation of speech-sankhara (i.e. vitakka-vicara), then cessation of body-sankhara (i.e. breathing), and then cessation of mind-sankhara (i.e. feeling and perception - and consciousness too). From SN 36.11, we can understand that the ceasing of vitakka-vicara is the 2nd Jhana, ceasing of breathing is the 4th Jhana. So to attain the cessation of consciousness and enter Nibbana one must pass through the 2nd Jhana and 4th Jhana. Hence from here we can see the necessity of Jhana for the Arahant.

### **SATIPATTHANA IS NOT SEPARATE FROM JHANA**

Now because of the view that Vipassana gives you wisdom whereas Samatha does not give you wisdom, there is developed certain other wrong views; e.g. that Jhana is of not much use because there is no Sati (mindfulness or recollection) when you abide in Jhana. This is quite unfounded. There is a description of the 4 Jhanas in MN 119. The 4th Jhana (as an example) is described as follows: "And with the abandoning of bodily pleasure and the previous abandoning of bodily pain, by the fading away of grief and joy, he enters upon and abides in the

## SAMATHA AND VIPASSANA

4th Jhana, which has neither pain nor pleasure and has complete purity of mindfulness (sati) and equanimity.” So in the 4th Jhana one has complete purity (parisuddhi) of mindfulness. How can there be no mindfulness in Jhana? Jhana and Sati are very much related and we can see from several Suttas that this is so.

In MN 117, it is stated that the Ariyan Eightfold Path is to be cultivated starting with Right View. First you must have Right View, and Right View will lead you to have Right Thought; Right Thought will lead you to Right Speech; Right Speech will lead you to Right Action, etc.. Finally, Right Sati (mindfulness) will lead you to have Right Samadhi. That means if you practise Sati correctly you must attain the Jhanas - they are related. This is supported by a Sutta (SN 47.1.8) where the Buddha said that an unskilful monk contemplates body, feelings, mind, and Dhamma, but his mind is not concentrated, the hindrances are not abandoned and he does not gain Sati-sampajanna (though he thinks he does!). But if a skilful monk contemplates body, feelings, mind, Dhamma, his mind becomes concentrated, the hindrances are abandoned and he gains Sati-sampajanna. That means he attains the Jhanas. This again shows that Sati should lead to Jhana.

Now there is another Sutta (MN 44) where it is said that the sign (nimitta) of Samadhi is Satipatthana - again here we see that Satipatthana and Jhana are related. This is a very important statement. That means once you have Jhana, Satipatthana becomes established. But if you try to practise Satipatthana, it is just like a person trying to practise concentration; it does not mean a person practising concentration has the 4 Jhanas, he is only trying to concentrate his mind. He is still not able to attain concentration, but when he attains Jhana then he has attained concentration. So in the same way if a person is trying to practise Satipatthana without Jhana it does not necessarily mean that he has Satipatthana, he is only trying to be mindful. But



## SAMATHA AND VIPASSANA

when he attains Jhana it is seen by the sign of Satipatthana that he possesses.

Satipatthana should mean 'intense state of mindfulness'. Patthana comes from two words – 'pa' and 'thana'. 'Pa' means setting forth and it also implies going beyond. That is why 'pa' also normally means extreme, intense. 'Thana' literally means standing still; so it is also used to mean a condition or state or situation. Thus Satipatthana probably means an intense state or extreme state of 'sati' and this Satipatthana is obtained when a person attains Jhana. This is confirmed by Sutta MN 125 where the Buddha describes the cultivation of Satipatthana in place of the 1st Jhana normally mentioned. Then without mentioning the 1st Jhana itself the Buddha next mentions the cultivation of the 2nd, 3rd, 4th Jhanas. Thus here Satipatthana is presumed to be synonymous with the 1st Jhana itself.

There is a Sutta (SN 52.1.4), where the Buddha said that Satipatthana should be abandoned after its attainment. And yet another Sutta (SN 47.1.4) says that the Buddha's disciples, the learners (sekha) and Arahants, always abide in Satipatthana. In other words cultivate Satipatthana, until you attain it; but after you attain it, the Buddha said to abandon the practice. Why? Because as was stated just now the mark or sign of Jhana is Satipatthana. That is why you can abandon the practice of Satipatthana and yet you still abide in Satipatthana because it is established.

There is another Sutta (SN 52.1.3), in fact three Suttas, where our Arahant Anuruddha was asked the cause of his great psychic power. Anuruddha could see the whole world system so clearly as in the palm of his hand. He answered that the cause of his great psychic power was Satipatthana. Normally the cause of psychic power is always said to be Jhana. Only Jhana can give you psychic power, but here Anuruddha said Satipatthana - that

means Satipatthana is not separate from Jhana. Only when you have Jhana do you have Satipatthana.

### **THE PRACTICE OF SATIPATTHANA**

Let us now look at how Satipatthana is to be practised according to the Nikayas. There are about 8 Suttas (e.g. AN 5.2.14) that define Sati as 'to remember what was said and done a long time ago'. Sati is derived from a word meaning memory. So, a good translation for Sati is Recollection. Often the word Mindfulness is used for Sati. The word Mindfulness has two meanings: (a) being generally aware and heedful; (b) recollection or memory. So if Mindfulness in the sense of recollection is used for Sati, that is perfectly correct. However most people take the word Mindfulness to mean being generally aware and heedful of what is seen, heard, smelled, tasted, touched and thought, i.e. being aware of what is perceived through the 6 sense doors, which is not applicable here.

When we investigate the Suttas that deal with the practice of Sati and Satipatthana we find that the Buddha taught that this involves contemplation of only 4 things - body, feeling, mind and Dhamma. The Buddha said in SN 47.1.6 that if our attention is drawn out to the external world of sights, sounds, smells, flavours and tangibles, that is straying out into Mara's ground, which is dangerous. We are advised to guard our sense doors and stay within our 'own pasture' of the 4 objects of Sati. So if we use the word Mindfulness in translating Sati, we should remember that it is not general mindfulness but a specific mindfulness directed only towards these 4 objects. General mindfulness or awareness of one's bodily actions is termed sampajanna in the Nikayas.

But let us return to the more correct translation of Sati which is Recollection. Recollection or 'to remember' does not only refer

## SAMATHA AND VIPASSANA

to the past. It can be used for the present or even the future, e.g. 'Remember to lock the gate when you go out.' In the case of the practice of Sati, it means the recollection of the 4 objects of meditation (body, feelings, mind, Dhamma) moment to moment, i.e. in the present. Why do we want to recollect the meditation object moment to moment? It is because the mind is constantly carried away by the strong currents of the Asavas (uncontrolled mental outflows) so that we have no control over it.

In Sutta SN 35.206 the Buddha gave a beautiful simile to illustrate the working of the mind. The Buddha said, a man caught 6 animals - a snake, crocodile, bird, monkey, dog, jackal - tied them together and let them go. They would then each try to go off in their own direction - the snake into a hole, the crocodile into the water, bird into the air, monkey to the forest, dog to the village and the jackal into the charnel ground. They would have to follow whichever one was stronger. To restrain the 6 animals, instead of tying them together and letting them go, they should all be tied to a stout post. Then they can go only round and round the post. When they grow weary, they would have to stand, crouch or lie down by the post.

Similarly, the mind has 6 consciousnesses which are always pulling it in different directions, and it follows whichever one is strongest at any moment. To tame the mind we have to tie it to one object of meditation (e.g. recollection of the breath, Anapanasati) until it is able to stay there and not get pulled away in the 6 different directions. When that happens we have control over the mind and have suppressed the asavas, which gives us a chance next to destroy it completely. Thus we see the importance of recollecting one object moment to moment until the mind is able to stay with that object, i.e. become tamed, which means a controlled mind, a one-pointed mind.

## SAMATHA AND VIPASSANA

The Satipatthana Samyutta Sutta 47.2.10 gives a very striking simile to show how satipatthana should be practised. In this simile a man is forced to carry a bowl of oil filled to the brim in between a great crowd of people watching the most beautiful girl of the land singing and dancing. Following him is a man with uplifted sword ready to chop off his head should even a drop of oil be spilled. That being so, he has to pay intense attention on the bowl of oil without allowing himself to be the least distracted by any other thing, i.e. one-pointed attention on one object. This is a clear explanation of the practice of Satipatthana, which clearly should lead to perfect concentration.

So in the practice of Satipatthana we recollect one of the 4 objects and if we bring the practice up to an intense state, it must culminate in one-pointedness of mind (SN 47.1.4 and SN 47.1.8, MN 125). When that happens we can abandon the (effort to) practice (SN 52.1.4) because it is established, since Satipatthana is a sign of Jhana (MN 44). In MN 125 the Buddha said that in the practice of Satipatthana, one should not think thoughts connected with the body or feelings or mind or Dhamma - something that only a mind that has developed the ability to cut off the tendency to proliferation of thoughts can do easily, i.e. one attained to Jhana (DN 21).

When we use the thinking mind, that is a lower kind of wisdom. The Buddha wants us to cultivate the higher mind, to develop Jhana so that the mind is lifted to a higher level. Then when we use it to contemplate, we can understand intuitively and perceive in depth. Shallow concentration enables us to understand at a shallow level (as evident from the fact that Sotapanna and Sakadagami attainment do not need Jhana), while deep concentration enables us to understand at deep level (Anagami and Arahant attainment need the four Jhanas). Thus the Buddha said in Sutta SN 12.1.10 that before he was enlightened he used yoniso manasikara (thorough consideration) and understood the

## SAMATHA AND VIPASSANA

dependent origination of suffering. With the higher mind we continue to contemplate on the 4 objects of Satipatthana and especially the non-Self or corelessness of the 5 Aggregates, which should eventually bring us to enlightenment.

### **No Tendency to Crave for Jhana**

Nowadays some books try to discourage you from cultivating the Jhanas. They say that by cultivating the Jhanas, you can become easily attached to them. This is quite the opposite of what the Suttas say. In MN 44, it is said that there are 3 types of feelings - pleasant, unpleasant and neutral feeling. Generally, when you experience pleasant feeling, there is an underlying tendency to lust for it, to crave for that pleasant feeling. But it is not in the case of all pleasant feelings that you have this underlying tendency to lust for it. In the case of Jhana, when a person enters the 1st Jhana 'lust is abandoned and the underlying tendency to lust does not underlie that'. So you see the tendency to crave for Jhana is not there. So to say that a person can be attached to Jhana has no basis. To say that, first of all, you must abandon eating, abandon marital relations, abandon sleeping, abandon driving a nice car, all these things you must abandon first, because all these things will give you the tendency to lust for it. In the case of Jhana, it is completely different.

In the case of the 4th Jhana, it is even more so than the 1st Jhana. Just now we read the state of the 4th Jhana. Before a person can enter the 4th Jhana, first he has to abandon dukkha, sukha, domanassa, somanassa; that means all the unpleasant bodily feelings, all the pleasant bodily feelings, all the unpleasant mental feelings, and all the pleasant mental feelings have to be abandoned before he can abide in the 4th Jhana, which is a state of complete purity of Sati and equanimity. So in

## SAMATHA AND VIPASSANA

the case of the Jhanas there is no basis to say that you can be attached to them.

### **JHANA SHOULD BE DEVELOPED, NOT FEARED**

Now concerning the advice not to cultivate Jhana, we find in AN 1.20.2 - 5 that the Buddha said the completely opposite thing. The Buddha said that if a monk can abide in Jhana for just one moment, as short as a finger snap, that is really a monk, and that monk eats the country's food not unproductively, what more to say of a monk who can abide in Jhana longer. The Buddha esteems the Jhanas so much that if anybody can abide in Jhana for just a moment, the Buddha already praises him.

In MN 66, 139 and DN 29 the Buddha said that sensual pleasure should not be indulged in, should not be pursued, but Jhanic bliss 'should be pursued, developed and made much of; it is not to be feared'. That is because 'it gives you the attainment of Sotapanna, Sakadagami, Anagami and Arahant'. What better reason to cultivate the Jhanas?

### **ARAHANTS CONSTANTLY ABIDE IN JHANA**

If we look into the Suttas (e.g. MN 36, SN 28.1 - 9) we will find that the Arahants always abide in Jhana whenever they can. We have to understand why, because some worldly people will wonder why these monks always abide in Jhana. Is it that they don't want to face the reality of the world, but want to run away and abide in Jhana? Actually if we understand Dhamma, and think carefully, it is not so. The Buddha said in AN 1.6.1 that our mind is bright but because our attention is diverted to the 6 external sense objects our mind is defiled and we lose the brightness. When we abide in Jhana, our mind is one-pointed, our attention is not diverted out through the 6 sense doors and the mind becomes bright.

## SAMATHA AND VIPASSANA

Previous translations of the word Jhana have been quite unsatisfactory and even misleading - like 'trance', 'musing', etc., so people had a wrong understanding of Jhana. Later on they used 'meditative absorption' and 'mental absorption'. That gave a better idea of what it means. Jhana literally means incandescence. So it would be more correct to translate Jhana as a 'state of mental incandescence' because when a person attains Jhana his mind becomes one-pointed, and lights up, becomes bright.

So when a person abides in Jhana, he is actually going back in to his mind. He may come to realise that the world is similar to a dream - what he sees, hears, smells, etc., are actually the creation of the mind. When we are in a dream state, it appears as real as now; but when we wake up then we know it is only a dream. So in the same way, now the world is so important to us, everything seems real, but to the awakened Arahant the world is not real in a sense, just like a dream only, but full of suffering. That is why the Arahants don't want to abide in the world but would rather abide in Jhana.

### **ABANDONMENT OF THE HINDRANCES**

Many people have this wrong belief that attaining Jhana is of not much use, that when one comes out of Jhana, all the hindrances resurface. There is a Sutta in the Samyutta Nikaya (No. 54.2.2) where the Buddha said that Ariyan disciples (Sekha) have abandoned the hindrances (here he probably means those who have attained Jhana), whereas the Arahant has not only abandoned the hindrances, he has uprooted them. The hindrances obstruct us like the lallang (tall grass). But for a person who has attained the Jhana, he has cut down all the lallang but not uprooted them. This is due to the fact that the effects of concentration, i.e. suppression of the hindrances, etc., linger on for some time after one comes out of meditation. The

## SAMATHA AND VIPASSANA

stronger the concentration experienced, the longer the lingering effect. And if one meditates continually the hindrances are continuously suppressed - hence the word 'abandoned' is used by the Buddha.

That a person who has attained Jhana has abandoned that five hindrances is also supported by other Suttas. For example, there is one Sutta (MN 68) where the Buddha was instructing the monks. He told them that if a person does not attain piti and sukha (delight and pleasure), then the hindrances invade his mind and remain. But when he attains piti and sukha or something higher than that (that means either Rupa Jhana or Arupa Jhana), then the hindrances do not invade his mind and remain anymore.

In another Sutta (MN 14), the Buddha's relation, a very prominent Sakyan by the name of Mahanama, came to see the Buddha. He said that he understood Dhamma and knew that certain things are wrong, like greed, hatred and delusion, yet even though he understood Dhamm, greed, hatred and delusion still invaded his mind and remained and he wanted to know why. The Buddha said, "Even though an Ariyan disciple has seen clearly as it actually is with proper wisdom how sensual pleasures provide little gratification, much suffering, much despair, and how great is the danger in them, as long as he still does not attain to piti and sukha that are apart from sensual pleasures, apart from unwholesome states, or to something more peaceful than that, he may still be attracted to sensual pleasures." According to the Commentary, Mahanama was already a Sakadagami but had not attained Jhana. This Sutta shows that only when we attain Jhana are we not enslaved by sensual desires.

In another Sutta (SN 42.13), a person came to talk to the Buddha. He said that there were many teachers who came here



## SAMATHA AND VIPASSANA

teaching different doctrines. He was doubtful. Who was talking the truth? The Buddha said that he would have no more doubt if he could attain mental calm. The Buddha was trying to tell this man that if he attains mental calm then he would not have doubt because he can see things clearly and understand. The condition for seeing things clearly as they really are (Yatha-bhuta-nana-dassana) is mentioned in the Suttas as Samadhi (i.e. Jhana), only one condition. Unless you attain Samadhi, even if you try to see things clearly, you cannot because you are enveloped by the five hindrances. Just like when you are wearing a pair of dark glasses, no matter how hard you stare, you can never see the real colour because you are wearing dark glasses. Only when you take away the dark glasses, can you see the colour properly.

### **NAMA-RUPA**

The interpretation of Nama-Rupa as Mind and Matter, or Mind and Body, is another thing that seems to be contradictory to the Nikayas. In DN 15 and MN 9, Nama is defined as contact, feeling, perception, consideration and volition. The five Khandhas or the 5 Aggregates are body, feeling, perception, volition and consciousness. Normally last four things - feeling, perception, volition and consciousness are said to be mind, the mental part. But when you look at 'Nama' it does not include consciousness.

'Rupa' is defined as the four great elements - earth, water, fire, wind - and the materiality derived from them, These do not actually mean earth, water, fire, wind. Earth stands for hardness and hardness is a mode of behaviour that is perceived. You feel something hard and you consider that as the earth element, e.g. this plastic is hard and it is considered as the earth element, but it is not earth. 'Water' stands for the property of cohesion, because water brings things together. Because our body contains water, we have a certain form; but if you take away all the

## SAMATHA AND VIPASSANA

water, this body will crumble, it cannot cohere together. Fire stands for heat. Wind stands for motion. So these four elements are modes of behaviour that are perceived.

In SN 12.7.67, it is stated that Vinnana (consciousness) and Nama-Rupa arise and cease together. There was a simile given, that Nama-Rupa and consciousness are like two bundles of reeds, standing leaning against each other, so that they stand together and fall together. So Nama-Rupa should mean phenomena that is presented to consciousness, because the moment consciousness arises, you must be conscious of something. If you cannot be conscious of something, you cannot have consciousness. Consciousness only means conscious of something. That something that is presented to consciousness, the totality of phenomena that is presented to consciousness, that actually is Nama-Rupa. And that has two aspects; they are the mental aspect and material aspect. That is why 'Nama-Rupa' should be defined as 'Mentality and Materiality', the two aspects of phenomena that impinge on consciousness. There are several Suttas that support this explanation.

In SN 12.2.19, it is stated that "there is just this body and 'Nama-Rupa' without, giving rise to contact and the six sense bases". In other words, there is this body and 'Nama-Rupa' outside of it.

In SN 47.5.2, it is said that "by the arising of Nama-Rupa comes the arising of mind, by the ceasing of Nama-Rupa comes the ceasing of mind." If you say Nama-Rupa is mind and body, then you must say, "with the arising of Nama is the arising of mind; with the ceasing of Nama is the ceasing of mind." But this is not so.

## SAMATHA AND VIPASSANA

In AN 9.2.14, it is stated: “The basis of sankappa-vitakka (purposive thought) is Nama-Rupa”. The basis of thinking is Nama-Rupa and is not ‘Nama’. If Nama is mind then you must say “the basis of purposive thought is Nama”, but here it says the basis of purposive thought is Nama-Rupa.

If we come to the conclusion that Nama-Rupa means mentality and materiality, (the totality of phenomena that is presented to consciousness), then we have completely different outlook from what is now being taught in certain books. What is now being taught is that the world consists of mind and matter, everything in existence is mind and matter. When you say that everything is mind and matter, that implies mind and matter are separate. But when you say Nama-Rupa is mentality and materiality (what is presented to consciousness) then you realise, as confirmed in Sutta DN 11 that the world actually exists in our consciousness.

In Sutta DN 11 the Buddha said: “But, bhikkhu, you should not ask your question in this way: ‘Where do the 4 great elements - earth, water, fire, wind - cease without remainder?’ Instead, this is how the question should have been put: ‘Where do earth, water, fire, wind no footing find? Where are long and short, small and great, fair and foul - where are Nama-Rupa wholly destroyed?’ And the answer is: ‘Where consciousness is non-manifestative, boundless, all luminous; that’s where earth, water, fire and wind no footing find. There both long and short, small and great, fair and foul - there Nama-Rupa are wholly destroyed. With the cessation of consciousness this is all destroyed.’” Thus it is clear from here that the world (i.e. earth, water, fire, wind) only arises dependent (with a foothold) on consciousness, the world does not exist independently of consciousness.

### **DISCREPANCIES BETWEEN ABHIDHAMMA AND THE NIKAYAS**

Now we would like to discuss certain discrepancies found between the Abhidhamma and the original four Nikayas. Certain contradictions appear which are serious enough to make one suspicious of the Abhidhamma. For example, one of the teachings in Abhidhamma is that when you attain Ariyan Path (Magga), you must attain Ariyan Fruit (Phala) immediately. In other words one moment a person attains the Path, the next (conscious) moment he attains Fruit. There are several Suttas in the original Nikayas that contradict this. One of them is SN 25.1. It says that when a person has confidence in the Dhamma (i.e. attains the First Path) the Buddha said for sure before he dies he will attain the Fruit of stream entry; but the Buddha didn't say when. Since people die at different ages, that means the time interval between Path and Fruit might be one moment, might be one year, might be ten years, etc. That is one Sutta.

In another Sutta, MN 142, Dakkhina Vibhanga Sutta, the Buddha talked about the merit from giving to individual persons. The highest merit you can gain is to give to a Sammasambuddha, secondly a Pacceka Buddha, and then an Arahant; then a person who has attained the Fourth Path; then an Anagami; then a person who has attained the Third Path, then a Sakadagami; then a Second Path attainer; then a Sotapanna; then a First Path attainer. That means the eight Ariyan persons exist for one to make offerings to. The fact that you can give something to a Path attainer means he exists not for one moment.

There is another Sutta (AN 3.3.21) where the Buddha talked about three types of Ariya, one is the Kayasakkhin - Body Witness, one is the Ditthipatto - View Attainer, one is the Saddhvimutto - Faith Released person. Now three disciples of the Buddha were arguing about these three types of Ariya, about

## SAMATHA AND VIPASSANA

which one is better. Then one disciple said number one (Kayasakkhin) is better, another said number two (Ditthipatto) is better and another said number three (Saddhvimutto) is better. So they went and asked the Buddha. The Buddha said that it is very hard to say which one is better straight away. The Buddha said number one might be a Sakadagami, might be an Anagami, might also be a Fourth Path attainer. Then the Buddha said number two person might also be a Sakadagami, might also be Anagami, might also be a Fourth Path attainer; same with number three. According to MN 70, these 3 types of Ariya have not completed their work, i.e. they are sekha (learners). In MN 27, the 4th Path attainer is said to have understood the 4 Ariyan Truths but his asavas are not yet destroyed. Only when his asavas are destroyed is he called Arahant. So from here, you find actually the 4th Path attainer exists, and not for just one moment. So this is one of the important teachings where you find contradiction between the Nikayas and the Abhidhamma. Just this one serious contradiction is enough for us to question the credibility of the whole Abhidhamma.

Another inconsistency between the Nikayas and the Abhidhamma concerns the Bhavanga consciousness. The Bhavanga-citta is also called Bhavanga-sota, the stream of Bhavanga. The Bhavanga is not mentioned at all in the Nikayas. The Mahayana teaching about the 7th and 8th consciousness is very similar to the Bhavanga-consciousness. They are trying to explain about a subconsciousness below our normal six consciousnesses and also an unending stream of consciousness. It is taught in the Abhidhamma that the Bhavanga-citta takes for its object (i.e. the cause of its existence) the last thought of the previous life, just as for example, the hearing consciousness takes for its object (and therefore its cause) a sound for it to arise. But according to Paticca Samuppada something ceasing cannot give rise to something arising. In Dependent Origination, when something ceases something else ceases, or several other

## SAMATHA AND VIPASSANA

things cease; when something arises, something else arises. The basic formula of Paticca Samuppada is: “This being, that comes to be; with the arising of this, that arises. This not being, that comes not to be; with the ceasing of this, that ceases.” But here they are saying that the last thought of the previous life ceased, causing (later) the Bhavanga consciousness to arise. This is contrary to Paticca Samuppada, and is not acceptable.

The other matter taught in Abhidhamma concerning Bhavanga consciousness is that when a person sleeps he does not dream; his Bhavanga consciousness operates, just a passive state. But this is now totally disproved by science. They have monitored persons who sleep and found that most of the time the person is dreaming. Normally when we sleep, we are dreaming but we do not know when we wake up. We have forgotten it all. But if you were to wake up suddenly, say because of the lightning, or alarm clock or someone wakes you up, then you know that you are dreaming. That is very natural because of ‘asava’. ‘Asava’ means ‘uncontrolled mental outflows’ and that is the tendency for the mind to run. The tendency is so fierce that even in our waking state, when we are not doing anything, we start day-dreaming. Or even if we are doing something, our mind will get distracted and think of something else because this tendency of the mind to run is so fierce. Even if you are awake and you are trying to guard your mind, still the mind runs - what more when you are asleep, when you have no guard at all.

The Abhidhamma interpretation of Nama-Rupa of Mind and Matter is another contradiction with the Nikayas and this has been explained earlier. These are some serious contradictions between the Nikayas and the Abhidhamma. But there are still other contradictions. For example, in one of the Abhidhamma books, the Kathavatthu, it is said that there are no animals in heaven; but if you read the Suttas SN 11.1.6; 29.3; 30.2 and the Vinaya books, there are. In the Suttas we find that there are

## SAMATHA AND VIPASSANA

horses, birds (garuda), snakes (naga), fishes (timingala), etc. in heaven. In the Vinaya there is an incident about a naga who transformed himself into a human form and became a monk. When he was found out the Buddha asked him to leave because he was considered an animal by nature, incapable of attaining success in the spiritual path. Again in the Kathavatthu it is taught that if during a dream you commit murder, then you are held blameable for it, but this is not reasonable. In the Vinaya, a monk who commits sexual misconduct in a dream is not blameable because it is only a dream.

Then it is taught in the Abhidhamma that the moment you die, the next moment you are reborn in another life. In other words, no soul transmigrates from this life into the next. Now in DN 28, the Buddha spoke about 4 types of beings - one enters the womb unknowing and stays there unknowing and leaves it unknowing; another enters the womb knowing and stays there unknowing and leaves it unknowing; another enters the womb knowing and stays there knowing and leaves it unknowing; the fourth type enters the womb knowing and stays there knowing and leaves it knowing. If a being enters the womb knowing, it means his consciousness or thought is working, and this contradicts the Abhidhamma teaching that rebirth is immediate. A flux of energy (soul) does enter the womb. Also in MN 97 it is said that a hell-bound being is dragged down to hell.

Then it is said that when the Buddha taught the Abhidhamma, 800 million devas became Arahants. However, in Sutta AN 10.7.63, the Buddha said that all Arahants attain their goal here, i.e. on earth as human beings. In other words, only humans can become Arahants – another contradiction.

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF STUDYING THE FOUR NIKAYAS**

In Sutta SN 55.6.3. the Buddha advised lay persons to study the Suttas. In SN 20.7, the Buddha warned that in the future, people would not study his Suttas but would rather study the works of disciples, meaning other monks (i.e. later books) and this would lead to the disappearance of the Suttas. The Buddha stressed the importance of Much-learning (Bahusacca) in many Suttas, e.g. in MN 43 it is said that Right-View assisted by much-learning leads to liberation. Not to study the Suttas is one extreme, and to study too many books is another extreme - the middle path is to study the original 4 Nikayas. The importance of studying the Nikayas can be understood from the fact that the Buddha spoke about 5000 Suttas and his disciples were called Savakas (Listeners). One Sutta explains the truth from one angle so that the more Suttas we study the better we can understand because we see the Dhamma explained from different angles and we can relate them to each other.

In fact, we see from the Nikayas and the Vinaya that people attain Sotapanna just by listening to the Suttas rather than by meditation:

- 1) Sutta AN 9.20 defines stream-entry (First Path) as the attainment of Right View.
- 2) In SN 43 and AN 12.11.9, it is stated that Right View is attained (and hence Sotapanna) by two conditions only: listening to another's utterance and having thorough consideration (yoniso manasikara). The degree of thorough consideration necessary for Sotapanna attainment is of course different from that for Arahant attainment.
- 3) In SN 55.3.4 the Buddha said that if the trees could understand his words (not meditate), even trees could



## SAMATHA AND VIPASSANA

become Sotapannas.

- 4) In SN 46.4.8, the Buddha said that when one listens to Dhamma attentively, the 5 hindrances exist not in one and the 7 Bojjhanga go to completion. These are conditions for Ariya attainment.
- 5) In SN 55.1.2, the characteristics of a Sotapanna are: having confidence in the Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha, and pure moral conduct - no mention of meditation, etc.
- 6) In AN 3.85; 9.12, the Sotapanna and Sakadagami are said to have Perfect Sila; Anagami has Perfect Sila and Samadi; Arahant has Perfect Sila and Samadhi and Panna. This means the Sotapanna and Sakadagami do not need the four Jhanas while the Anagami and Arahant must possess the four Jhanas.
- 7) In MN 22 the Sotapanna is said to have destroyed 3 fetters and the Sakadagami to have destroyed 3 fetters and weakened lust, hatred and delusion. So the Sakadagami needs some concentration short of Jhana (i.e. Upacara Samadhi) whereas the Sotapanna does not, and only needs to contemplate and reflect on the Dhamma he has learnt.
- 8) There are several instances in the Nikayas and Vinaya of lay people coming to hear a Sutta from the Buddha (exactly as we have it in our Nikayas) for the first time and attaining Sotapanna, e.g. DN 3, 5; MN 56, 91; AN 8.12, 8.21.

So while the pure true Dhanama is still to be found in the world today, it would benefit us immeasurably to study it.

## SAMATHA AND VIPASSANA

**QUESTION:** If Jhana is such a superior state and will give you wisdom, mindfulness, equanimity, etc. why is it when the Buddha was following the two external sect teachers, he did not get enlightenment?

The Ariyan Eightfold Path consists of eight factors and there is a difference between Right Concentration in Buddhism and Right Concentration in the external teachings. In the external sect teachings Right Concentration might be the Jhanas, but in the Buddha's teaching the Ariyan Right Concentration or the Noble Right Concentration or the Buddhist Right Concentration is the four Jhanas supported by the other seven factors of the Noble Eightfold Path (MN 117). Only when these eight factors work together will you end suffering and get liberation. It is not meant for you to just use one factor, only the Right Concentration. That is why when people said that Devadatta attained all the Jhanas and still he did not have wisdom, we said that to begin with he had Wrong View, and because of Wrong View he had Wrong Thoughts; because of Wrong Thoughts, he wanted to kill the Buddha. How can such a person become an Arahant?

### **DISAPPEARANCE OF THE TRUE DHAMMA**

We have to study the Four Nikayas and be very clear about the Four Nikayas before we teach. The Buddha said that if we teach the wrong Dhamma, it will cause the disappearance of the true Dhamma. The Buddha said in SN 16.13 that there are five things that will cause the disappearance of the true Dhamm. The true Dhamma does not disappear suddenly like the sinking of a ship. The disappearance of the true Dhamma will come about gradually.

Five things that cause the disappearance of the True Dhamma are:-

## SAMATHA AND VIPASSANA

- 1) There is no respect for the Buddha; in other words, some people although they call themselves Buddhists, do not have that much respect for our Buddha as for some other being.
- 2) There is no respect for the Dhamma, i.e. the Buddha's Suttas in the 4 Nikayas. The Buddha said in SN 20.7 that in the future people will not want to listen to and master the discourses of the Buddha. They would rather listen to and master the words of his disciples, i.e. other monks, and these are 'mere poetry', compared to the Buddha's discourses. So we should concentrate on the study of the 4 Nikayas rather than other books!
- 3) There is no respect for the Sangha. Probably, for various reasons, lay people fail to do their duty of supporting the monks so that the lineage of the Sangha is broken, causing it to disappear.
- 4) There is no respect for the Training, i.e. the cultivation of Sila, Samadhi, Panna. Some people belittle the training and some others say that Sila and Samadhi are unnecessary, etc.
- 5) There is no respect for Samadhi, i.e. the four Jhanas. Some people teach that Jhana is not important and is unnecessary for liberation. This itself will cause the disappearance of True Dhamma.

*Ciram Titthatu Saddhammo*

