



Some
Keys to the Higher Life

Notes of a Spiritual Friend



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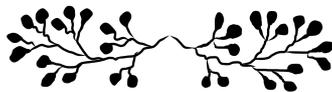
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Preface

*As long religion is capable of quenching peoples thirst,
few people will seek to quench their thirst through
material things. It is when religion becomes dead, that
people seek for life in material things.*



I have started writing this little book initially with the intent to help young monastics to make sense of the life in a monastery. However, with time, while working on it, I began a yet other project, which, as it slowly grew in importance for me, eventually did not allow me to properly finish this book.

Still I believe, even as far as I went with it, it has grown into a piece of writing that can be valuable both for monastics and for the matter, any religious or spiritual practitioner.

Like my other writings (the link to which can be found below), it is an attempt to move the practice of the religious or spiritual life more into the realm of natural laws, away from the mere blind following of rigid formalised methods on the one hand, as well the usually equally blind experimenting of the few bold explorers on the other.

I divided the book into seven chapters, each delving into some essential aspect of spiritual development:

The first chapter explores spiritual living, offering insights to aid life within a community.

The second chapter I devoted to 'Right View', where I tried to explore what 'Right View' means not only from a Buddhist perspective, but from a more encompassing religious and human perspective.

The third part delves into the body as the foundation for the development of the higher faculties.

Chapter four examines feelings and emotions and their connection to spiritual growth.

In the fifth chapter I give various considerations about meditation. This is the longest section of the book.

The sixth chapter explores investigation and thought, and how to make use of the faculty of inquiry for progress on one's spiritual path...

And in the last part on 'Higher Dhamma' I tried to gather some understanding of my own, as well as from other traditions ...to find out and delineate, what may be considered the higher teachings of religion and culture. Much of what belongs in here I have elaborated with diagrams and started putting into another writing, 'Paramattha'¹.

This book is an ongoing project, evidently it is not yet a finished writing. But as there is no evidence, that it ever will become one...perhaps it still can serve as a little bit of a guide for those who have no better guide or give at least some inspiration.



¹ Can be found now also under: www.highermindart.info/books

On Living



"Ye may well work on building that tower aiming at the highest heavens,...but see ye to it my friend, that you do not build upon sand"

FIRST STEPS: MASTERING THE ENVIRONMENT/STUDYING THE PLACE

"Blunt your sharp points, diminish your brightness, unravel the complications of things and bring yourself into alignment with the obscurities of others"

(From the Tao Te Ching)



*M*an is a social animal. Thus, in order to move onwards and forward, on a spiritual path, a person requires, at the very least initially, people who move in a similar direction. Developing spiritually means developing both in character and in mind. But, although anything may serve to develop character, developing the mind requires very specific conditions, both internally and externally.

Hence, it generally takes a long time before a person is strong enough to progress just by himself. However, if we can relinquish our desire for what is not there and start to find out and wisely make use of what is there, we may have a chance of progressing with whatever higher aspirations we have set before ourselves.

Taking in the environment through the 5 senses, we can transform the environment within ourselves and later on without. In the beginning usually it is nearly impossible to liberate oneself from all external influences, hence it may be more intelligent to get to know and work with those forces that for long will pull and push us...only gradually freeing ourselves from them.

Thus, one of the first steps is to learn to understand the conditions of living for the purpose of freeing oneself (/ones mind) from the conditions of living.

Usually the activities in a place are producing certain forces which move and influence the people in that particular place. They are what moulds what we are, how we are, and what we shall become. They are going to pull or push us whether we want it or not, whenever certain conditions arise. And we can either work with them, work against them, or simply be moved around by them, perhaps even thinking that it is our free will that we are obeying.

Consequently, for those coming to a monastery with long term goals, it would perhaps be a good idea to spend much of the first year or so enquiring into the conditions of the place one chose as the platform for ones spiritual evolution. Praying that the conditions of the place get revealed to us, inclining the mind to perceive the conditions of the place ...However we want to call it. In order that we might find the freedom and support within that place to make experiments with our mind as well as to be able to gather the information and resources, which we perceive to require for our spiritual development.

Then, in the course of our living we try to investigate what meditation is meant to accomplish.

Understanding means connecting one item of knowledge with another item of knowledge, hence, if we can learn to gain knowledge, wisdom and understanding in our practice of virtuous living (sila-practice), ...we will have set the right foundation for developing knowledge, wisdom and understanding about how to develop a peaceful abiding within ourselves.

If we do the right type of study and reflection, we will have the right narrative for being strong, when we are strong; for being weak, when we are weak...for living, when life seems to go on, for dying, when life seems to have come to an end.

Thus, we should clearly understand, that mental development mustn't only come from sitting meditation. In our interaction with other people there is the possibility of developing great compassion, patience, wisdom, etc. Actually human intelligence grew to a high degree from social interaction and from working with complex social structures, and that might be also what we have to work with in the beginning of a life in a monastery.

Yet, there are so many other ways for developing the mind. For instance, mindfully performing religious duties, rituals, acts of devotion, acts of good kamma,..study of religious texts,..etc...when the heart opens up during these actions and practices, we can say, that the heart/mind develops, when it gets insight into the nature of the wholesome / the nature of religious life (the bliss of the wholesome), we can say it is developing wisdom... it gains a foothold in the Dhamma and discipline. This is why the religious life and the religious community can be very helpful for our spiritual development.

Thus living with discernment can bring about living with a developed mind (and vice versa)...living with discernment, one comes to find one's place within the community,...one finds out what one is meant to do, how to survive, how to develop more wholesomeness. When wholesomeness becomes more continuous,...the mind can grow in confidence,...more energy can be saved...the fullness of the mind can develop,...which becomes samadhi.

Many times people who had initial success in their mental development, entirely change their life-style, which requires much discernment,...which in turn leaves them not enough energy to develop their mind. Before, they might have been entirely self-focussed, while after such experience, they are willing to bind themselves to a certain group or religion (which may also require several energy consuming activities, such as study/ learning, helping, etc.)...in such condition especially, it will be very important to skillfully adopt to the new conditions in order to get back to the higher stages they have already realised and aiming at which, they totally changed their life in the first place.

HOW TO MAKE USE OF THE MONASTIC LIFE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF MINDFULNESS?

We are born into the physical world, because we still have to learn some lesson from this world...thus we must try to learn to become more responsive to the physical world, learning to deal with it more skillfully, learning to solve its riddles.

Especially for a young monk interested in training it is important to not be too focused and narrowed down only on attainment, but to also seek adaptation,...that is, he should make the basis firm...

He should first see to it, that his mindfulness becomes continuous (in the beginning esp. as regards the 5 sensory world), rather than worrying about (esp. scholastic) accomplishments, he should mainly (not exclusively) learn through observation, rather than through the books...experiencing the suffering and joys relevant in the place....(the defilement, gratification, danger and escape)...all the aspects of human life in that place (good and bad).

Even if he just knows suffering day and night...if he can know it with his conscious mind and non of it sinks into his subconscious mind...that

day and night will be spiritually infinitely more valuable than a happy unconscious day and a happy unconscious night.

In regard to the external, you first see to it, that you can stay without making any mistakes regarding morality, and keeping the rules. When you can do that, you try to be less often distracted and more focused.

For that, having some friend may be of great value. Spiritual friendship is an essential part of the spiritual life...It is usually with a friend where we can be at our best, while yet not always having to be strong and at our best. So, try to see whether you can have some friendship with someone who helps you to be more conscious, who reminds you of the Dhamma as well as of higher virtues...

Having many friends, reading many books, much activity, these all are not as such conducive for meditation, but we might sometimes need them in order to maintain our physical and mental health.

Thus, one may learn to skillfully fill one's mind-stream with sensations, perception, thoughts and knowledge of one's environment (see notes on mental body), and by that learn to vibrate on the same level or frequency of that place, which will so to say allow it's gravity to act upon oneself. Understanding about the mind, one can turn the environment through acts of perception into a memory-device... that shall become one's study book and one's' field of enquiry.

Turning all duties into things to train and things one likes to do...when one has overcome that kamma, one may gain more freedom.

Walking with both feet on the local ground, one may find one's way backward or upward to loftier conditions, taking with oneself (or developing) the knowledge of that path.

DIFFERENTIATING INFLUENCES

Within a given place, there may be power-possessing beings posting certain rules and a certain structure,...while yet there maybe other

influential beings, being officially or unofficially accepted, which allow for more flexibility or emphasis on deeper values...Furthermore, there may be perceived (through insight) factors in the minds of some (or all) of these power-possessing beings, which maybe directly communicated with by one who is skilled in such matters ...certain universal qualities, brought forth through personal development, may assure a certain calculable resonance in other beings.

Understanding the meaning of something can free us of its outer aspects:

If we are dwelling in a monastery, having many duties and a fixed schedule, one of the first most important things to understand, is the meaning of these duties, as well as of the schedule... If we can realise the meaning of something, we are halfway free of it. If for example we understand that the meaning of the schedule is to keep us away from unwholesome things and confusion, we can develop a mental mechanism that informs us, when the meaning is getting fulfilled by the outer action and when the outer action is becoming an obstruction to the realisation of the meaning. If we find that by continuous sitting our mind becomes less settled, we have to find a way to gain the freedom to get up when our situation requires it...this is the freedom, that comes from self-knowledge (i.e. understanding yourself). Perhaps we can do something for the monastery or find a way to explain our situation to the teacher etc...once we have realised a certain condition, we have to follow through with it and not allow ourselves to be overcome by fear or confusion. ...But as long the outside is purer and better than the inside, the inside should try to adopt to the outside, only when the inside becomes purer and better than the outside, is it right to follow the game of the inside.... Every sphere has its peculiar laws and we do well to try to understand where we are....the 5 sense world, the world of desire, has one set of laws, the fine-material world has another set of laws (more spiritual laws), the world in between, the one of the struggling truth seeker, has yet another set of laws.

Many restrictions that we perceive out there, may not be as solid as we might think,...there are conditions...If you can manage yourself and act in a wise and noble manner,..you might get granted more freedom. If you know your purpose and can articulate its importance, there is all likelihood of getting support for it.

GIVING PRIORITY TO STABILITY FIRST

If we are amongst other people, it may be more OK to be weak, while when alone, being weak is not much fun. Being amongst others, impressions arise both from without and within...showing one, what is so to say the normal human condition and relieving thus a bit of the pressure of a premature idealism. If you are considering too early about things of an ultimate nature, usually you will always be in conflict with how things are in 'real life', thus it will be difficult for you to survive in "real life".

In the group we can try to find happiness just in living the moral life,...perhaps solving the very gross problems of ours first on that level... while when being alone, we need immediately all three... that is, sīla, samadhi, and pañña,...possibly without proficiently distinguishing which belongs in which realm...

It is important to stabilise the mind in regards to the external conditions first...adopting the mind to the conditions that can't be changed (blending them out from one's awareness after having internalised them (e.g. vinaya things, general matters, things, one has confidence that they are thoroughly inside already) and trying to improve things that can be changed ...(e.g. figuring out what health problem one frequently encounters....finding suitable medicine, exercises, experimenting with one/ two meals (Seeing whether in any one condition one can manage to get a complete -digestion→ energy → mindfulness-cycle), finding out what good/wholesome deeds can be done in one's environment....doing many good deeds (for a person

with chance of higher development...doing them without having to commit himself to them for a very long time)

And especially important is to not waste one's best energy for showering or doing the laundry. It is one's best-energy-moments where one can set good causes for one's future. If one only uses them for mediocre activities, one is likely to only get mediocre results.

Thus one should try to come to a point of continuous good deeds, developing a stream of merits...and making that one's priority ...and making this a platform for discernment (of how to acquire more wholesomeness).

RAPPORT

There is a now reasonably well known phenomenon called rapport,... understanding this phenomenon a meditator can learn to tune into the energy fields of other people or into the energy field of a group. This can be very helpful for a persons energy management... as he can learn to move about consuming much less of his own inner resources, which is especially useful when one's own energy is frequently low... but care has of course to be taken when the path of the environment is quite different from one's' own path, as well as with people, who are deliberately making use of this phenomenon to put suggestions into a persons mind (as in the case of hypnosis, or an already established guru-disciple relationship, where the disciple might tune into a (pleasant) energy field i.e the aura of a guru, while the guru is operating on a higher plane i. e. the plane of mind, where he slips in information which will operate on a very deep level of the disciples mind).

Having spiritual experiences, the perception arises, 'I am not a worldly person'...having the perception 'I am not a worldly person'...a person aligns his thoughts, speech and actions to become in concordance

with this self-perception. Having less and less worldly thoughts, speech and actions, a person becomes less and less of this world,...less and less dependent on this world. Transcending the world, after death he will not fall into this world again.

Internally one should work on improving one's understanding of the Dhamma, developing an understanding of what to pay attention to, which things to permit in one's mind and which things not to allow, while on the other hand not neglecting to develop the spark of inspiration (calmness of the body has to be perfectly balanced with inspiration of mind). Especially keeping inspired in one's own experience is very important. Even for a sick person it is possible to keep inspired, for example by contemplating the repulsiveness of the body, impermanence, suffering, non-self, or death, etc. For a healthy person it is possible to contemplate subtle mental phenomenon (mental factors (equanimity, joy, oneness), visions of light, psychic visions, immaterial states, etc. One also might want to experiment using external nimittas as skillful means, e.g. kasinas, fire, smoke, forest, nature, one's own shadow, lovely animals, lovely people (mettā), suffering beings (compassion), joyful beings (sympathetic joy)...in this way one's meditation kamma will improve.

ENERGY DISTRIBUTION

In regard to energy distribution, a person may try to distinguish two different approaches: One is to aim at continuous mental balance and mindfulness for the whole day, the other is to be part of the world with its ups and downs and then set some time aside to cultivate a specific meditation subject or specific mental conditions. Depending on one's general circumstances one may emphasise one and when one feels that things move in the wrong direction change the approach. E.g. in the first case, it will be much easier to react to changing conditions and problems and find suitable ways of dealing with them, while in the

second condition, a person can accumulate material to mould creatively into an extensive experience with his meditation subject.

For a person with weak health, some merit making activities, which desensitise him from his own mind-body condition may also be very useful. Cleaning the Buddha-statue, sweeping the meditation hall, doing something for others, doing something which relaxes mind and body and perhaps keeping a certain routine of doing so...that is, one has to keep the assemblage point or reference point of the mind first primarily, or at least occasional, external, that is, on wholesome deeds (emphasising The Four Right Efforts instead of mindfulness as a cultivation practice).

ADAPTATION

More important than reading and remembering many scriptures, is to learn, understand and remember what is important at a time (in one's present circumstances)...even in very simple matters, as when eating, what of the food available is good for me and when eating what do I get problems. When hungry,...all phenomena are impermanent. When talking to a teacher, to behave so and so. When strong defilements arise in one's mind, to do such and such a thing. When the weather is hot to act in what manner, when cold in what other manner. When what physical problem arises, what medicine to take...When what problem arises in meditation, how to overcome it. When what good thing arises, how to make use of it...At what times and in what circumstances, is the mind open, in what circumstances is it contracted...In this manner one may learn to adapt to various circumstances.

Thus, adaptation is one major aspect of meditation and spiritual development in general. In ancient times the shaman (or a great warrior) could seemingly disappear into thin air and manifest somewhere else....he could seemingly transform into a tree when in the forest,...he could recover quiet rapidly when seemingly dead....he

was so adapted to his environment and to nature, that he could become as necessity arose disappear as a general feature of nature.

A yogi should try to work in a similar manner while familiarising the conditions of his environment,...he should know what aspects to pay attention to, and which to blend out, which objects to allow into his mind and which to chase out.

Esp. in the beginning spending one's days in a way suitable for the development of mindfulness (relaxed, balanced attentiveness) is crucial for one's mental development, and usually far more productive than spending long hours only sitting.

Adaptation means renouncing one's desire for what is not there... We do not look for more harsh conditions than the given one's and then complain about other things, which are more accepted things to complain about.

A monastery, meditation group or tradition, or actually any organisation, is always only as good as the members that make up that group. Understanding thus, a person seeing fault in the outside, might try to see whether he can contribute in any manner to the improvement of the situation. Thus he must learn to see not so much that it paralyses him, but also not so little, that he just goes on with his own little life and his own little career.

A monk should train for peace in any given situation...he should find the right pitch of singing or playing when the song of life requires his voice and wait for his turn when his voice (i.e. his exertion) is not required. ...A common mistake of the beginner is to exert effort even when it is not required (because of his excess will-power), which usually has as a consequence that he won't have the energy when things become tough and his exertion is required.

The better a yogi knows the times, the seasons, the conditions of his physical and mental properties, the better he can make use of the various conditions for his own advantage, or the more he can transcend the various conditions. And the more a bhikkhu knows conditions of right speech and actions, the easier life becomes for him, that is, the better he knows the dangers, (e.g. the people and places etc. to be avoided), and remembers the conditions around them...the easier his path becomes. And further on still, in regard to one's mind,...wherein too the dangers should be identified and strategies sought out to overcome them.

For the attainment of higher states of mind, we are 'fishing' for the right conditions which make waiting more comfortable and higher states more likely to happen...right conditions are e.g. external freedom, little or no duties, good physical health, inspiration and an agreeable environment.

There is no space in the material world as such for easy spiritual progress....you have to create such space yourself, through applying the right spiritual principles.

In the beginning it will be a long time of only observation and gathering information and you won't be able to do anything with it for a long time...and you won't really know whether or not you will ever be able to do anything with it, and if, what,...the only thing you can notice, is, that you are doing the absolute opposite of what anybody else in the world is doing...that is, going some place...You rather stop the movement of the whole world,...the governing influences of the whole world.

BECOMING AWARE OF WHAT HINDERS ONE'S PROGRESS AND FINDING WAYS TO COUNTERACT THE HINDRANCES:

Ever calculating

...going amidst the people, you might have less anger (towards them) and less desire for other worldly things...but perhaps more delusion and confusion. While staying alone, you might perhaps develop contempt towards especially ordinary people... and being a hard judge to yourself...might oftentimes find it difficult to stay desireless ...while yet usually your understanding of the Dhamma is clear and spotless.

Therein, you might want to work out a strategy, wherein your mind becomes more mild and soft in regards to dealing with the 5 sensory world...looking more deeply into the specific suffering of other people, while desensitising to your own suffering...but putting out a specific kamma to remember your own practice when things become too heavy to bare (that is,...for a person who attained anything prior to e.g. moving into a new community).

And if you ever succeed in overcoming one particular type of kamma, try to pay attention to, how long did it roughly took you to overcome it..., a knowledge thus acquired can be very valuable in making more exact inner calculations about similar issues later in life.

Thus one may use virtue as magic and counter-magic,...that is, one does a certain action to gain something or one does another kind of action to abolish somethingacting in one manner to gain a good friend....or acting in another manner to abolish guilt, enmity, fear, pride, etc.

This way one develops one's' intuition and self-confidence in regard to magical and spiritual things...to get out of a world of mediocrity, where one dares to take risks and where one willingly endures suffering for one's own upliftment of spirit.

UNIVERSAL CONQUEST

The study and understanding of modern and ancient archetypes (for example as depicted in the system of the Tarot) also may be useful for avoiding pitfalls and achieving minor goals... For example, one may recognise, that a monk just sitting for one or two hours waiting for the break period, is not very different from a secretary (perhaps in ancient times the attendant or servant (in Tarot, the Page)), doing the same thing. And noticing thus and seeing the undesirable direction of it for oneself, one may feel inspired to get a handle on the issue in a manner of universal and timeless conquest (that is, if one perceives oneself to have already outgrown such type of occupation).

While in other situations as for example when we are in danger we need to live like a warrior ...or, if we seek to become a good scholar we need appropriate resources which require certain steps to be taken...

Understanding in this way, the task of changing ourselves becomes a matter of a kind of universal human accomplishment...thus it becomes a universal matter, the crux of which is, that it gets accomplished in the right manner, not by selfish means.

Unravelling our own situation thus, will unravel a universal condition that eases the way for all those to follow...as well as bringing us in contact with those people of the past who have trodden the path before.

And equally so with 'hierarchies of importance'. That is, for a person following the path of self-perfection it is not suitable to look out for helping people, unless he lacks sufficient merit to continue on his path. Should there arise a need to help, he should help, but only if it does not endanger his own path to an excessive degree ...or else quickly he will be again the one needing help, and he again deeply gets caught up in the net of the world (if you are in the mud yourself, you can't pull another person out of the mud, else both of you will sink).

Other types of hierarchies, are the hierarchies without. If we try to distinguish the principles and hierarchies of a certain place, we might understand for example a spectrum from happy uneducated people to unhappy scholars, from honest simple people to dishonest career monks. And with such understanding further our own knowledge of human life and culture in general. Further conditions wherein we might want to seek what is higher and what is lower, might be for example the difference between day to day living and e.g. working towards a goal, which may teach us also something about different perspectives on time (which I will treat in a later chapter).

And all such things will help us to develop our discrimination, to find out what we want...i.e. to choose our path....as well as at least in the beginning to find a certain niche in society (or in the group), where we can rest in a reasonably wholesome position, without having to be excessively self-conscious all the time,... before we can continue (with) discerning conditions (in order to move) towards the unconditioned.

Thus one should try to lower entropy in one's life by finding and building patterns and structures into one's life and mind...taking out chaotic ways of thinking and behaving (yet with the understanding, that these are just means and not ends).

WORLDLY CONDITIONS

...whether Buddhist monastery or not...progress within ourselves depends also on our understanding of worldly conditions...if we give, or have some special kind of skill, a special kind of character... we are pleasing to others etc,...we might get granted more freedom within the structure of a system or place. Having received rightful freedom from without (less duties etc.) it will be a matter from within whether we feel guilty or not to not do anything, whether we are inclined to think about the future and use our supposedly free-time only for study purposes, or only for relaxation and time-killing purposes...or on the

other hand for being able to meditate more freely without worries, figuring out personal questions. What ever it is, as long it is thought for an increase in wholesome states,...it can help a persons development

(...some form of asceticism or frugality also can help to develop this kind of perception of independence)

Spiritual development means personal development, which means, greater personal power, greater personal freedom, greater personal wisdom as well as, more clarity, more sense of joy, more positiveness, better intuition....

If you are perceived as unpleasing, as egoistic, as unwise, as selfish, as lazy etc.,(even if it is not true)...usually it will come back to you...in subtle form perhaps even as thought vibrations, but on a tangible level through gestures or words...Such things might matter especially in smaller communities, but as a psychological factor it exists in most people. In that, most people seek feedback from the outside...Thus such condition has to be taken into consideration too, when considering about worldly conditions in relation to one's practice, as for many a sensitive one it might usually not be good enough to only contemplate such things as impermanent and non-self. If you give out a smile or do some act of kindness off and on, you gain back a smile or acts of kindness,...leading to greater happiness within yourself. Thus, even a small thing like a smile can make a persons day. Another one's and your own.

In a group, certain hardened mind states and views are likely to arise,...as well as other undesirable things. This is part of the game of giving up part of our power for the end of acquiring knowledge and experience ..But if we practice the gradual training, understanding these to be arisen based on conditions (but noting their unwholesome character in the back of our mind), we may later rid ourselves of them, when the conditions improve.

Bhavanamaya panna also means that everything can be made use of for our spiritual practice. If we know ourselves, if we know our practice, knowing that proficiency will only come if we have went through some considerable amount of difficulty, we will welcome all hardships on our way.

When one's experiences are in line with one's discernment, then there is peace, even if the experiences are unpleasant. Understanding is understanding of the present conditions in relation to the whole...or one's' position now in relation to one's path and goal.

Then there is another way of thinking about the mind in relation to the outside world. Which is,...for people ordaining in foreign countries as monks,...a foreigner, dealing mainly with locals,...negative or positive emotions might arise in regard to learning the language (and giving time for that) (which for meditation purposes may be classified as "sense-sphere issues"), dealing primarily with people of a similar origin, a person might be more inclined to find a bridge of understanding the local customs and knowledges in regard to his own, or he will spend the time with others as a break and relaxation thing, between his (mental or otherwise) work-periods. While dwelling alone, a person will perhaps supplement with books of personal interest, religious or spiritual books and his feelings, aspirations, intentions and perceptions will depend on that. This is only for giving examples, as to where one may initially need to look, in order to get some insight into the conditions of the mind. From there one may calculate further as to whether the way the mind is inclining towards is really a way one wants to follow.

Living in a community it is important to know when to deal with people and when to avoid people...what kind of emotions should be allowed to cease by themselves and what kind of emotions should be thoroughly fought on the spot. And we should equally always try to find a balance between sensitising (introverting) and desensitising (extroverting)...for being too sensitive to one's own stuff, can bring

about things like mental derangement, while being not sensitive enough can perhaps cause breaking of one's virtue, loose talk, and other problems.

Hierarchically a yogi should first become sensitive to his environment (and try to gain freedom therein),...then towards his body,...then towards his mind.

For a person who has thus gained confidence in the without and somewhat feels himself in agreement with the outer condition, being intent on his mental development should understand that his body needs nutriment and his mind needs nutriment, the rest is a matter of time (of gaining the right mixture).

There are basic needs, that any person requires, but which according to quantity may vary. Thus man has to know his basic needs....as well as what is superfluous to that. He has to understand that every human being is dependent on things like nutriment, he has to understand that a human being requires a certain amount of security, ...he has to understand, that human beings usually require some amount of social contact....and that a human being usually requires some goal...

So a yogi should get to know (find out) what he needs to be content... nobody can live from love and air... and he should see to it that he neither goes beyond (/exceeds) that, by indulging in greed and luxury nor,....that he will have to live too long below that standard

If mans basic needs are not fulfilled,it will be difficult for him to find more than momentary peace,...he will have to think a lot, to solve his various problems. While yet, on the other hand, man's peace is as much dependent on his mind, as it depends on outer conditions...it is when man has greed, hatred and delusion, however good his outer conditions maybe, that he won't find peace either.

The more is provided by the environment, the less a person needs to apply his mind to existential issues....the more he can apply his mind to higher things....but equally the other way around, the better a

person can adopt, the less of his mind is owned by the environment, the more he can own his mind

If you are a person whose kamma is providing good resources, there should be no problem with tinkering a little bit around with medicines¹...if it helps one to understanding the elements or the body...it will also increase one's value for others. Much confusion exists in this world through good kamma-persons following a poor-mans philosophy, which may be valid mainly on a lower rung of evolution than that, which they have already acquired.

LAWS GOVERNING CONDITIONS

Every condition or set of conditions is governed by its own set of laws, which when obeyed will lead a person to a certain destination as well as determine his experiences in life...if we study a certain thing, we bring ourselves more and more in alignment with the laws governing that subject...if we study only a lot of Vinaya (the rules regulating monks life), there will be a fair chance that one day we might run a monastery or perhaps, at least, that we will go a path of worldly engagement. If we spend much time with other people, our views, convictions as well as the things we do, will depend on that. If we spend much time alone, our ideas and convictions will again depend on that...and even there, the conditions will differ, as to whether we are able to abandon the 5 hindrances and develop the 7 factors of enlightenment or not. Thus all things related to learning for the sake of reputation, on the meditation path will be termed sensual desire, all things related to learning out of fear...for the future etc. will be considered as 'bad mind'/'negative mind' (byāpāda)...

So if we can constantly attune our conditions in line with a wished for outcome, as well as in line with the avoidance of an unwished for

¹ Since ages Yogis used various “tricks” to maintain meditative states for longer. One such “trick” was to put a stone under one's tongue, which would slowly dissolve, nourishing the Yogi with some amount of minerals. In modern days using vitamin-supplements in a similar manner, may do the same trick, just better.

outcome, there is a greater possibility of gaining what we wish for and the avoidance of what we do not wish for,... but of course this will also be determined by whether or not we have already crystallised a certain definite will into our being... yet even if that is not the case (if we do not possess a very definite will), still most people will already have a fair amount of non-desire for very unwholesome, painful things.

...Thus, we must calculate the inner value of everything we are dealing with..

...yourself and the environment,...usually that's all that is there,...if you know either one well, you will have more time improving the other

The same laws, that are applicable in the world, apply to a big extent in a monastery too. That is, if you don't have the mind and knowledge yet, you have to work for your bread,...if you have the knowledge but not the liberation yet,...you have to earn the freedom by for example teaching etc. Herein one should use law against law to work oneself up the ladder to freely practice the higher teachings

...following the laws of earning one's' belly, following the laws of earning one's' heart, following the laws of earning one's' head

Having good questions, one may gain good answers,...what am I here for...What does the place want me to do? What are the topics of the place and how do they relate to my own topic/s (spiritual interests..etc.)?...Is there any conflict?...How can I resolve that conflict? ... 'What does living here mean?', 'What does being a buddhist here mean, ?', 'What does being a monk here mean'...am I satisfied with the established meaning of these things?

We have to find out, what needs to be done on the outside.. and we also try to find out about ourselves ...when our inside requires things like a sense of belonging or respect from others, we might need to do

more work on the outside, while if that ceases as a topic for us, we perhaps can focus more on ourselves.

Also it was said before, to not pay attention so much to the continuous arising and passing states of mind, but to surrender to the place and do what everyone does (when in a spiritual community), we do that acknowledging our own insecure and confusing condition...but we also need to know our limits, going back into ourselves... finding out which of our needs do make sense and how we can fulfill them.

For the attainment of concentration we in any circumstances, pay attention to the element of calm, to relaxation etc. on the one hand and to the element of exertion and energy on the other hand, for this end, we need the religious way of life, as well as the rituals etc. which support, when properly made use of the mindful living.

LIFE OF LIES:

Social life is based on compromise, repression and lying...and with lying is not just meant, to tell that you were a famous rock singer in your youth, when you weren't...lying goes much deeper than that... pretending that you know something when you really don't know, casual use of concepts, which you never penetrated as to their meaning, or even just the very common way of interacting with someone (politely, when feeling like being impolite)... Life is full of these things. Thus, for a person desiring to study life, it is rather of crucial importance to understand this fundamental fact of life, because it gives one of the key-reasons for living a religious life of meditation and study of holy texts.

Much of the task of changing ourselves, is to understand that we ourselves are made up of different parts, which usually relate in contradictory and chaotic ways to the outside world. It is in this way,

that we can become a more integral person who is really capable of telling the truth. Without any spiritual knowledge and without any training, it is pretty much impossible to tell the truth, it is pretty impossible to never lie.

Every child is taught not to lie...sometimes to good ends, but many times to no avail...In dealing with adults talking about lying requires a more refined method of consideration. It probably would be better to talk about how to more skillfully tell the truth on the one hand and on the other hand how to deal more wisely with people who one perceives to be lying.

For a spiritual practitioner truthfulness is the main means of progress...this means for a long time being honest about one's mistakes...Thus in matters of lying, a person in training, making mistakes, should analyse, making distinctions as regards when it happens, remembering both the incident and the circumstances. Most people would try to forget such situation as fast as possible,...perhaps later projecting it onto other people...hence the lack of clarity and understanding in that area. Thus the big difference between a person on the path and an ordinary person.

Then again, some person might lie just because the wind blows, while another might lie to protect his own and other peoples lives.

ON TEACHERS

To practice certain spiritual exercises without having any knowledge of spiritual matters and without having any guidance, is potentially quiet harmful... often it is such, that good instructions will already give one a certain flavour of what can be gained, so that the mind is already propelled in a certain direction...the rest is more of an finding the way and realising, what one has already glimpsed.

When you gain experiences which you consider good, which you consider worthwhile remembering, reporting them to a meditation teacher can help you to build up a mechanism, where you remember

more often your experience,... motivating you to build them up into a path....that is, if the meditation teacher encourages your experiences....

But if you report experiences that you consider good and your meditation teacher (especially if repeatedly) is telling you things like 'No,...don't pay attention to that...just go back to your nose' or ...'here we don't practice like that'...(as happens very often in meditation centres in asian countries, where meditation is often practiced just as a ritual or cultural activity without any interest for realising higher things)...you will have to know, ...its finished...A person who after at least a few such experiences does not realise, that that teacher is not going to help me with my meditation....may generally be considered as a person who is lacking wisdom.

(...although that realisation does not necessarily mean, that one can avoid interacting with that teacher altogether)

If you have a bad teacher (or one unsuitable for your temperament)(as happens occasionally), and you have the tendency to stay alone, if your meditation is not yet very good, search for another centre of gravity. If your teacher is your centre of gravity, and you are yourself weak, he might destroy everything good in you, or pervert your understanding of the Dhamma...in such case, see whether you can have another person to talk to, or follow some other aspect of the place, such as schedules, chanting, doing service for the Sangha or some senior monk...doing thus may show you that your teacher has less power in the place than you might have initially thought.

A bad teacher is one who tries to bind you to the false. Only if he succeeds in that, he can gain some power over you. In contrast, a real teacher will help you to distinguish the real from the false...which will immediately strengthen the goodness in you.

RIGHT TEACHER, WRONG TEACHER?

One important thing to realise in regard to teachers in the vipassanā schools is, that all the vipassanā schools are generally very keen to find persons to make a teacher of their tradition. There is always a lack of teachers. So if a person seems to be intelligent, has some degree of learning and also is a calm character, even if he does not understand much about meditation or anything in regard to the workings of the mind (usually nobody is going to ask about this, which is why it is more often than not the case), there will be made attempts to make him a teacher.

A yet further important point in this regard also is, that in many of the third world countries, where the standard of education is often very low, it is generally not so difficult for an intelligent person who might have acquired even only a little bit of some religious or occult knowledge, if he is bold enough, to set himself up as an enlightened master. And perhaps even going through life claiming special attainments or some spiritual powers, without ever having to show or prove them.

But life is such, that things are as a general rule never perfect. One place you may have a good teacher, but the place itself is not good or suitable for your condition, another place the place is good, but the teacher is a drag.

If one has some understanding, one might use the condition of the bad teacher as a further training. If one is generally lacking understanding and has no chance to get understanding from other sources, one might need to surrender to a teacher and hope, that he can help one to make use of the difficult surrounding conditions for one's Dhamma practice.

One alternative to working with a teacher and under a teacher, is working with a system...Many have tried to find the perfect teacher (especially going to the east) and reaping only disappointment, started to try finding answers in the texts and the systemisations which

were building up on them. And many did get success with that approach.

If you work with a teacher, you will have to consolidate yourself (or your practice) with that teacher. If you work with a system, you have to consolidate yourself (/your practice) with the system. Both will have pros and cons depending on the teacher or the system. And of course they don't have to be mutually exclusive.

About Systems and how to work them, I will come back in a later chapter.

LIFE OF CONTRADICTIONS: (OR CONTRADICTIONS OF LIFE):

In life many times we might encounter unsolvable riddles. One famous one, often posted in ethics classes, is 'Would you kill one man, if by doing so you could save 20 or a hundred people?', or 'Which choice in such case would be that of a holy man?'.
In life there are many such riddles to be solved. Many times we can not know which choice would be the right one. And the truth of the matter is, that there is no objectively right choice. But there are differences in matters of outcome. An ordinary person, whatever his choice may be, is likely to get confused after any choice. While a trained person, who knows the laws of life, will know the consequences of any choice he makes and thus will grow in wisdom.

But for making the right choice, it is important to know one's position in life (/in the system). If you know where you are, even if you are at the bottom pit of society, you might have more peace, more wisdom and be free-er of greed, hatred and delusion than the greatest scholar or king. Being thus, you truly carry the seed of greatness within you, ready to be put into fertile ground when the right conditions have ripened.

Yet another aspect of meditation and spiritual living, is to think in new categories, in new ways. Ordinarily sitting around somewhere doing nothing particular will be considered laziness. But starting on a spiritual path, this should become one of our main practices. Ordinarily focussing on yourself only, not doing things for others, will be considered selfish. Now it will be the main means for progress. Ordinarily bodily kamma will be the most important, then verbal and last mental. Now it shall become the other way around. That is, mental kamma will be the most important, then only comes verbal and bodily one. Many if not all things of life have to be re-considered in this way. They have to be re-learned and re-understood.

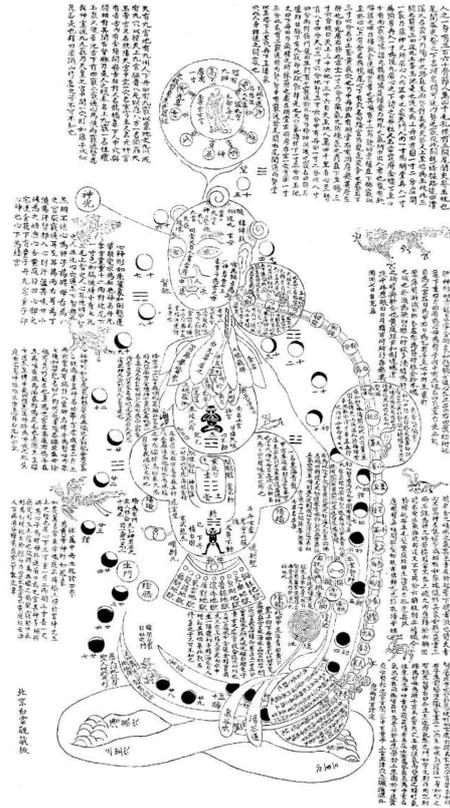
Living in the monastery, wearing monks robes, the perception arises "I am a monk (/a bhikkhu)". With this perception in mind, one acquires the life-style of a bhikkhu and masters it. But then, going to an empty place, desirous of true knowledge (self-knowledge), it is this very perception one burns away, the process of which is called meditation.

The Body

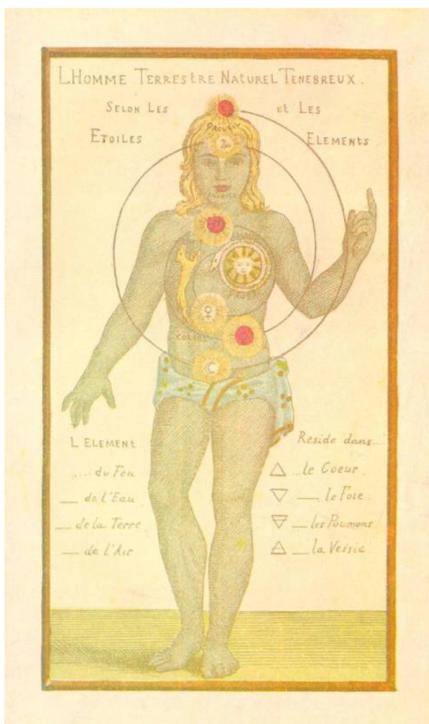
“He who uses well his light reverting to its source so bright, will from the body ward all blight and hides the unchanging from men's sight” (from the Tao Te Ching)

One of the big problems of perhaps all the major religions in the world is the lack of capacity to talk maturely about the body

Therefore here some inner considerations as to how the body relates to mental development.



Ancient Chinese Human Computer...all the aspects of life being comprehended through the body and in the body



Old European depiction of man, awoken to the cosmic principles within

CONSCIOUS RELAXATION VS. UNCONSCIOUS RELAXATION

If the body is full of tensions and we have no habit of doing good, no habit of channeling it wisely, those tensions will lead to greater unconsciousness. And the body being an expression of the animal nature of man will wield its power over the better judgement of the intellect. This is the way of the savage.

On the other hand side, whenever we do good, whenever we act in accordance with our better knowledge, relaxation of the mind sets in...and the body will follow. This is the way of culture and consciousness. This relaxation in turn will allow for the growth of consciousness (jhāna condition).

And in exactly the same way it is when we are meditating. If we perceive our moves (e.g. of the mind within the body) to be in accordance with our better knowledge, relaxation sets in and consciousness grows. Relaxation of the body too may set in, if we do not apply the mind at all; but then consciousness will be lost altogether, and if it is not quickly regained the mind will become savage like when consciousness starts emerging again. Thus, while from the side of the body both conditions may look very similar, from the side of mind they are utterly opposite.

Hence, it is those who are skillful in doing good only, that can succeed in the way of culture, and only those who based on that, gather knowledge regarding body and mind, in the way of the expansion of consciousness.

(As some wise person expressed it: Those who have (much), may quite easily grow in plentitude,while he who has but little, may easily loose even that).

Relaxing your mind into your body, you always want to be careful to not relax it into something unwholesome. That is, allowing the unwholesome to grow, by giving it space.

With the unwholesome, you first have to work hard to get rid of it. If you are strong and possess good spiritual faculties, you can do so in meditation. If you are not strong, you will first have to develop wholesome kamma otherwise. Once you acquired a spark of wholesomeness, you allow that to grow.

If you apply your mind for example to the breath or to the belly, or to sensations in the body, with an intention to understand something about meditation, you are acquiring sense-sphere kamma related to meditation. This then will result in an increase in your understanding about meditation from the sense-sphere perspective (which has to be established first).

Spiritual development is about gaining conscious control over your life,...whether you consciously relax or you consciously tense up to resist a certain thing,...both are valid means for progress.

TECHNICAL TEACHINGS REGARDING THE BODY

THE PHYSIOLOGY OF SUCCESS

ON LDT

When all the gross bodily functions reached homeostasis, we can start getting an idea about the meanings of chi and Dan tian.¹ Homeostasis

¹ "Dan tian in tradition taoist meditation denotes the place about 3 chinese inches (4 personal finger breadth without the thumb) below the belly button. It lies on the main meridian (the so-called chi path or chi route) of the human body and is a place where chi is cultivated and developed by taoist meditation, and also is the pool or reservoir for chi. Tian (田) means farming field (the word, or character as most people call it, itself looks like a paddy field already). Dan is a ball-shaped medicine, made up of special herbs and special minerals (elixir of life), decocted by taoists (who are considered to be the earliest alchemists in China) to help them to attain immortality and become a divine being (with status and power higher than Gods). In general, dan denote the kind of medicines which aim at benefitting the body and mind to be healthy, comfortable, light, etc. or for special purposes. So, dan here is to represent the chi signifying that its function is similar to a real dan."

means: the body temperature reached its optimum, the oxygen level in the blood reached its perfect amount and the blood sugar level is stable. When these are fulfilled and the mind is inwardly established, usually perceptions of light (/energy) will arise, which can be said to be an in-between link between gross materiality and mind, which is known in many cultures. The Chinese call it chi, the Hindus call it prana, in the western world it was once known as ether, to several indigenous/tribal people it is known as mana, modern western civilisation might call it nervous energy...in Theravada Buddhist teachings it is equivalent to the fine material-sphere (fine-material element), and later in the Abhidhamma system, it was elaborated as a process of the interaction of various particles (nutriment born particles feeding kamma born matter). With the Theosophists it is perhaps the same as the astral-body, or in the more detailed classification the etheric double.

For higher human states (pure samadhi),...a full (lower-) dan-tien (etherical part of the digestion system) is essential.

Thus a yogi should keep his LDT (Lower Dan Tien) as a reference point where his mindfulness should habitually rest, in order to keep check of his available energy and his health condition.

(that is for a person who has hope for improvement of his health condition) his second reference-point should be his breath (it could also be taken the other way around (breath first and then LDT)...then the mind (preferably in his breath).

The LDT should be one's' basis ...As long there is some amount of energy left in one's' LDT there will be grounding and a balanced outlook ,...from there one can make explorations of getting involved in (i.e. the monastic) life, to gather perceptions of how to do within the environment, when to endure and when to let go, when to focus more on oneself and when to flow with the circumstances....and from there

one can also explore about meditation,...when it makes sense to manipulate and when one should let things flow by themselves.

For progress in meditation a yogi should understand his digestive system as a lower part of his mind....Even digestion transforms the 4 gross material elements into a subtle etherical substance, which becomes the substance on which the mind can manifest itself

(Which in medieval European terms relates to the process of alchemy...the production of the philosophers stone... (the descriptions of which are very similar to the descriptions given to the nimitta of Buddhist meditation practice))

...this etherical substance (creative force) can be transformed or refined into various precious things.....it can appear in various beautiful colours (gold, yellow, white...), it can increase in solidity and be extended to become an, at times big solid aura (perhaps also filled with mettā), it can be gathered in some part of the body to manifest deeper parts of the mind (...like long forgotten memories),...or when skilfully used it can provide the basis for a mental plateau...vision of past lives...etc.or to solve deep philosophical or scientific problems.¹

The LDT is not the belly, if you have no samadhi, there may be the belly, if you have samadhi, there may be the LDT.

Now, this Chi-force or energy,...may be called also the vessel of the mind. This Chi in a developed person will follow its pathway upwards to the top of the head, but if it is not controlled or kept in check, it is more likely to get stuck somewhere, wherever it spills over its channels (the blood will be too thick to penetrate the walls of the blood

¹ This is also resonating with the Buddhas description, that a monk who attained the four Jhānas and grasped that sign through reviewing-knowledge, is able to realise any state realisable through direct knowledge, when there is a suitable basis for it....-these are only two ways of talking about the same thing, but from the perspectives of different systems

vessels), leaving some sort of deposit at those walls, and sort of glueing them ...whenever this energy or force gets thus stuck in its channels, some worry or desire or confusion is going to arise...

If the system is clean, that is the channels are clear, ...pure mind states will arise, if the channels are unclean, that is, the chi gets stuck somewhere in the channel, impure mental states will arise.

Thus one should make use of 3 things in order to refine one's physical (and mental) base...movement, stillness, and material nutriment.

QUESTIONS TO ASK ON THE LEVEL OF CHI

What can I do to balance the Chi (balancing imbalances in the elements...e.g. excessive heat, too coarse,...lack of fuel etc.,), how can I become more skillful in moving around the Chi unobstructedly , how can I make it feed problem areas (this corresponding to the sutta descriptions of suffusing the body with joy etc.)

Once a yogi perceives a certain amount of balance (of the elements), he should make use of it, through the above mentioned means,...he should not follow arising desires, such as drinking water, nor should he waste away energy through excessive study etc.

Often things are such, that one might think one will get bored not to put anything into one's mouth or just e.g. eats or drinks as a matter of habit,... but sometimes... if we recognise that the condition of the elements is such, that more water element or the adding of any other element would lead to greater imbalance of the elements we should not risk breaking that balance, but should find a way of allowing that balance to continue...thus emphasising the balance of the elements

and making an investigation about how to develop that/repeat that/keep that condition longer, etc.

...and so too with any state worthwhile developing ...ever trying to investigate into the 'how' of it as well as its meaning for one's spiritual path

Whatever you do, attend to the condition of your body...am I (./the body) getting tense, etc?...

...sometimes the mind might be calm, but in the sway of heavy elements, thus not energetic, then it might be advisable to stir the mind up a little, even if that means the disturbance of the elements, even for the sake of life, we should not rest in unwholesome states/conditions....yet another way is, if we understand the nature of the elements, we might use medicine, the breath, or other more physical methods for improving the character of the elements, that will have the benefit of quickly regaining both one's body and one's mind, although this can have the effect of turning one into a materialist (in a limited sense of the word), in that, one might start balancing the mind only through physical means,....and thus will be excessively interested in medicine etc.

(Usually those who go far in this direction, will after some time drop meditation perhaps altogether and only work for assuring themselves better material circumstances in the future).

Thus one should cautiously approach this situation in line with the Dhamma and adopted to the situation...

"My body is not good/my health is not good", this is a thought... if you can even once a day notice an experience, that contradicts such statement, even being one minute conscious of good health, whether while eating, or after waking up, or throughout the day, then you know

that you can overcome such situation,... paying more and more often attention to good health, you can investigate into that situation and thus allow it to grow.

...a meditator first has to earn his head, seeing to it, that he can direct his bodily energy towards the head and keep it there for longer periods of time, then he should see to it, that he also manages to keep energy in the lower part of his body, suffusing the whole body with his mind, (with his energy)

...as the body needs (the right kind of-) food, so the mind needs (the right kind of-) food...if we understand this process of (right) feeding, and we also allow for the natural process of digestion to occur, the result or outcome surely won't be just faeces

...understand your body, not body as some objective phenomenon but subjectively according to your needs...understand it in relation to mind...what does physical tension do to your mind,...what does eating much do to your mind?...what does physical weakness do to your mind?

...if we feel, if I have this wind going up here, I should take this medicine from over there (knowing a variety of local medicines for various ailments) ...and if no medicine is available, I pay attention in this way (either to the problem or to a wholesome object, that lifts up the mind..), ...so as to make the problem subside... and if the problem appears to be permanent, I should live my life in such and such a way with the problem...then improvements may come.

...what is important? Sometimes after many days we realise, that we have such and such an imbalance of elements... and after another long time we realise, what is the cure for that..thus we study and learn about the elements...why is my body heavy?,... why is it not light? when is it heavy, when is it light?

...being determined on living alone, one must see to it, that the fire in one's belly never goes out, but preferably ever burns evenly...to this end vitamin tablets, tonics and other aiding medicines can prove indeed endlessly valuable

...like a doctor, who has to remember all the (available) medicines ...as well as the symptoms of the diseases which they are meant to cure, in the same manner the yogi gathers information (and remembers them) about the elements of his body and mind as well as his environment in order to know about different diseases and their cure.

BODY-MIND FULFILLMENTS AND THE CHAKRAS

The Base

...being grounded in Dhamma...standing on a firm base...how to keep the lower chakra (the base) filled with (spiritual) energy...how to overcome the existential problems in life (e.g. fears regarding survival)

Solar Plexus Chakra

...how can I take my health into my own hands

Sexual Chakra

...how can I be master over my lower nature ...how can I live a happy celibate life...

The Heart

....opening the heart, ...how can I live life feeling secure and loved/ liked...how can I live life with an open heart...not closing my heart towards my own suffering or the suffering of others

Speech

...right speaking... how to have only spiritual energy going through my throat (how to speak with mindfulness?) ...how can I speak more confidently?

The Third Eye

...third eye area..I want to be one who sees ...I want to be a seer... how can I become one who can perceive the subtler things of life?...

Higher reasoning

...how to get sufficient energy into the neo-cortex area of the brain ...how can I keep that area of the body open and supplied with energy...how to encounter the everyday situations in life with greater understanding?...how to live life with higher reasoning?...how to gain enlightened knowledge?

TURNING THE LOWER CHAKRAS AND DIVORCING THE HEART FROM THE BELLY

Turning the lower chakras relates to having a certain amount of freedom,...if you are continuously involved in life-things,...This itself means, that you are not turning your lower chakras, but that your energies are being pulled by sensual things.

Thus, sometimes when your heart is too conjoined with your belly and you can not experience any condition of flow, you will equally encounter great difficulties in controlling your mind. In that case, in order to get your energy flowing, you can try for example moving your body back and forth a bit and up and down a bit, while trying to perceive the breath (when you can perceive it) through the movement of the belly. At the same time in order to ground the mind, it may be helpful to focus it on the palms of the hands, which may be held in front of the belly and which sometimes it may help to move them around a bit too.

TURNING THE HEART CHAKRA

The more you are able to operate on the level of wholesome emotions without having to hold onto the body all the time, the easier life becomes and the easier meditation becomes. Thus remaining aware of the heart area or an wholesome emotion (possibly even throughout the body) learning to let the mind flow with it, is the main work with this chakra.

TURNING THE MIND

At first it may be difficult to keep going a good idea within the mind,...it may be easier to first learn to follow the dictates' of a good idea. Yet, slowly as skill improves, and mind and body learn to better

cooperate, it becomes possible to think further and further into a good idea as well as to see further and further into a good idea.

BODY CONTEMPLATION

... eating or drinking sweet may activate the liver, because of which appetite improves, often accompanied with the release of certain hormones, which also create happiness in the mind....Stagnation of the juices in the liver(gall) in ancient times was thought to be the cause of anger and melancholy.

(slow flowing bodily humours,...may cause slothful states of mind)

...if the energy goes down we are feeling heavy, if it goes up, we are feeling light...(therein relying on this, abandon that...)

...the autonomous nervous system can be controlled through meditation, a person with constant back-pain may use his mind to train the muscles along the spine (tensing and relaxing them)

Understanding in these ways, a yogi learns to fix himself

...our belly is like an oven, if you keep the fire therein properly going, it will keep the house warm, makes your sustenance more healthy, and makes your environment a place for rest and good work....but on the other hand if you throw wet firewood or the wrong kind of things into it, it will fill the whole house with dirty smoke and impurity, making the whole place an unpleasant place to be in.....not to mention that, if you everyday have to light up the fire anew, after all coals have went cold, you are going to have to do a lot of work to make the house an

agreeable place again,...you will be very busy and will probably also be breathing much bad smoke.

...if my body feels light, what does it do to my mind? Do I feel better and happier, or do I feel ungrounded and insecure?...what can I learn from that insecurity? What does it tell about myself? Am I a person, which is afraid to let go? ...who always needs the body to feel secure? What will happen when I die...will I be holding on to the body till the last moment? Is there the possibility of integrating lightness and happiness into my mental life....

...learning to live simple...when we first just learn to live, without emphasising on learning other things, we see that many of our physical and mental wounds will heal by themselves... the forebrain and neocortex part of our brain (responsible for higher mental faculties) require enormous amounts of energy....if we can first learn to live life, keeping our base (base chakra and the lower chakras) undepleted and healthy ...and from there learn to live life more with an open heart,...and only then work on gaining and developing the higher faculties, ...we will have a vast backup to go back to, when things will go wrong too heavily and too long for a possibility of figuring everything out with our higher faculties

We can ask questions (perhaps focussing on the lower chakras) ...'how can I assure, that my base (-chakras) won't become depleted (for that will usually be accompanied with much anxiety and in the long run with disease etc.)...Usually a life without that firm base, may be (or appear) more chaotic and may force us more into dependence on the environment (much of our internals will be determined or conditioned by the place and the people around us),...

...when the lower chakras are full,... when the mind (heart) gets excited, it will have a reservoir to calm down again and for the cultivating of pure states

...a person having the problem of never being able to eat enough, may well suffer from this due to some form of anxiety, ...he might solve such type of problem by making an effort to bring himself into situations which require courage from him (force him to develop courage)...as his heart becomes stronger, his body will manifest the need for greater amounts of food (often people with lower back-pain might actually also suffer from this due to this problem ...they may so to say "not have the guts to walk upright and confident") ...feeling into your body, you find out what your body requires... then you do wholesome deeds, with the aim of gaining what you require (that is the way of magic).

...if you eat, pay attention, ...there may be some amount of food, until which you will feel very light, not feeling the body or perhaps feeling a feeling of the body regenerating and getting energised, but with the next morsel you will feel your kidneys working, perhaps your liver too and maybe you will feel some solidifying sensations in your brain...

...see whether you can cultivate the pure states (in Sanskrit sattvas) more often...When we are pure, we are happy, being happy, our concentration improves.

You may be surprised how long a well functioning body can keep going without any new supply of food.

If all energy goes up to the brain, along the middle channel, without any of the other organs having to be supplied with extra energy (due to having to work to purify the system)...then samadhi can come, insights can come.

Contemplation of postures

...better is if meditation is going hand in hand with some tai chi or yoga practice.....to develop some body awareness /some understanding of the body and how it effects the mind

...standing or walking in an upright posture, the mind feels upright, confident, balanced... with a mind that feels, upright, confident and balanced, when coming in contact with people, one speaks with confidence, clarity and uprightness ...having the habit of respectfully observing things within oneself, one will be able to treat people and their objectives respectfully...having the habit of observing things as they are, observing their origination, danger and escape,...their impermanent, suffering and non-self characteristics, one might be able to relate another persons experience to the Dhamma ...as a result of which, people will respect one, one may be able to help other people...life improves for both.

Perspectives on work:

...do some work... and while doing it, feel how your body feels, do you feel your muscles expending and contracting... what does it do to your mind.... do you suddenly feel downgraded taking on a worker identity ...how does that feel like...do you recognise that as a danger to your spiritual path?....or do you feel you are doing a great thing....suddenly feeling more alive then usual?.....feeling that you do something unselfish and unegotistic? Observing your thoughts, feelings and emotions...you will see the need for formulating and refining your own concept of the world.

...if you can keep your head chakra open, and filled with pure energy, your wisdom faculty will guide you as to how to proceed

...developing familiarity as to how to make best use of the 4 requisites of life also has to come through observation of the body....how does my body work in relation to the place, the food, the climate...how

when only meditating, how when talking, how when moving.... what time of the day I usually feel best

Usually much of our energy is wasted due to wrong working of the organism...if we eat too much,...excess material gets disposed somewhere in the body... which the body will have to work again to get rid of...we drink, which will destroy the digestive heat...instead of giving the body rest, we use our brain resulting again in different forms of malfunctioning. If we can figure out how our body works, then we really can do what is appropriate at a certain time, then our body will overcome all sorts of diseases...a healthy body in its turn can produce or bring about various types of higher faculties, that can not exist for a malfunctioning organism.

Remaining in touch with the chi-flow within, we after some time may be able to intuit as to how much time it will take to get full samadhi (that means how long it will take till the whole of kamma born matter is suffused and nourished with nutriment born particles)...and e.g. when stopping a sitting, how far from full samadhi one is moving away,...etc.

Emotion and Feeling

(and how they relate to spiritual development)



“If you don't have a soul, you'd better invent one for yourself...otherwise someone else may do it...And let it better be a good one, else it will lay heavy in your bosom”

An emotion and a feeling are two different things. Feeling is Lives first attempt to know, while Emotions are Lives first attempt to move towards others.

In regards to feelings, there are three different feelings...the pleasant, the unpleasant and the neutral.

Whenever there is a pleasant feeling in your body (due to past wholesome kamma) and you, becoming aware of it contemplate its benefit for your spiritual path,...you develop supporting wholesome

kamma... Whenever you experience unpleasant feelings in your body,...and you can yet keep your mind positive, then wholesome kamma develops and the continuation of the unwholesome kamma is obstructed.

Pleasant feeling is what makes the mind grow, ...it supports it, it is like a platform for it to manifest. Unpleasant feelings, make the mind wither and shrink....

It is important to understand all types of feelings (first especially pleasant and unpleasant),...for if a person is identified with pleasant feelings, without understanding their non-self nature, he will get confused when that pleasant feeling disappears (such as when a spiritual person might feel, that he lost his spiritual attainment (his divine grace etc.), when after a longer period of pleasant feelings, these feelings suddenly disappear (due to sickness etc...).

That is why in most if not all ancient cultures there were certain initiation rituals for children or teenager (especially men) for the entering into adulthood, which usually involved very unpleasant and strenuous things....sweat lodges, bungy jumping, fastings and similar things.

And even today in many religious sects there exist initiation rituals of that kind.

Thus the understanding of unpleasant feeling is a very important aspect of both religious life, as well as adult life,...as it breaks with the (for children quiet necessary) identification and feeling of a unified self in relation to pleasant feelings.¹

Yet, on the other hand it is equally important to understand, that such a thing is not meant to be a life style thing, and even in the first place it never should be associated with a feeling of punishment.

¹ usually it is due to this identification coupled with a lack of understanding of the rules of adult life, which is the sole cause for manifestations of dishonesty and lying

For people who never got enough love in their childhood it maybe potentially dangerous, ...for such people it is more important to develop first a feeling of unity within themselves, or a feeling of unity through a group.

Pleasant feelings are important for one's spiritual development and development of mind....

From an Abhidhamma point of view, pleasant feelings allow for the manifestation of the various wholesome mental factors and make them grow, they allow for a continuity of mental processes.

A mental process or an emotion made of many impulses, usually can last only as long as there are the same type of feelings.

Unpleasant feelings generally allow only for short mental processes.

EMOTION

An emotion is something more complex than feelings, it includes a certain amount of intellection...that is, for the most part memory and anticipation (thought about past incidents and thoughts about the future)...A person who is emotional about a certain thing...will not just be influenced by a feeling of pleasure or pain, but by the mind thinking about the experience, that is, the mind involves itself with the experience...anticipating a union with an desirable object in the future or remembering past strategies for the obtainment of a desired object (and similar with the destruction or repulsion of an undesirable object)...all without allowing the forces of the mind to directly being dispersed,...thus requiring already a certain power of concentration...a sign of a higher development of a person...

FEELING → INTEREST → VALUE → ATTITUDE

Our likes and dislikes are closely related to feelings too... Generally, objects and activities, that produce pleasant feeling are liked by a person....the opposite is true for unpleasant feelings. When the liking

or disliking for an object becomes very strong, we are said to value that object (,person or activity).

Value, like interest and feeling may be positive or negative. A person becomes inclined towards what he values....Sometimes the inclination or rejection becomes a permanent condition within us. It influences our behaviour...this condition is called attitude.

(If a person values religion, he is inclined towards religious beliefs and practices...thus he can be said to have a positive attitude towards religion)

Attitude may be considered as a permanent state of readiness or preparedness to perceive, feel, think and act in a particular manner, ...to be inclined towards or reject, to be attracted or repelled by an object, issue or person. Thus it forms part of what we call a persons character.

PRACTICAL WORK ON FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS

BONDAGE AND FREEDOM:

Human beings are usually bound up with other human beings. Inter-human relationships may be one of the greatest sources of suffering in a persons life.

In order to free himself from the dependence towards another person, a person must first free his mind from the dependence towards that other person...if in his mind there will be no footing for another persons' hooks,...there will be no possibility for that person to get hurt by another person. So the main requisite condition is to think rightly about the circumstances, to get on top of things in thought first.

INTROSPECTION AS A WAY TO UNDERSTAND OURSELVES IN RELATION TO THE THEORY ON EMOTIONS:

What are Emotions, what are feelings and how do they work?...how do I feel, when I am only alone, how do I feel in company, how do I feel when sitting in meditation?, how do I feel when walking or exercising, how do I feel when I do something good for others...how do I feel when doing the right things, how do I feel when doing the wrong things... how do I feel when listening to Dhamma, how when listening to non-sense.....how do I feel when my body is weak, how do I feel when my body is strong, how do I feel when applying my mind, how when I allow it to run its own course....

EXPERIMENTING WITH EMOTIONS

We can make experiments of how we can manipulate our own as well as other peoples emotions (preferably for their betterment)...

For example through gestures (e.g. smiling at somebody) we may be able to trigger wholesome emotions in others,...doing fastings we may improve our own emotions...Through the mind too we may be able to manipulate emotions...e.g. changing a mood by remembering something positive...keeping an arisen wholesome emotion going, by thinking further about something the mind already has picked up.

NON-EXPRESSION OF NEGATIVE EMOTIONS:

The moment you express negative emotions, that moment you are usually out of the realm of good company and within the realm of the barbarians, hooligans & co., where there is no space for reflection and thinking. Yet, on the other hand side, not expressing them, if you find no wholesome channel to work on your negative emotions...no time to

reflect on them, to think them over,...they will develop into a complex...and thus will become a problem....

In human life suppression of unwholesome states of mind, has its definite place. In matters of mental processing, it requires some amount of introspection (mind-door adverting) and then a thought process that is concerned with developing an obstructive kamma towards what is perceived at the mind-door. Usually it is rather a luxury, if a person has the time and supporting conditions to sit down and shine his light on those undesirable kammās coming from the past and arising at the mind-door in order to really work on removing them completely (thus developing a destructive kamma towards them).

In order to enter upon a spiritual path, especially negative emotions will have to be, to quite some degree, under a person's control (suppressed or destroyed whatever the conditions permit).

DESERVING HAPPINESS

Many especially religious minded people think or feel, that they do not deserve happiness, or that happiness is somewhat not important for spiritual progress. This is utterly not so, although as already mentioned, the ability to cope with suffering and pain is an essential element on the spiritual path,...it is by no means so, that a spiritual path is essentially a painful path. Quite otherwise,...the scriptures are full of descriptions of the joys and the powers on the spiritual path...it is where the identification with lower things are still strong, that painful practices might be necessary or important in order to strengthen the power of the will... but only as a means... and great care has to be taken to avoid the trap of defilements garmenting themselves as

virtues and initial will-power and intelligence turning into deluded and aggressive self-hatred.

From the Buddha:

"Happiness, Sakka, I declare to be twofold, according as it is to be followed after or avoided. Unhappiness too, I declare to be twofold....- Equanimity, too, I declare to be twofold....."And the distinction I have affirmed in happiness, was drawn on these grounds: When in following after happiness one perceives that bad qualities develop and good qualities are diminished that kind of happiness should be avoided. And when following after happiness one perceives that bad qualities are diminished and good qualities develop, then such happiness should be followed. Now, of such happiness as is accompanied by thinking and pondering, and of that which is not so accompanied, the latter is the more excellent. The same applies to unhappiness, and to equanimity. And this, Ruler of the Gods, is the practice that monk must have undertaken who has reached the right way...leading to the cessation of the tendency to proliferation"

(Sakkapanha Sutta)

ANGER

Anger is one of the major emotional problems of a great many people...Thus a person may be well advised to give some time to the study this great aspect of our internal universe.

The first great strategy for the abeyance of anger, which is recommended in the Visudhimagga, the great Buddhist treatise on meditation, is for the person of an angry temperament to avoid unpleasant surroundings,...thus, to bring himself into an environment in which he perceives himself to have less anger arising.

INTUITIONAL WAYS OF DEALING WITH ANGER:

A step further along the path, will be, to make use of the faculty of self-enquiry.

Thus, one possible approach of dealing with anger, is to look at it directly and to question it....This way you might discover, for example, that although perhaps various of your thoughts will tell you all sorts of things, perhaps in between these thoughts there arise images, some of which might contradict the content of those thoughts...you might perceive in between thoughts of.."he is all evil"....images of scenes and occasions where he wasn't all that evil, or between the thoughts that dwell on the things, that "he" has done, you may perceive scenes of your own past, where you might have done quite similar thingssuch experiences can teach you to not be too confident about each and every thought. So you will become more tolerant towards other people, as well as more humble and less judgemental towards others.....

Principle questions to ask for the overcoming of anger...or right aspirations to post:

"May I gain the perfect understanding of the other persons conditions and circumstances (may my intuition guide me to such understanding), ...for to understand all, means to forgive all."

Another way of dealing with anger is to use it to make some small experiments in psychical direction, ...that is, if we are confident, that we know what is good, we know what is wholesome, we know love etc. ...we can try to use that very unwholesome emotion, by making the feeling aspect grow and intensify until we can perhaps direct our mind

towards that person... perhaps we perceive images of that person doing something bad e.g. ...if we can then use our faculty of imagination in a creative manner, for example if we think that person is doing bad things towards other people, we can send the person whom we perceive to be threatened, support and strength or by imagining something like a bubble around the seemingly evil person, from which any attempt to hurt e.g. emotionally, is bouncing back towards himself and can not reach outward (although one has to be careful to not drift into a direction of black magic... remembering Dhamma principles)...thus we may get to understand the powers of the mind.

These are just examples for clarification... to show the way of practice as a contrast to the often quite ridged outline of the books¹

Many of the states of magic come about as a result of some emotional involvement... so if we have to endure accusation, humiliation, or certain acts of suppression,... at that time, if we develop the virtues of the heart (patient endurance etc.)...refining our internal map with informations about suffering and the non-self and conditioned nature of certain unwholesome mind states,...that increasing inner depth is one of the main factors for mystical, magical, meditative states.

The Buddhas recommendation for dealing with the problem of anger is, to make the deliverance of mind through loving kindness one's vehicle...such as by the use of mettā phrases (phrases of loving kindnesses) or visualisation exercises and applying one's mind towards this new object, until it reaches a certain momentum, whereupon a persons will feel mettā (loving kindness) within himself..if a person experiences himself as being a being full of mettā repeatedly, his identification with the anger will disappear

¹ as well as to give some glimpses of the higher life

automatically. And yet similarly, a person following the path of self-development, understanding the impermanent and non-self nature of all phenomena, is also capable of overcoming anger.

If one is often obsessed by anger but one has not much capacity for concentration, one can try to do something along the line of a ritual, that is one can do some deliberate act of goodwill towards the person one feels anger towards and wishing within oneself that that good kamma will help to eradicate that anger.

The non-expression of unwholesome emotions as well as the skillfulness in wholesome emotions is what might be considered a main condition of what makes a person to be thought of as a good character.

FEAR AND ANXIETY

Life is a frightening business. There are probably rather few people, who do not suffer some form of anxiety or another. Fear is one strong paralysing agent, that can drain off much of a persons resources and energies.

There are usually two possible reasons for fear: either the presence or the absence of something.

Depending on our life circumstances, there may be many frightening things surrounding us...many people that at the very least may make us feel suspicious...many unknown things that intimidate us by their incomprehensibility...

While on the other hand, there may be many things that we perceive as our needs, either at present or in the approaching future...and which we can not see any way of how we could possibly fulfill them.

There are ways on the human level, which can buffer the intensity of anxiety, such as improving one's surrounding conditions, seeking out more agreeable surroundings, seeking more contact with people we perceive to be trustworthy., etc.

On the religious level .. for immediate anxiety the Buddha recommended recollection of the qualities of the Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha,...and along that line, perhaps any form of prayer might equally do something to cope with anxiety attacks.

Further than that, certain anxieties regarding our own weaknesses require more firm means, as for example the taking onto oneself some set of precepts or vows and following them as uncompromisingly as one can, yet without being excessively judgemental when one fails in it (as such attitude would evidently generate even more anxiety).

Beyond that, only a capacity to attain samadhi, that is, a capacity to develop happiness within oneself, can cope with fear more directly... and following that, the gaining of liberating insight into higher things.

SOME METAPHYSICAL CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT ANGER, DESIRE AND DELUSION

Anger is life resisting life. It is when life is identified with what it is not, that it resists its own flow. But as lives vision of life becomes more complete, life learns to flow with life in an unobstructed manner.

Anger is a form of resistance of the higher part of ourselves,...an awareness of our path, towards sense-impressions that obstruct the flow of life moving in the direction outlined by that path. That path is not as yet a self-chosen path, but a path as outlined by our culture, upbringing and the wave of evolution itself. It is a path of still seeking fulfilment and power in concrete things without. It is only when a person starts entering the path of involution, that is, not seeking anymore experiences without, but working in conjunction with life learns to comprehend life, that there becomes possible a complete transcendence of all forms of anger.

Desire is life thirsting for more life. It is when life seeks for life in dead things, that its thirst fails to become quenched. When life sees itself expand, its desires start to subside. As life starts to realise itself, it ceases to seek life where it can not be found, thus its thirst starts to be quenched more frequently. When there is nothing left to be realised by life about life, lives thirst for life will have come to its end.

Desire is a thirst for more life. It is when we are identified with sense-impressions coming from without, that there is no ending of this thirst. Yet, as we progress, we learn to identify with ever higher things, thus our thirst seeks quenching through ever purer waters with increasing thirst quenching capacities.

Delusion is life blinded by dead things. It is when life grows eyes for itself, that it begins to see what used to blind it.

Delusion arises, where we have not yet learned to see,...as our knowledge of life develops, we learn to remain mindful in all the conditions of life.

INSIGHT INTO THE PROCESS OF EVOLUTION OF EMOTIONS AND FACULTIES

For gaining a yet clearer understanding about emotions, we might consider about them in the light of their evolution and relation to the higher faculties.

An Example:

A person receives an impression from without: A strong person oppresses a weaker one...

First level of development...

The observing person receives the impression, and after that his mind just goes back into life-continuum ...it will add to his life-stuff and become part of his nature...he will feel naturally at home amongst barbarians, which will manifest in his later life.

Second level of development....

The observing person is a person who in his course of growing up learned to make a certain distinction between good and bad...He sees the situation, receives the impression, investigates it and classifies it as "bad". After that, his mind lapses into life-continuum,..but that life-continuum starts vibrating...stirring him into action...An angry action of trying to harm the oppressor ...the cause of the "bad-action"...As a result, perhaps he dies and the victim dies...but the impression did not

move into him, becoming part of himself but rather he established himself as being apart from the situation ...thus a certain personality starts crystallising...a being that is no longer only product of the environment... He thus made use of the situation to make a certain acquired concept regarding good and bad a reality... which means that his organism has been made responsive to the concept...which in turn through further development can become a faculty of discernment. (This condition may be related to the condition of a two rooted person)

Third level of development...

The observing person having classified the situation as "bad" ...starts thinking about it (processing the situation) ..."That person should be put into prison"(perhaps a thought of anger)...or "I need to do something about the situation...perhaps I could call the police ...perhaps I could do something to help" (wholesome thoughts). Then his mind lapses into life-continuum, after which it starts vibrating,..moving him to action, ...or the process runs until registration,..making a mental note to process that situation further in some future mental process...after which it equally lapses into life-continuum which starts vibrating ...moving him into action. In that case both a personality has crystallised, distinguishing him as an entity apart from the environment, ...as well as his higher faculties of intellection and discernment have developed further...distinguishing him as an entity higher in order than the former one. (This condition relates to the condition of a three rooted person.)

Fourth level of development...

Following the thought considerations regarding the 5 sensory situation, the person, calms his mind, adverts his attention to the content of his own mind-stream, seeing, the situation in relation to his

own present mental constitution and knowledge, he makes a decision that includes a greater amount of factors.

Fifth level of development...

A person has acquired in the course of living life, skilfulness in action, as well as in the usage of his faculties..and, basing himself on the result of his good kamma, leaves worldly conditions behind, either temporarily or permanently to develop his mental faculties more deliberately into powers...going to an empty place,...he uses his faculties to master the pressing force of the momentum of his worldly life usually with the aid of an religious subject and/or certain religious instructions. Becoming more proficient, his faculties develop into powers and the results of his past kamma are more skilfully made use of.

Right View



"Understanding means understanding all,...understanding only in part, means not to understand at all"

“Religion has existed and directed the life of mankind seemingly since the dawn of the species...one of the primary purposes of religion is to provide man with a creation myth...it explains the observable phenomena of the world in which we find ourselves,... by explaining how the world came to be,...how and why it is maintained as it is and by predicting, what its ultimate end will be.

In the course of this mythical or religious description of the world, human kinds place is defined in a moral framework.. that is constructed. It gives a rational for moderating our basic behaviours in the light of our relationship to the whole of creation...

Nowadays the scientific method has proven so successful in explaining the observable phenomena of the universe, that it is indeed the provider of our current creation myth."¹

(From Science & Vipassanā ...Rick Crutcher)

¹ for the Buddhist perspective on this, see my blog post on Paticca Samūpāda

STUDY OF MAN IN RELATION TO THE WORLD

To attain to right knowledge, to make knowledge a faculty, a person has to study the laws of the world in conjunction with the laws of the life within...and the life within, parallel with the laws of the world. Laws (in pali called niyama(s)), if they are universal, natural laws, will be the same within and without, because the within is also a part of the without...and the without is continuously inter-penetrating the within. In order to master a law (for example the law of kamma), that is, in order to be able to make use of a law skillfully for one's own advantage, one has to study its manifestation both without and within.

In Buddhist higher teachings, the number of fundamental laws, has been taken to be 5 most fundamental laws¹, from which all the rest may be deduced.

All the seeming variety of the world, a student of higher teachings, (who is aiming to understand the mechanics of the universe (the inner and the outer)), has to learn to break down into more elementary forces. Only thus he may come to encompass the world with his mind.

Learning to thus encompass the things of the world with his mind, a person may gradually learn to comprehend the mechanics of that world and of life itself.

¹ Here I only mention them, but I have treated them to a greater extent in my other book 'Paramattha'
Utu-Niyama (Law of manifest Nature)
Bija-Niyama (Law of Seeds and descending order)
Citta-Niyama (Law of the workings of the Mind)
Kamma-Niyama (Law of Kamma)
Dhamma-Niyama (Law of Dhamma)

AN EXAMPLE OF RELATING MODERN SCIENTIFIC CONSIDERATIONS ON TIME TO THE PRACTICE OF MEDITATION

When an observer and an observed object travel with the same speed¹...no experience of time comes about; the object is just present². When an observed object passes by an observer with greater speed, in the same direction, an assumption of a future comes about (the object ahead of the observer, is at a potential future position in regard to the observer³). When an object moves in the opposite direction of that of an observer, a consideration of the past comes about⁴...

In meditation one can consider along a similar line, that is, when a person (the observer) is very identified with the body, things like the subtler forms of breathing may be many times too fast to catch. Leave alone catching wholesome emotions or the mind. So the mind may seek out strategies as to how to catch the breath better in the future or

¹ Or vibrate with the same frequency

....Nowadays both in east and west the western scientific model has widely asserted itself, so in order to be taken seriously in any attempt to establish a new (although perhaps it is not all that new at all, but very ancient), more spiritual conception of time one has to make use (.../base oneself) or prove some understanding of the western scientific model with its conceptions of space and time...

The success of such an attempt will be proven only when it starts being used by people for more sublime and spiritual acts of magic than those brought about by the application of the western scientific model as it is used now

² F.ex. The mind is speedy and quick witted and the object or in this case the situation is a fast changing one...

A more concrete example...

A sports event,..for example a basketball game...if it is observed by an observer who knows the rules and the game very well (his mind can acquire the speed of the object),...and whose mind when watching is clear, sharp and filled with interest in the game ...then there will be no experience of time ...if the same event is watched by a person who knows the game either little or not at all (the mind can not acquire the same speed as the object), and who has little or no interest in the game,....for that person, time will move slowly

³ in the case of the game, the hoped for ending of the game will be projected into the future

⁴ past events related in general or to the specifics of the situation will arise in the mind...in the case of the game, perhaps something like 'I never liked these sorts of games'

...of course in general one might say, that the mind will just take a different object, but in this present scenario we are considering about the relation of one observer with a specific object and how that relates to time

look into the past as to whether there were any previous experiences that relate to the breathing condition now. But with skill and experience, off and on, a person may be able to bring his body more into alignment with his breathing. Thus body (as the main identity of the observer) and breathing, become more aligned. And with it changes the time-perception, that is, a person becomes more aware of the present. With a repeated experience of that, a person (the observer) will cease to overly identify himself with the body, and starts to become more identified with the perception of alignment and harmony. With that in turn, it will become again easier to catch up with the object of attention because the observer now starts to move in the same direction as the object of attention.

A NEW AND OLD PERSPECTIVE ON THE UNIVERSE

In ancient time the earth was the centre of the universe, the universe circled around the earth...and man was the central and most important part of earth....Later, they found earth to be just a dust-corn circling around one of millions of suns, with man being more or less an accident of nature, only slightly distinct from other animals.

For most people it is perhaps the former view which would give them a deeper sense of things,...an order of the universe, from which they could find out about the order to be followed for their own life.

What is true, depends on one's own level of development...if you live in a world of appearances and you can know nothing more than the appearance of things...then it will be better for you to consider the world a flat disk around which sun and moon revolve, because that is the world that presents itself to you...and looking at it in this manner, you can learn many things, and many connections become clear to you, which otherwise would be obscure for you and difficult to make sense of.

Learning in this way, turning your sense perceptions into knowledge...with time, you will find you will require less and less 'sparks' of sense perception from without...slowly a fire gets kindled within, that keeps going by itself without easily dying out. You require less and less a sun that daily raises on your horizon...as you yourself become more and more sun-like... Now the light that is within, starts illuminating the worldly forms without. And more and more it is the earth, that starts revolving around you, a true sun. As the fire of that knowledge becomes more and more refined,..it becomes ever more capable of embracing infinity itself.

For a yogi or a meditator a mythology, worldview or cosmology which reflects, that his mind (and actions) matter, is very important. Truth without a reference towards himself has no meaning for a person following a spiritual path...life is a incomprehensible mystery...a yogis main reference is suffering and the way out of suffering. For him the question is not: 'What is it?' ...rather it is 'What meaning has something for my spiritual path?' ...thinking thus, his mind is not bound to the appearances of things and ever grows with the good and the bad.

In order to understand a thing, one has to see its connection with some bigger subject or bigger whole, and the possible consequences of this connection. Understanding is always the understanding of a smaller problem in relation to a bigger problem.

People learn to understand by understanding a system (e.g. a religious system or philosophical system like the Abhidhamma system or any other system)... and everything else only in relation to that system.

Keys to the understanding of things (including scriptures) may come from certain literature, but mostly keys will come only from change of being...change of being means accessing higher states of consciousness...higher states of consciousness can understand many

things which a person on an ordinary level will never be able to understand.

Thus in studying either nature or scriptures, the consciousness which is studying has to be considered first and then transformed.

When we listen to holy people or read great books, it is not so much for the sake of gaining information, but rather to understand how a wise person looks at things (i.e. for gaining the method).

There are limits to what we can carry in our stream of thoughts, therefore we should choose wisely what things should continue in our lives and minds.

SOLVING PROBLEMS

Many especially monks and scholars to be 's situation is thus: If I have energy, I read, if I have no energy I cry and lament ...If we have recurring problems,...we should pay attention to that. If I have energy, I try to remember or register ,...and if I have no energy, I should try to solve that. By asking the right questions... the right answers will appear.

Once you know what you want, there is all possibility of finding out how to achieve it...there is all possibility of finding out about the how.

If we find ourselves in a reality, which we are not very satisfied with, there is a way to change that reality....

Repeated thought develops into a faculty of consciousness,...and our faculties (of consciousness) determine how we see the world, which in

turn determines, what experiences we get in life (what we draw around ourselves).

...at what times and in what circumstances, is the mind open, in what circumstances is it contracted.....what means such and such sensation (feeling one kind of sensation means, my body is weak, feeling another sensation, means my body is strong)...

And these types of informations, usually we gain through living life ...with discernment.

Something one has rightly realised is endlessly more valuable than what one has heard or read (As the Bhagavadgita says: "One's own Dhamma, is superior to the Dhamma of the scriptures")

In the beginning we might be too tired and confused to figure out what to do with our life, how to meditate, what is the meaning and usefulness of the breath-meditation, etc., so we have to rely on the externals, like teachers, schedules, etc....doing what everyone does,...but only to recover from our own perplexity,...then slowly we should enquire and use our discernment (to understand the religious life).

Religions start, with somebody studying suffering, studying the meaning of life etc.,...but once the religion is established, people cease to study life and only study texts, and instead of transcending ordinary man and his boundaries, they become more narrow and bound into more narrow boundaries.

Much wisdom comes from life stories of people who succeeded in life (the Buddha and others)...in ancient times much mystical knowledge (knowledge about life and mind...psychological knowledge) was wrapped up in the myths (stories) of heroes and sages... Even modern

novels, if intelligent, may contain more understanding about the mind and the spiritual path, than many books on psychology.

Spirituality is not about religion,... You can be religious and a very cruel person, you can be religious and a very selfish person, you can be religious and only speak things that are confusing and disturbing people.... On the other hand, you can have become a gangster due to lives confusing twists and turns, but you tell your gangster friends, not to take more than they need, you tell your gangster friends an alternative to killing, or even when killing, to choose the non-cruel way...that is spirit right there, working through you, that is genuine spirituality in action.

The world is never going to help you with your spiritual development, you have to battle with the world in order to develop spiritually.

And in order to do that, you have to develop the appropriate faculties to respond to difficult situations.

First you must make yourself, then only shall you try to find out who you are. First you develop your virtue uncompromisingly, then you can find out about the virtuous one you have become. And verily, then only shall you ask what you need...and only what you need to become more noble.

Many times in life, there is a fork in one's road...where we can choose one of two paths...the path of anger, the path of forgiveness, the path of the Dhamma, or the path of desire, the path of the 5 sensory world (e.g. some distraction in meditation) or the path of the fine-material world. So we should prepare ourselves wisely and know which way is the better one to take.

Whenever we attain clarity of mind we will know, what will be the next thing to do, we will know what will be the right thing to do.

To become enlightened, we have to bring ourselves continuously under enlightening influences...life has no interest in you getting enlightened ...Life might have interest in you helping your fellow human beings, and off and on Life might have an interest in you destroying your fellow human (and non-human) beings, but the last thing life is interested in, is you getting enlightened.

The world is always and everywhere a place of corruptions and confusions, so the only chance to remain untainted and unconfused, is to develop as often as possible states of mind, that are untainted and unworldly, and which can help us to look through the conditions of the world.

THE ART OF MENTAL TRANSFORMATION:

...First, the nature is such, ...if anger arises,... it is expressed, bringing with it the appropriate reaction,...a vicious circle starts and never ends... Then,...on hearing teachings, coming from the higher mind, coming from enlightened beings, people start getting to know about the danger of such mode of action...then people start trying not to express anger...tensions start accumulating within themselves, parts of the mind get dissociated...the mind gets divided within itself...things become unnatural and ugly...but then,....people start working out other ways of channeling that energy...they start finding out new and more integrated ways of working through conflict...thus things become natural again, now on a higher level (the useless shrub starts bringing forth a flower).

(As an old Zen saying goes: "First a mountain was a mountain, a river was a river and a tree was a tree...then a mountain was no longer a mountain, a river no longer a river and a tree no longer a tree,...but later a mountain was again a mountain, a river again a river and a tree again a tree").

METAPHYSICS

The Buddha gave us the tools to speak the truth,...when he taught, 'truth is not something metaphysical'.....'there are defilements in your heart,...name them and you have found a truth'. Based on the eye and form, eye-consciousness arises. There it is. There you can know what it is,...not an ever-present consciousness...Even if there would be something ever-present...it would be of no use to you if you can not be aware of what is ever-changing and ever-otherwise ...ever-present things are for the lazy one's (who seek consolidation in fixed views) and perhaps those few whose mind is so speedy as to ever rise above the ever-changing things by grasping the essence of every situation. This usually can be done only by a person who has long followed the gradual path. Thus from the Buddhist point of view, to stay in the continuity of contemplation is infinitely more important than realising some metaphysical truths.

HOW TO KNOW THE TRUTH?

If your only sphere of knowledge is the sensory world,...It does not make much sense to concern yourself with as to whether something is ultimately true. Rather your best judgment can only be as to whether something makes sense or not. If it does not make much sense, leave it aside or reject it.

If you are a person, training in purifying the emotions, training in wholesome emotions, take as your measurement, as to whether

something feels right. If something seems to not have the flavour of openness, of honesty, of love and devotion to the good, you reject it.

If you are training in making the immaterial sphere a reality for you, perceiving particles, perceiving mental phenomena, you will have to break down whatever you want to test as to its truthfulness into its constituent parts. If the inner components, do not fit by natural arrangement together, but are unnaturally glued to one another, you will understand in this sphere, that something is untrue.

SYSTEMS AND THEIR USE FOR MEDITATION

I have mentioned in a previous chapter the possibility of using systems of self knowledge to some degree to substitute for a lack of a good teacher. Without any form of initiation, this usually is close to impossible. Yet having had any initiatory experience, there is all chance of finding the way to gain further keys from some of the old systems (or even new systems which usually were inspired by the former ones).

Divination systems, as systems similar to the Buddhist Abhidhamma are sometimes called, are systems, which, so their promise, can give a diligent student a higher than human (hence divine-) perspective. Their aim is to aid the growth of the higher faculties, with the help of which the unseen things of the world may be discerned and ultimately the inner workings of life itself. Yet, of course, its use is for the few only, not for the many.

Non of those old systems might be utterly perfect...all of them might have certain flaws, but one thing that can perhaps be learned from all of them, is the method of a "closed system" ...if any such system is studied in conjunction with the perhaps usually more accurate knowledge of modern science (as far as its subjects go)... the result will

be much more lucid on either of the two subjects....the ancient system shows the outline and unity of a closed system...giving a certain superstructure into which all other acquired knowledge can be fitted..while the modern knowledge fills out the gaps and increases the quality of the details.

All ancient systems have divided man into various parts. One such system much liked by the author, divides man into 4 centres¹, which he who wants to study himself, may be well advised to pay attention to. These four centres, which may well be also related to the 4 satipatthanas, but perhaps more so to some of the 22 indriyas of the Abhidhamma system,...are the intellectual, the emotional, the moving and the instinctive centre²...Each of these centres has its own intelligence, its own functions, its own purposes, its own characteristics as well as its own way of development and each can help or obstruct the work of another centre...e.g. the intellectual centre can help the emotional centre by educating it, as when an emotion of anger arises and the intellectual centre starts advising the emotional centre to develop loving kindness or to reflect on the dangers of letting these emotions control the other centres (such as the moving centre etc.).... in the same way, it can also obstruct the emotional centre, as for example in a relationship, where excessive thinking obstructs a genuine relationship. In meditation too, the understanding of these centres can prove of great advantage. For example, the breath, which is part of the instinctive centre, can be used to balance the excessive work of the intellectual centre. The same thing can be done by the emotional centre; as positive emotions usually result in reduction of excessive thinking. An example of the obstruction of the work of the instinctive or moving centre through the intellectual centre would be excessive and unnatural control of the breath in meditation, leading to malfunction of the instinctive and moving centre. By development of

¹ The system mentioned here and frequently referred to throughout this writing, is the system of the fourth way school, as thought by P.D.Ouspensky...a system which greatly helped the author to understand his own tradition

² Further work with the Abhidhamma system ...showed me that the 'Viññana-kicca' ...the functions of consciousness can be perfectly related to these centres...see to that my work "Keys to the Abhidhamma system"

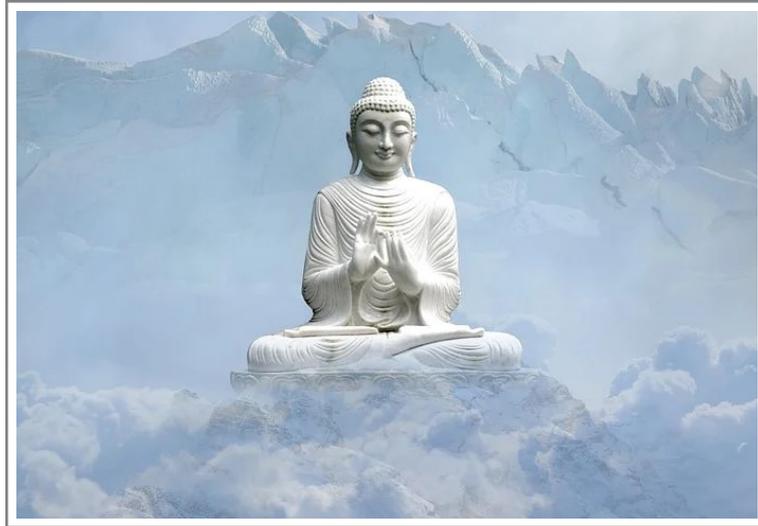
the 4 sublime abidings (loving kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity), one can also harmonise with the help of the emotional centre all the other centres, supporting them in their work.

In other systems, such as the pagan systems everything in the universe is divided into a duality of male and female. The male is the conscious, structure, moral. The female is the subconscious, nature....

If we can understand in this way certain universal principles, we can demystify the strange absurdities we come across... E.g. in the last mentioned system, one would take the conscious mind to be like the masculine aspect, and the body like the feminine aspect of life; and the meditation on the breath sort of signifying the relationship between the two. Thus a person will have a whole realm of meaningful inquiry, ...that is,... how to make such a relationship work...

Thus, one of the main things about systems is, that once you learned the basic items of the system, your main job will be only to gather experiences and translate them into these terms...Once you can do that and the words start to become a connected network of ideas,..you will be pretty independent already. You can start answering your own questions, without relying on others.

Meditation



"Learn to discern the real from the unreal, the true from the false"

THE VOICE OF THE SILENCE

H. P. B

Through processing the objects of the 5 senses, man evolves concepts in regard to the world in which he finds himself...These concepts, once anchored in him will bind him to that particular sphere of existence.

Desirous of going higher, attempting to attain higher states of consciousness, man requires more "All-encompassing"-concepts, that allow for a broader vision of things.



Usually in everyday life we build up buffers, which help us to not see a certain spectrum of things. Since, if we would see too much of what is

happening around us, we would probably go mad. We will not be able to function in everyday life, because everyday life requires us to make quick decisions in our dealings with the things around us. But when we start our spiritual journey, gradually we want to remove some of these buffers in order to see more clearly, and in order to understand life more deeply.

Removing these buffers can be a painful thing and attempting it is usually only advisable in conditions in which we feel quite safe.

CLEARING DOUBTS

In order to understand about meditation, we need to define for ourselves what meditation means and where it fits into the scheme of things...what its objective is, and what it tries to accomplish. Without understanding these things, it is going to be rather difficult to go very far in meditation.

What meditation means usually depends on one's general conditions. For many people it might be a kind of redemption, or burning up bad karma, for others it might be a scientific experiment, others might use it just for relaxation, and again others for self-knowledge. It greatly varies according to a person's karma

If we have doubts in regard to meditation, we have to learn more on the one hand, and on the other hand do only things or at the very least emphasise things we have no doubts about, things we are clear about. Then we can take some light into unknown territory.

We make experiments, to realise more and more the subjectiveness of our experience of the world, as well as to realise the freedom that could come if we make proper use of that knowledge.

As you become more familiar with the powers of the mind, you will start paving the way for the experience of higher spheres of consciousness.

Thus, one of the principle tasks for a meditator is, to create and maintain a force within himself of truth and spirituality. This force will attract towards him the necessary support for the continuation of his path, as well as enabling him to repel all forces contrary to his aim.

STARTING

"A Journey of a thousand miles starts with the first step"

Imagine you are driving on a road in the middle of the night with the headlights on and the only thing you see is the road about 50m ahead of you. If you keep looking at just that small part of the road in front of you, you will reach your destination 100 miles ahead..

This is precisely how things are, for long periods of time, for a person walking on a spiritual path.

In the beginning we might be too tired and confused to figure out what to do with our life, how to meditate, what is the meaning and usefulness of the breath-meditation, etc. So we have to rely on the externals, like teachers, schedules, etc....doing what everyone else does,....but only to recover from our own perplexity. Then, slowly we should enquire and use our discernment to understand the religious life.

If we succeed even once in going up the mountaintop ...even if trying, we will feel more tired and exhausted than our contemporaries, ...having glimpsed a broader vision of life,...having gained a birds-eye view of the territory,...we will have an enormous

advantage in life towards all our fellow human beings, who, although perhaps for the time being less exhausted, will be groping blindly through life, not knowing where they are going.

DISCIPLINE

For a beginner discipline is very important. If the yogis mind will go anywhere here and there, outside of the realm of Dhamma,...being determined on his mental development, he should see to it, that he will have regular meditation sittings and he should arrange his life and his days organised around that discipline. He should go early to bed, so as to be able to get up in the morning to meditate.... Only with that as a base, he should gradually look at distinguishing the qualities of the mind and work towards a refinement of his life and mind for general practice.

Thus the yogi should know (or find out) what he is meant to do and how to behave. When he finds he is lacking in matters of good behaviour, he should stay with other (good) people. Or when he finds he is too lazy, he might have to stir himself up for a while. He may look out for challenging situations to strengthen his character, but he should understand discipline as a means, not as an end, for, constantly living in a stirred up way, not being able to appreciate when there is nothing to do, can be a defilement too.

The Buddhas advice in this respect: Here a monk considers, "While I do as I feel like, unwholesome states increase and wholesome states diminish,...what if I were to practice in a more painful manner"...In doing so, on a later occasion he finds wholesome states increasing and unwholesome states diminish. Realising which, he considers: "The purpose for which I practiced in a painful manner is fulfilled". Thus, seeing no more danger in doing so, he abandons that painful way of practice, while yet being able to increase in the wholesome and diminish in the unwholesome.

If you learn to listen more often to the voice of knowledge, instead of to your fears and desires, your life will start to be guided more by knowledge than by desires and fears.

One way of doing that, is by bringing yourself into situations of evolving difficulty, making yourself understand, that solving the task by not listening to the lower will increase the volume of the voice of knowledge, while when you fail to do so you will be forced again to listen to some voice of knowledge from without.

Developing one's own little tricks is essential. Chanting or reciting a mantra (or any type of talking), can cut down excessive thinking, as it cools down the digestive heat and thus cuts or diminishes the chi flow towards the brain. This can also be useful when one feels, that one has not eaten enough and thus wants to see to it, that the digestive process goes slow (...going through the day strategy). However for achievement of higher mental states (which usually becomes only an option when the conditions are pretty good,) any kind of talking is mostly detrimental.

Thus in the beginning...using the most refined method one can think of to get rid of suffering, is the one one should take.

We gain some calm and that calm teaches us how to proceed further

Everything on the outside level of a bhikkhu or yogi, is concerned with his practice of sīla...and as long and whenever he is perceiving himself as part of a whole, this will be his primary ground of orientation... Yet, a yogi is meditating to make his internal world grow. When he is meditating, he gives predominance to his internal world. That is, his internal world will sooner or later out-grow the importance of his external world (that is why it is important to base one's meditation

practice on a firm ground of sīla, otherwise one might become (at least to the outside world) an egoistic- and self-centred person).

Experience gives confidence, which in turn will lead a person away from the rabble into noble seclusion...seeking to follow the truth ever deeper into its den.

SELF-KNOWLEDGE

Nosce te ipsum -know thy self

“In order to become the KNOWER of ALL, thou hast first of SELF to be the KNOWER.”

A true yogi has to be self-oriented. That is, not in a selfish way, but in a way of total self examination. He has to perfectly understand himself, so as to come to truly transcend his self (having acquired a superior self, then only he can leave it behind, without having to fear that he will be overwhelmed by anything).

Your sense of who you are determines what you perceive as your needs and what matters to you in life.

So it is important, that we refine our self-knowledge. If we only know our higher aspirations, yet our lower desires push us here and there, remaining unknown mysterious forces, that we don't want to look at, yet, which dominate much of our life and actions,...investigating these forces, can truly prove to give us back much of our life and save much time for the development of the higher.

Even for the practice of sīla both knowledge and self-observation is necessary. One has to know what a breaking and what a keeping of sīla is, and one has to observe especially one's' bodily and verbal actions. In the same way it is necessary for samādhi to have certain knowledge of what is the right way of practicing (when wholesome states increase and unwholesome states decrease..), and what is the wrong way of practicing.

The benefit of self observation is mastery over oneself. The benefit of mastery of oneself, is mastery of life.

USING LIFE-WISDOM FOR MEDITATION

Working with your meditation subject is really quite a similar thing as an Indian marriage... Your parents choose a wife for you, which you don't know,...which might be beautiful or not (certainly she won't be beautiful forever)... and then you have to see, how to make the marriage work. If you only try to understand her, surely it won't work. If you only look after yourself, sure it won't work either...You have to try to understand both her and yourself and then make the relationship between the two of you a more natural affair... a true dance. And then sometimes union between the two of you will happen.

With the breath meditation it is the very same thing. If you only sit with one another in the same room for the whole day,...unless you know each other very well,...conflict is likely to appear. If you only investigate into your breath, without ever considering about yourself, the breath meditation is unlikely to work out either. If you approach your breath happily, it is a very similar situation of a husband approaching a wife happily. It is much more likely to be a good relationship.... And all that of course depends to a big extend on how the wholeness of the life is lived. If the husband is poor and unemployed, sitting all day at home,... he will have to really do a lot of work on himself and really mould together with his wife , that things won't fall apart. But if he is all

day busy, or sometimes a whole week gone, he will be so happy to see his wife and his wife will be so happy to see him. So that sometimes only a few minutes after meeting each other, a union will happen. Thus a good life conditions a good marriage and a good marriage conditions a good life. And in the same manner, a good life conditions a good meditation practice and a good meditation practice conditions a good life.

(That situation might also be one reason why perhaps more lay people (and perhaps busy monks) are successful with the breath meditation than (most other) monks...)

The only question that might than arise is,... 'Do I really want to live a life like that, or can I attain something higher (or do I perhaps need to first free myself of something lower ?)'...

DISSOLVE AND BIND

Dissolve and bind is the ancient formula of alchemy, knowing this, a yogi learns to weave his life, breaking down the sway of conventional reality, by producing a momentum of spiritual reality.

If you are not so happy with your life, you must dissolve everything you are and everything you think you are.....and then build on that something or someone you want to be ...

Modern vipassanā traditions are perhaps good at dissolving old patterns of mind, but often they leave people without anything better to bind the mind together again. Due to this many people might go from better to worse. Dissolving old patterns, has to go hand in hand with a healthy re-patterning of the mind. Giving the mind a worldview of growth.

You use a meditation subject as a reminder, for what you want to develop. Perhaps unity, oneness of mind, concentration... etc. But whenever nonsense starts to arise, things you don't wish for, you contemplate that as impermanent, suffering and non-self, danger etc... you try to understand the proximate cause of that problem.... (weaknesses of body, lack of inspiration, aversion towards the meditation subject...etc.)

In the suttas there is by far not such an emphasis on only impermanence and suffering, as is in the modern view of Buddhism, especially as depicted by the Vipassanā schools. In the older teachings there is an equal emphasis on developing...the 5 indriyas, the factors of enlightenment, the noble eightfold path and the jhānas.

MEDITATION-CONDITIONS

FROM MEDITATION METHODS TO MEDITATING

The methods are only there to bring people in touch with a new sphere of experience...When a person starts becoming familiar with the new type of experience, he slowly has to let go of formalised methods, by learning to grasp the principles. Grasping the principles, he will become capable of working out his own method.

So, how to meditate is principally the wrong question... 'What are the conditions, under which meditation-experiences can manifest?',... would be a much better question to ask.

And often the answer to this is quite a different one, than we would like hear...This is also a basis, for understanding what ascetic practices are there for, which is, what an ordinary scholar won't be able to understand.

Often meditation starts really working only when we are finally willing to go against the grain, that is, if you want to hide always,to go amongst people.... and when you are finally comfortable with people, ...you seek seclusion. If you want comfort for its own sake, you go into the forest. If you are beating yourself up all the time for not working hard enough, you find a way of making a holiday...travel a bit or do something with friends. If you want your life nice and neat and organised,...surprise yourself more often by doing something different. If you find you are living a messy life without any structure, ...try to build a structure into your life. This is the method of coming out of an unwanted 'status quo' into the sphere of magic and 'the unordinary'.

Then, further, in order to tune into the subtle and to get hold of the mind, a yogi who is reasonably healthy may use some minimum sense perception... The smoke of an incense, a butterfly on a wall being blown by the wind, ripples on water, the sound of the wind, some animals playing etc. Some field, where he can move his mindfulness back and forth. Or even things like drawing a mandala or anything similar, are equally valid things. As the mind becomes more subtle,...its capabilities increase and possibilities of using it for more important tasks become available.

But once a yogi owns his mind he first should find out how to not lose it again.

For that a sane base of right living is again very essential. For, living life in a natural and balanced way, leads to meditating in a natural and balanced way. And being able to respond to various situations in the 5 sensory world, leads to being able to respond to various situations in the inner world.

Further on, there is religious devotion. Religious devotion is a mental state, which can keep the mind soft, when there is great suffering and oppression. Thus, to bring one-self into an environment where

religious devotion is supported can greatly help one's' spiritual progress.

DEVELOPING AND KEEPING GOING THE SPARK OF INSPIRATION

Calmness of the body has to be perfectly balanced with inspiration of mind. Thus one should find ways of keeping inspired in one's own experience. For example, for a sick person it is possible to keep inspired contemplating the repulsiveness of the body, impermanence, suffering, non-self, death, etc. For a healthy person, it is possible to contemplate subtle mental phenomenon (mental factors (equanimity, joy, oneness), visions of light, psychic visions, immaterial states,). And either person principally can use external nimittas as skillful means (kasinas, fire, smoke, forest, nature, (one's own shadow, lovely animals, lovely people, suffering beings (compassion), joyful beings (sympathetic joy)...inviting thus the force of inspiration, new insights will come as to how to progress.

ENERGY-DISTRIBUTION

Another important factor to pay attention to for making meditation work, is energy distribution...maintaining continuous mental balance and mindfulness for the whole day vs. being part of the world with its ups and downs and then setting some time aside to cultivate a specific meditation subject or a specific mental condition. There too, one may have to look, which way is more suitable in one's environment...

In the first case, one can easily react to changing conditions and problems and can find suitable ways of dealing with them, in the second, one can accumulate material to mould creatively into an extensive experience with one's meditation subject.

In the first case, the whole life is made into an creative experience,...but if that is not yet perfected, perhaps one will still oftentimes have a nagging desire for a special spiritual vision.

In the second case, one may perhaps be more often overpowered by unskillful states, because there is not enough flexibility to deal with any upcoming condition or problem.

So one has to find a balance in one's practice between these two. Although of course they are not mutually exclusive..and one can lead to/ be the preparation for the other.

The second way is perhaps for a beginner the common thing to do, as he can't expect too much structure in his days, he should have the outward structure of regular sitting, without being too sensitive to the constantly changing phenomenon of his mind and body.

Another aspect in regard to the question of energy distribution is, that a person in an unfamiliar environment has to have a more continuous alertness, which requires a forceful energy-supply/ energy application, while a person in familiar and non stressful circumstances can allow his energy to rise up and flow more naturally.

What objects the mind takes, is also very crucial for the condition of one's energy. One person might spend his day talking and doing various other things (with the awareness landing on these various things) and at the end of the day he might have some energy coming up, which he might use to have a happy evening with a friend...or he is too exhausted for anything...his energy is always polluted with various objects (and he will find delight in this and that). Another person may spend his day alone in seclusion, meditating, and by evening time his energy rises. Having been sensitive to his energy throughout the day/ having kept his energy pure throughout the day, he will be able to use his energy for various spiritual purposes, or he will experience his energy associated with various pure/spiritual objects (nimittas).

For continuity of practice, one should use whatever energy one has available for the development of the mind and when things go down

again contemplate impermanence, suffering, non-self...for as long as one can and for as many days, weeks, month...

If we calculate for higher human states, we must cease to calculate in matters of ordinary time and ordinary conditioning.

MAKING THE MEDITATION SUBJECT ONE'S VEHICLE

A yogi should make his meditation subject his vehicle, which means, when mindfulness arises, it should be associated with his meditation subject...e.g. a thought of anger should arise with an awareness of one's breath, if that is one's primary meditation subject, or else with a noting/ repetition of a mettā phrase if the brahma viharas are one's primary subject; anicca, dukkha, anatta, when these are one's meditation subject.

Yet one also should understand, that meditation is not just about solving problems (the Buddha teaches us, that we should understand three types of feeling (unpleasant, pleasant and neutral)...first we meditate, to get rid of (gross) dukkha (we understand a certain danger of unpleasant feeling and we try to overcome it)...many people stop there, perhaps being satisfied with a certain amount of pleasantness and only go back to their meditation, when they feel dukkha again...Secondly...people notice a certain danger or futility of mere pleasant feeling...and they want to incorporate pleasant feeling into their spiritual practice (going from pleasant feeling associated with sensuality (friends, nature, etc..)-diversity, ...towards pleasant feeling associated with unity.....

The third will be the understanding of neutrality,....maintaining awareness, when nothing is happening (at least on a gross level), understanding the danger of not understanding the whole range of experience, one finds ways of maintaining awareness of the neutral, of the subtle. Thus one incorporates the neutral feeling into one's spiritual practice.

KARMA

A yogi should understand that he will need an enormous amount of good karma to succeed in his spiritual quest. The whole world is against him, who tries to escape the laws and ties of the world.

Thus understanding some of the principles of magic, understanding something about karma yoga may be very useful (actually magic is kind of the pre-form of the understanding of karma and of religious practices, as karma formerly referred to the performance of religious rituals within the pre-buddhist understanding).

Along that line one may use for example supplementation skills. Being of service to others, or acquiring a certain kind of knowledge or skill as a backup, can give a person a certain amount of confidence which can also help one's meditation (if it does not overtake it).....it can help to maintain a certain amount of continuous stability and it can help familiarising the mind with wholesome states (when the mind is filled with wholesome states, no unwholesome states can enter)...

For a person of weak health, some merit making activities, which desensitise him from his mind-body condition may be of great help. Cleaning the Buddha-stature, sweeping the meditation hall, doing something for others, doing something which relaxes mind and body,...and perhaps keeping a certain routine of doing so...which means, keeping the mind's assemblage point (the reference point of the mind) first primarily or at least occasional, external, that is on wholesome deeds, emphasising the Four Right Efforts instead of mindfulness practice. Doing thus may remove much anxiety of daily life.

WHAT TO REMEMBER/WHAT TO PRACTICE?

A meditator (primarily) seeks repetition..so he chooses carefully what he puts into his mind...carefully what he wants to remember. This becomes especially relevant when considering about rebirth...What is it that you would want to take into your next life? Is it the Patimokkha recitation or some chant of old, your grudge towards others or some petty thought?...Thus for a meditator the most important thing is to choose an object for his meditation that he finds worthwhile spending a lot of time with...that he has faith in,...or that he can easily develop faith in. For different people, different things are suitable. For an emotional or devotional person a subject like mettā might work quiet well,...but for an intellectual person it might not really do anything...especially for an intellectually bright person...a subject might be needed that demand the utmost of his mental faculties...a subject that is not easily exhaustible ...for such type of person an metaphysical system like the Abhidhamma might be necessary to temper his spirit enough to grow further.

Similar to an engineer who has to learn many things before he can put together many different pieces in order to create a machine, in the same way a yogi has to find out how to put together the ingredients of his personal kamma as well as his environment in order to make his body work,...like a programmer has to learn various things in order to create a working program, so a yogi has to learn certain things in order to make his mind a working program.

...dissolve and bind, nourish and excrete....

..opposing forces should be equilibrated ...not all processes should be looked on with equanimity...active and passive should be balanced

When the consciousness that is looking at the breath is soft, meditation is an easy thing/ when the meditating consciousness is soft, any meditation subject can be penetrated easily.

The point of no breath....is only useful, when one has sufficient spiritual energy.....sometimes one will go through all the Jhānas (1-4), sometimes one will come to a point of total balance through mindfulness of the body or mindfulness of an external object.

If one comes to the point of no-breath without sufficient spiritual energy, one should perhaps, do something else... and start of another time anew at least when determined to work primarily on samatha.

TIMING

Meditation requires determination and timing...One's meditation might arise exactly at a time, when one expects it the least or is least willing to meditate (just before a meal is served, when a certain attachment or any other defilement arises...). If one is then willing to give up one's attachment, this burning up of the attachment or defilement can be exactly the process which can lead one into very deep samādhi states

....Meditation is an creative act...it is meant to transform the lower (baser things) into the higher and to refine what is good already

...Meditation is about the mind and about being devoted to your meditation subject. Determining to sit for so and so long, when it will produce detrimental mind-states, is going in the opposite direction. Usually it is only for those people who when getting up will do unskillful things, for whom it will be best to sit as long as possible.

NOTICING SUCCESS

Subtle experiences might grow, when we give them proper attention and encouragement...We should value subtle experiences even if they just seem like imagination and wishful thinking. Imagination can be a very useful tool for one's spiritual development. Thus one should not allow one's faith in one's experiences be easily destroyed and one should not be overly critical/ doubtful with oneself...Usually it is the people with a rich imagination that find getting good meditations quite easy, rather than ordinary people or sceptics. Although, of course it shouldn't get too much out of hand. But for most people it is usually rather the opposite which easily gets out of hand.

TIMING AND WAITING

Meditation is a lot about waiting...like a crocodile might just wait and (almost) motionless float in the water (for hours and days (sometimes even weeks) on end), being just aware whether there is a gazelle or not,....so a yogi should just stay in a balanced waiting position.....

...and as the crocodile will become more alert when his pray is drawing nearer,...so should the yogi become more alert, when his meditation subject is arising

...and as the crocodile will have to be very skillful and quick in catching his pray,...so the yogi has to be very skillful and quick in grasping the sign of his mind

...like a surfer will for a (sometimes) long time just a little bit paddle in the water, waiting for the perfect wave to surf, so the yogi should for a long time, do as little as possible, waiting for the sign of his mind to arise

...or a yogi might think of himself as being similar to a hunter waiting for his pray...each step of the hunt (the waiting, the drawing nearer, the encroaching, the capturing and the proper keeping hold of...(as well as later the proper processing/ digestion of the caught i.e. the experience) , he has to become thoroughly familiar with in order to succeed

...and like the hunter is better of to know the proper season, the proper conditions, as well as the going about of his pray, so the yogi should know the proper season, proper surrounding conditions regarding his 'hunt' (in example this may mean e.g. during the hot season things like low blood pressure might be a recurring problem and thus one might need to rest more, while during the cold season naturally there may be more clarity and alertness...etc.)

...fighting for the mind, is fighting for the strongest object of perception....if the mind gets excited on an inferior object ...(e.g. if one breaks knowingly a rule, then a whole bad process might build up on that, until one will be able to do some purifying action)...thus one will have some work to do...if the mind has taken in an superior object, one has to see to it, that one keeps it inside for as long as possible

...a strong perception (thus) impressed on the mind, will attract a corresponding element of the universe

...a yogi should occasionally reflect on his goal and/or the path (refining right intention/right view) as remembering again and again the very essential things is incomparable more important than learning many new things (we think we know, but too often we forget)

...meditation requires at least a certain amount of freedom....we must feel free enough to be willing to experiment and be creative, quiet

similar as wanting to play an instrument, if we don't have this freedom to be creative, we will soon give up or get frustrated

DUKKHA INVESTIGATION:

...more real than many of your thoughts about the future would be a stinging pain... and truly many a one has to go through hell, before he is ready to be a full human being. Do not shun pain that is here and now, but rather shun and shoosh away all imaginary future pain, to do this you might need the body, painful or pleasant, however it might be now.

a yogi should understand what and how much he needs in order to function properly, finding a balance between humble acceptance of whatever is there at the moment... and honestly regarding his needs....a balance between "there is always going to be some dukkha' ...and 'how can I improve my life/ my condition,... For many times it might be possible to improve things. Proper medicines or treatment,...or rest might change one's meditation from just 'dukkha, dukkha, dukkha' to true progress in the Dhamma.

When you are forced to sit by some outside force and your mind starts revolting and does not want it,...at least take the side of your mind and promise it something nice when the outside force has diminished.

A yogi should notice the subtle (as well as the subtle difference). Especially in the beginning one's understanding will be very blur....feeling something, one notices...this is spiritual, this is worldly...one notices....this is better than that...

...the more often one finds one's intuition confirmed (and in line with the scriptures etc.),...the more confidence one will have in one's intuition...then one will be able to keep a very subtle and sensitive mind even in the face of great suffering (and in the end...in the face of death)

Thus we should rather work on living life so well, that attainments can appear...and arrange our life according to our highest ideal,...and even if we accomplish nothing, we should not lower this standard, but keep the direction right. Yet without being altogether inflexible in approach. If we run too often against a wall, we should look for another way to approach the situation.

...learning and developing one's own set of skilful means, is a thousand times more valuable than learning a hundred other things

...learning to be spiritual when things are tough and learning to be spiritual when nothing happens...

...a yogi should understand his resources....like a king would not go into war without first reviewing the amount of his troops, treasures etc. ...so a yogi should get an understanding of his available energy resources before acting, studying, etc...

...understanding his resources he can work for their proper usage, without allowing them to diminish...remembering, that he should always have enough for his death

...meditation is not a sitting exercise,...meditation is about self-knowledge

...a yogi should learn to transform everything for his own advantage

...life is the yogis field of study, not the books...although the books can give the yogi some advise, he should drink only for quenching his thirst and not before he notices his being thirsty

...a yogi should not be opposed to life, rather he should develop a comprehensive understanding of it

...a yogis knowledge is not shared by anyone else, yet when he shares it with others it is immediately recognised

...it can not be found in any book, but whether child or old man, all seem to know it

(the difference therein is only he dares to live it, while the rest of the world is too busy)

...however messy one's starting point, one should begin by paying attention to what is important,...having gathered an understanding of what is important one should distil further to find out what is most important...gradually one will reach the essence of everything (which is suffering and the end of suffering)

...wisdom is not complicated, it gives the right amount of understanding

...like cooking is a mixture of ingredients and skill, so wisdom is a mixture of knowledge and skill

....a yogi should rid himself of ambition...the desire to do good is not ambition, the desire to know, is not ambition

....in sitting meditation a yogi should remember that any technique is a means to something...what feels more natural generally is to be preferred....his main aim is to develop pleasure, mindfulness and wisdom

...meditation will only work, when one is on it continuously...sometimes one might have a bad sitting meditation, but when getting up (if the energy is not dispersed through talking etc.) one's meditation object might suddenly arise clearly...in this respect it is also quite essential that the meditator has enough freedom to get up from his meditation seat when continuity of sitting will result in mental decline

...it is essential to understand about the healing power of spiritual experiences and it is essential to understand the health required for following a (spiritual) path

...continuity of mindfulness (as well as the other spiritual faculties) is where freedom should be sought

....the mind should be always kept aloof from the elements, this can be achieved by naming them, understanding them or by putting the mind on an object superior to the elements

....a yogi should try to bring his conscious mind into his dreams and fantasies and transform them through conscious imagination/application

SATIPATTHANA

The word Satipatthana is made of the two words sati (usually translated as mindfulness) and upatthana...

In Sanskrit there exists a word, asat,...which approximately means something like unreal, also having a connotation of not good, which is taken in opposition to sat, the real and the good.

The word upatthana has also a variety of meanings, such as:

1. attendance, waiting on, looking after, service, care, ministering,
2. worship or (divine) service
3. understanding

So along that line, a good translation of Satipatthana might be something like "attending to the real" or "understanding the real".

In modern days the word sati is usually translated as mindfulness which for some time was considered something like bare attention, but as understanding evolved was often shown to have also a certain memory aspect.

Practitioners familiar with other systems sometimes used the word compound 'self-remembering' which I consider a pretty good wording, because it is precisely this, that one attempts to do in

meditation, one remembers oneself...one remembers one's goal...one remembers one's knowledge of the Dhamma...one remembers one's path. Thus true mindfulness only can come, when one has realised some entrance into the path.

Another good translation for the 4 satipatthanas may be 4 places of inquiry. Through the practice of mindfulness, through inquiring into one's body, feelings, mind or into the Dhamma with an upright mind, having the goal of acquiring true wisdom and understanding of the Dhamma...as well as freedom from suffering, we gain self-knowledge. With some of these categories, we are trying to realise their impermanent, dissatisfactory and non-self nature, with others, we seek to realise their need and benefit for the living of the holy life (spiritual feelings, exalted mind states, etc.)...with again others of those categories we need to understand their gratification, danger and escape...Through the knowledge thus gained, the 'inquiring one' filters out certain things from his reality, which will slowly fade away (...as is the nature of memory) and through both the practice of mindfulness as well as through his study, he weaves positive things into his reality.

Constant (self-)remembering is one of the key points of the practice...but care has to be given to not become like a paranoid self-checking robot, "self-observation addict", or a robot-like creature, focused only on apperception and self-categorisation of his inner and outer world...as this is not really a desirable way of life...Rather one should have usually some sane base to fall back upon.

WHAT IS IT, BY KNOWING WHICH, ONE CAN COME TO KNOW ALL?

The Buddha gave different answers to this question...sometimes he said 'feeling' (vedanā) is that by knowing which you can come to know all...sometimes by knowing 'what is wholesome and what unwholesome', you can come to know all, sometimes 'the 6 sense bases', sometimes, 'the 5 aggregates', or, by means of the gradual

training you can come to know all...by trying to know any of these things by means of direct knowledge it becomes clear, that merely knowing intellectually does not suffice.

By trying to directly know feeling, one also will come to know the consciousness, which knows feeling, one may also come to know other mind- factors involved in knowing feeling, one may know the difference between consciousness accompanied by wisdom and consciousness unaccompanied by wisdom, one may come to know 'feeling' in that case as an object of consciousness, and one may realise, that the faculty cognising the object also depends on the base ,...thus one may realise the need to practice mindfulness regarding the body to understand that faculty of mind, and so also with the other satipatthanas.

Self-knowledge also means knowledge in regards to one's aggregate of virtue, knowledge in regards one's aggregate of concentration, knowledge regarding one's aggregate of wisdom, knowledge regarding one's aggregate of liberation/freedom and the aggregate of knowledge and discernment of freedom/liberation.

GATHERING THE ITEMS OF SAMADHI

Through practicing you will gather certain understandings about your body and mind...one day all the good things may come together and you gain samadhi...So one should know how to distinguish the good from the bad,..and abandoning the bad, cultivate the good (in order to develop such type of understanding one should make use both of one's daily life as well as of one's sitting meditations to develop a familiarity with body and mind...its needs, how far they can be pushed, their flexibilities, their characteristics, functions etc.)

...if we keep our mind with our experience,...if we try to continuously practice some form of spiritual practice,... something which allows us

to stay more natural for longer periods of time, and to understand that natural state of ours more and more...than only do we have the best chance to gain some superhuman experience(s)...this is perhaps also the only way, not to be swayed away by the ups and downs of life.

...whenever the faculties are clear and sharp, we should make use of them, to understand their functioning... seeing what we are able to perceive with our senses... how many colours we can see in the sky, how many different fragrances can we recognise in the smell of the room, or the smell of a flower...looking at another human being perhaps we can detect indications of that persons state of mind by e.g. looking at his facial and bodily features...feeling sensations in the body, we may detect different characteristics (of the four elements etc.)...tasting a taste, we may taste different flavours therein (sweet, sour, bitter,...), as well as what effect a different flavour has on our body and mind. It is in this way that we are inclining to the subtler spheres of existence, moving into loftier spheres.

When there is the body, we try to understand and develop the body, when there are feelings, we try to understand and develop (wholesome) feelings, when there is the mind we try to understand and develop the (wholesome) mind, when there are ideas, we try to understand and develop (wholesome) ideas.

In the beginning it will be a long time of only observation and gathering information and you won't be able to do anything with it for a long time...and you won't really know whether or not you will ever be able to do anything with it, and if, what,...the only thing that you might notice, is, that you are doing the absolute opposite of what anybody else in the world is doing

MANIFESTING THE MIND

Kamma is the seed, Consciousness is the field and tanhā (thirst, desire for more) is the moisture.

After initiation of kamma related to higher things, this kamma may arise as a resultant and come into the sphere of consciousness...A person skilled with the higher faculties, may from there feed that kamma with a wholesome desire¹ for growth.

For example in the case of anapana-sati, a person having gained trust, that meditating on the breath can lead him to a higher stage of being, may develop interest (wholesome desire) in the perception of the breath, which in turn may produce more breath-manifestations and may make the kammical seed of an "interesting breath" grow and sprout into a more elaborate form of manifestation, which in turn will make it easier for the faculties of consciousness (i.e. mindfulness) to remain interested in it.

JHĀNAS²

One big problem that causes many confusions to arise is, that many times people try to accomplish certain things, while yet considering about it in matters of a plane that follows very different laws.

For example, people trying to attain Jhānas, which belong to the fine-material realm, try to do so, by virtue of following sense-sphere considerations. They don't cease to think in matters of 'meditation means, you should sit in such and such a posture', or 'the longer you sit, the better it is for your meditation',...considerations, which may do

¹ metaphysically speaking, feeding it with astral-matter

² A great book that I can recommend, describing the different stages of meditation including the Jhānas, is called "The Mind Illuminated" by Culadasa (John Yates, Ph.D.)

something for a beginner, but which often are rather an obstruction for a person aiming at things like Jhānas.

Jhānas refer to states of purity and non-sensual joy and thus can not really be grasped in terms of sensual things.

JHĀNAS IN THE SUTTAS

In the suttas there are different ways of talking about the Jhānas (sometimes the Buddha was talking about defilement and purification of Jhāna , sometimes of the Jhāna as a superhuman state, sometimes in relation to mastery (which is the realm of a self and control)the usual description of the Jhānas, is that a monk suffuses his body with a feeling of joy etc....it does not talk about the intellectual part of the mind (which might be covered only by the grasping the reviewing sign or the higher knowledges, following the fourth Jhāna or the purified mindfulness of the fourth Jhāna it-self). Thus, perhaps the Jhāna might also include states of mind, with a rather smeared mindfulness, where there still can exist certain kinds of delusions. Often they are preceded by the instructions of sense restraint,..."a monk going for alms in a village with guarded sense- doors"....things which often might require a certain amount of holding onto, yet which lead the monk already in the same direction of concentration (holding onto, he gains concentration, sitting down, he suffuses his body with the joy of being free from unwholesome states...),...

Thus, since mindfulness might initially be rather smeared in certain samadhi attainments, people might sometimes be uncertain of what they were and only after they grasped the reviewing sign or after they experienced some higher knowledges, they will know for sure that it was a true Jhāna....

So, perhaps Jhāna should be thought of as a spectrum, covering a rather wide range of meditative experiences, which the meditator

experiences as satisfactory (meaning all wholesome meditative experiences), since after all the Buddha gave these instructions for the sole purpose of helping people to become free from suffering.

Along that line, we may say that the perhaps simplest (yet perhaps valid according to the scriptures) description of Jhāna may be just, that a person can use his mind well enough to make himself happy ...whatever the general development of that person may be. The Abhidhamma actually recognises a kind of unwholesome Jhāna, that is one with a 'bad mind' (domanassa).. and one may perhaps say, that certain forms of black magic might require also a kind of Jhāna, although that will not be the type of Jhāna talked about in the suttas.

Yet, another point to be considered, is the context, in which the instructions of the Jhāna is given, which is the life of a forest monk, who has put his back towards the 5 sensory world and to whom thus too meticulous naming or cataloguing might be rather uninteresting.

Jhānas in the suttas actually never (or at least not usually) mean absorption on some object, but generally mean something like being self-absorbed in the bliss of one's purity. Along that line Jhāna may also be thought of as an act of creativity directed at greater inner purity.

Thus it might also not always be necessary for a person to go through all the Jhānas one by one, especially if he is a long term practitioner ... if he can usually keep some mindfulness going, his mind perhaps being used to that equanimity, can spread or deepen that equanimity, when there is a suitable occasion.

Anapana (mindfulness of breathing) according to the authors knowledge was not in the Suttas talked of as being a subject for the attainment of Jhāna...but was usually taken as a subject in its own right (Anapana sutta) or as one of the Satipatthanas (Satipatthana sutta). Although there are obviously people who do attain Jhānas basing their practice on Anapanasati.

....most people knowingly or unknowingly (consciously or unconsciously) will practice a set of practices, which they have to coordinate in order to reach distinction....mindfulness regarding the body or devotion towards a certain meditation subject which leads to concentration, may be quiet different from mindfulness of postures, or a moment to moment kind of mindfulness, which will lead to (or is in itself) mindfulness and clear comprehension. The second one might be necessary especially for a young monk, keen on making no mistakes regarding his morality.

In terms of the gradual training, Jhānas come after the successful training in virtue, being based on that and building up on that.

In matters of mental process, it is, although basing itself on wholesome resultants, a condition of continuous wholesome mental activity, usually taking as an object a subject that is counterbalancing a certain unwholesome kamma (such as the contemplation of unattractiveness for a person with a kammical condition of much greed, the contemplation of light for a person who generally lacks brightness or the contemplation of the qualities of an saint or Arahant to counterbalance all forms of worldliness).

The mental factors and even the body condition that one is hoping for in a Jhāna, are the same ones which one should cultivate in regard to wholesome daily activities,...the main difference will be only, the sphere of consciousness in which they occur...

Some modern teachers¹, distinguish the various Jhānas that are nowadays talked about into 3 levels. The first being the 'whole body Jhāna', which as the name suggests, designates the condition wherein

¹ See 'Culadasa' (John Yates, Ph.D.: "The Mind Illuminated")

a meditator attains a flow-state, that is experienced throughout his body.

The second type of Jhāna, which requires still greater skill, is the 'blissful Jhāna', wherein a meditator is able to 'surf' blissful feelings for some certain amount of time.

While the highest of those Jhānas will be the luminous Jhāna, which requires the capacity to maintain a light type of nimitta for some continuous amount of time.

These three types of Jhāna also closely resemble the 3 main chakras of other systems (both the Chinese (there called 'dan tien') as well as the tantric chakras), that is the chakra around the area of the solar plexus whose 'main topic' is physical vigour and energy, the heart chakra, whose 'main topic' is emotions (aiming at purified emotions) and the brow chakra, whose 'main topic' is mastery over the senses and psychic visions.

Summing up we might call Jhāna a condition, wherein the mind rules over matter, while, up to some point (until arupa)...being engaged with it. Modern western psychology recognises 2 types of experiences, which perhaps closely resonate with the experience of Jhāna.

One being the experience of flow¹, and the other is called peak-experience.

METAPHYSICAL CONSIDERATIONS OF THE JHĀNAS

Metaphysically, the first 4 Jhānas are related to the fine-material realm, in which are said to abide those gods, which have transcended sensuality (at least as long they remain in that realm). While the remaining 4 relate to the immaterial sphere, wherein the mind is capable of functioning entirely without any kind of material support of inner or outer visual perception (at least beyond the second arupa Jhāna), contemplating purely abstract ideas. In modern days, diligent scientists like for example the well known physicist Stephen Hawking, will be comprehensible examples of persons attaining arupa jhanas.

Thus taking the term Jhāna as related to the fine-material realm, perhaps all experiences of perception of lights, energies, qi-flow, astral-body, suffusing the body with pleasant feelings, or thoughts and perceptions about angels and gods, which are signs that the meditator has transcended the sense sphere world, all might be considered as

¹ According to psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, for an activity to potentially lead to a state of flow, it must meet the following conditions:

1. The activity is performed as an end in itself, not for any other purpose.
2. The goals of the activity are clear, and the feedback you get from it is immediate. The most important thing about that feedback is the symbolic message it contains: I have succeeded in my goal.*
3. The activity is neither taxingly difficult, nor too easy. The challenge of the task is perfectly balanced with the person's abilities.
4. The activity requires complete focus of attention, allowing only a very select range of information into awareness, and leaving no room in the mind for anything else. All troubling or irrelevant thoughts are kept entirely at bay.

Then, for that activity to actually transform into a flow state, these further conditions must arise:

5. The activity becomes spontaneous, almost automatic, and there is no sense of a self apart from the activity.
6. A feeling of effortlessness arises, even though continuous skilled performance is required. Everything happens seamlessly, as if by magic.
7. There is a sense of successfully exercising control—which is not the same as feeling like “you” are in control.

* Intention is followed by action, the outcome gets a positive evaluation, and feelings of pleasure and satisfaction reinforce the continued repetition of intention and action. This process creates a sense of order in conscious experience.

relating to the sphere of Jhānas, and when accompanied with equanimity and purified mindfulness, specifically the 4th Jhāna,.

The attainment of the Arupa-Jhanas (Immaterial Jhānas), I would say generally will come about only when meditation is practiced in conjunction with the study of certain metaphysical systems (or after such type of prior knowledge), where the mind (a sharp, abstract mind,...mindfulness having been purified) can roam in abstract thought climbing up ever higher the ladder of refinement...¹

(I would suggest that contemplations of quarks and atoms, deep thought about the universe or in the Abhidhamma model the detailed analysis of rupa, ...when someone gets absorbed in the contemplation, can become the first arupa jhana of the infinity of space,...when someone contemplates the mind and mental factors...while being absorbed in it, it will be the second arupa jhāna of the infinity of consciousness...the third arupa jhana (generally translated as nothingness, but it can easily be considered as being just a bad translation for something like 'un-concreteness' (no-'thing'-ness)...although as I am not a pali-scholar, I have no prove for that) ...will come about by contemplating what is called the life-continuum, or in modern terms the subconscious mind, while the fourth will be perhaps something like the end-limit of the previous one, generally considered too subtle to gain concrete insight into it (that one is called neither perception nor non-perception)...²

1 India has ever been the queen of metaphysics...taking things further than anyone can think

2 this whole theory may be supported by the fact, that as far as the author remembers, the Rishi, who predicted, that the young infant Siddharta, is going to become a Buddha was said to have attained the Arupa-Jhanas...having made such prediction, he evidently was a person who could see deeply into subtle kammic conditions (thus also into mental-physical conditions as he made such prediction after seeing the young Buddha to be)

Interestingly enough may be the fact, that even according to Buddhist doctrine, the last arupa jhana is considered to be too subtle to develop insight towards ...coupled with the fact, that during the Buddhas time other teachers proclaimed that (what is now generally translated as) perception is a persons self ...do I dare to ask, my dear reader, whether we find here a connecting link with the other religions ...in the sphere of neither-self nor non-self?

ANAPANA

Later systems divide the process of meditation into 3 stages instead of into the 4 Jhāna. These three stages are: concentration, meditation and samadhi....In the case of Anapana-sati, the first stage of concentration would be, when the meditator put his attention on the nose,...trying to feel the breath,..the second stage of breath meditation would mean, when the meditator starts knowing his natural breath, contemplating its qualities, such as ...flowing and movement and softness as desirable qualities of the meditation, while stagnation and roughness and hardness as undesirable qualities of meditation...contemplating in this way,...he learns to cultivate the more desirable factors as well as to remove the undesirable factors...Experiencing the desirable factors for prolonged periods of time,...will be the condition of samadhi, as in such case all the other factors such as pleasure and one-pointedness will come in automatically.

NIMITTAS

In later buddhist elaborations on meditation, there came about descriptions of the mediative signs a person might perceive prior to complete samadhi.

Although the Visuddhimagga and later works are very specific about the appearance of nimittas, principally a nimitta may be any sign of calm, peace, inner joy, brightness, luminosity or any sign, that the mind has started to transcend the sphere of desire (...a sign of the fine-material sphere).

Along the line of the mental process, they are the life-stuff arrested, with an introspective awareness (mind-door adverting) occasionally arising, followed by at first short instances and then gradually more

prolonged periods of mental processing of the experience. Although, strictly speaking as such it is not mind-door adverting that is arising, but an inner sense-door adverting. That is a usually visual perception arising independent from the eye, which will be closely akin to the senses of those devas of a lower order, who have not transcended sensuality altogether, but who live in spheres of greater sublimity than human beings do.

Relating the nimitta to other especially more metaphysical systems, one may perhaps say, that the light and energy that is generally referred to as the nimitta or nimitta stage,...is although not necessarily in appearance, ...in quality equal to that of the moon...that means...all the qualities generally especially in the mystical traditions attributed to the moon, can be found or looked for in this stage. The moon wields a certain electromagnetic energy over organic life on earth,...it moves the oceans, influences plant growth and has certain effects on the emotions of human beings...there is a certain attribution to passivity, femininity and emotionality...if we find any of these and perhaps similar attributes within ourselves, we can cosmological speaking ...draw a connecting line to the energy of the moon...and we can compare it with the nimitta stage of buddhist methodology....The stage of Jhāna on the other hand, using buddhist terminology,..is related to the sun ...its energy is more refined, yet more vitalising (and warming), its light more illuminating, its thought attributions are more lofty and sublime... (moon energy is more formatory, generally not coarsely sensual, but can contain energy of a sexual type, as well as things like spiritual or religious sadness)...The consciousness associated with either of these experiences, may be of the spectrum of self-consciousness or objective consciousness .

In regard to that description, one question may arise, as to how to go from the moon to the sun...?..The answer is,... by gradually removing anything, that keeps you attracted to the earth,...while at the same time training the consciousness to be aware of and become skillful with subtler things....

Sometimes the Buddha referred to the process as being similar to the refinement of gold...first the most coarse dirt is removed by washing,...than the ore gets heated, it gets hit by the hammer, blown at with the bellows...until it becomes gradually more refined.

EXPONENTIAL GROWTH

For establishing a clear understanding of the stages of meditation, one should see to it, that things don't get mingled up too much (although that again depends on how good one's general conditions are)...if one can see for example a nimitta (meditation sign) (or even perceive some amount of peace or happiness),...it is advisable, to meditate only as long there is the chance of working with that nimitta, and stop, when various confusing states arise (and do lighter (simpler) things that one is familiar with and which won't make a strong impression on one's mind)...this way one will make a clear sign in one's mind, as to what one wants to develop, and it will be also more easy to figure out the conditions regarding how it came about etc. and if one knows the conditions regarding how to gain good meditations, it will be more easy to re-create the suitable conditions.

Of course in the beginning it will be all a hopeless task of keeping these things apart and of gathering the right type of knowledge...Here and there some vague perception and then a few month nothing. Yet, there is something called exponential growth, and at some point in time every day there may be some improvement.

SPIRITUAL FIRE

Many Jataka stories talk about the Bodhisattva in his former lives having the choice between learning a skill /studying various crafts or, going to the forest, taking with him the fire which was lid when he was born. Fire was in ancient times always or mostly associated with the spiritual life...with inspiration and the higher mind... According to

some story, archeological findings revealed, that ancient man, when first taming the "fire-animal" did not initially use it for cooking, but for religious worship and inspiration... A yogi intent on furthering his spiritual development, is well advised to use this mysterious element as well as one element closely connected with it....i.e. the smoke ...for his inspiration and spiritual practice (nowadays it is for monks rather difficult to look at a reasonable size fire and a candle light might for most people be rather still to catch one's attention for a longer period of time,... so burning incense or moksha sticks for the purpose of looking at the smoke, which brings forth marvellous shapes etc....can be a very useful tool).

PAIN AND GAIN

Principally there are two ways of gaining higher experiences...both sides of the spectrum of mind can be useful (and should be understood): one way is, the mind bringing forth visions, out of body experiences, etc. from a state of great suffering,. The other condition is, when these things occur as a result of a continuity of meritorious states of mind reaching their peak.

ASPIRATION

It is in the heaven-worlds, that a thought can easily be made a reality. Understanding thus, after having conquered his lower mind, the hero gaining the heaven of his higher mind may easily see his wish fulfilled ... 'Thus Oh hero, see to it, that at the end of a good meditation you make a wise aspiration or humbly ask for a favour from the gods.'

STORMS

Storms are a natural occurrence of nature...but if we have to face them unprepared, they might destroy us. It is like surfing in the ocean. If we try to start surfing smaller waves, one day we might be able to master the giant ones. If we stay in contact with the day to day problems and obstacles, we have the best chances, to master the big one's...the big storms... He who ever rode a storm successfully, truly can not be an ordinary man. A strong wind can help a person who knows how to drive his ship to move forward much faster...but for a person who is not skilled with sailing, even a mild wind might toggle his ship upside down. In a similar manner might an emotional storm be exactly what is needed to move us forward on the path towards awakening, if we know how to drive our ship. While for an unskilled person it might lead to a serious downfall.

FLOW AND DISCERNMENT

...being adopted to one's environment and social condition is a strong determining factor for the further progression of one's meditation....being alone one may write down what one is experiencing, being part of a group one may share one's experiences with others. If too much is happening and everything just perceived as impermanent ...no new information will be registered or assimilated...but the flow of experience will perhaps not be interrupted drastically, so that equally no bad and unwholesome experiences get registered ...a person may continuously note every experience and thus be free from big obstacles,....On the other hand a person may try to accumulate merit for some strong kammic experience, which e.g. for samatha will be especially important, so that the mind goes out towards the experience/ that the mind relishes and find delight in the experience....For (modern) vipassana it will be more important to not attach to any experience...so the former lets the mind grow,... the latter does not allow it to grow...A good balance may be practising samatha, when things go well and practicing (modern)

vipassana when things don't go too well, when one is pressed into a corner in life (when one needs discernment) (so we can say the first one is living with an extended/developed mind and the second one is living with discernment).

MAINTAINING THE WHOLESOME

If you have a good idea about doing something,...see how far you can go in following that idea consciously, without the mind taking again another course,...and when the mind is falling again into the unwholesome, you draw your energy back into the body and focus on your primary meditation subject. Next time, or after some time, you should become more skilful in drawing your mind back at the right time, as well as in maintaining the wholesome force a little longer.

Usually there is always something arising, ...some suffering, some problem...if we stay in tune with life, in tune with the Dhamma,..these negative forces can be used to improve our own Dhamma practice. Like a Chinese Kung-Fu master who can make use of the force of his opponents attack, redirecting back that very force to conquer or overcome his opponent,...so a yogi should make use of whatever obstacles come into his way for advancement on his path...If there is an occasion arousing anger,..."great, let me practice mettā,...let me practice patience",...if the body is unhealthy,.. "great, let me contemplate death, impermanence, impurity of the body",... or if there is an occasion or possibility of getting the right medicine,..."great let me learn about medicine and the body", (so that I later can perhaps help other people with similar problems)...This way we develop enthusiasm about improving our own thought and character, which, when we have succeeded in strengthening them, shall become the main driving forces of our life.

When one does not yet get happiness through meditation and thus finds it difficult to feel much enthusiasm about it, one should find other

wholesome deeds to develop happiness within oneself...as a bhikkhu though it is not suitable to continuously run around doing wholesome deeds, ...but one should try to, without going too far away from one's meditation...find happiness through small rituals or little good deeds...just far enough to not infect one's meditation with unhappiness or negative mind states...

If we meditate in any other place than our resting place, ...if our meditation was somewhat 'not good', somewhat not satisfying, we should then and there find any wholesome activity, to clear away any negative registration/any negative mind-states from our mind-stream ...that is to avoid negativities to accumulate in regard to our meditation practice and mental development... (especially if we want to make meditation and mental development a life long thing).

Yet all suffering and painful mind-states can not be cut off all at once, so it is also good if we can learn to appreciate that there is a certain sense of meaningfulness to the pain and confusion that we might encounter in the difficult periods of our meditation. That is the blood which we sacrifice on the altar of knowledge.

CUTTING OFF THE UNWHOLESOME THROUGH SHIFTING PLANES:

If we notice that the mind is taking an unwholesome course of action...it is usually not advisable to allow that to continue, but one should rather strive to get rid of it... one possibility of doing that, is if a person possesses knowledge of planes, to quickly go down to a coarser plane with the intention to first gather more information and proficiency, so as to be later able to fight a proper battle on that plane. In ordinary language, that would simply mean to interrupt one's meditation and do something good to strengthen one's mind again and then ask questions to a teacher or fellow practitioner (we need both knowledge and strength in order to be able to fight with a demon, mere enthusiasm usually does not suffice). Yet, you always

need to try to find a solution related to the highest plane that you are capable of operating on.

Developing our spiritual path,...we try to use our good kamma (after having developed some) for crystallising into ourselves spiritual knowledge of the different stages of meditation....one day we may only walk up and down to rid our mind of obstructions...if we feel our good (spiritual) kamma has ended there (due to feelings of hunger, weakness etc.) we try to spend the rest of the day doing some wholesome activity, which will relax ourselves until we have again enough energy to continue our spiritual work...this way the different stages and the relevant knowledge will be registered in an unconfused, unegoic manner,...helping us to gather the right type of information and knowledge, in the right manner, so as to be able to later guide other people in an unconfusing manner...as well as to keep or make meditation something holy rather than some confusing, struggling technical thing (as it is with some of the vipassanā schools).

Some important prerequisite of meditation also is about making ourselves feel more comfortable and at home...that is why acts of kindness and becoming familiar with the rules and hows' of the place will greatly help us to grow spiritually, as the positive feedback of others, will help us to feel more comfortable and at ease.

So see what you can do now, don't breed over results.... work on causes, ...try to find in anything you encounter, something which can help you to get nearer to your goal.

Thus, we must find ways to continuously build up our mindfulness, only in this way, there is the possibility of gaining higher states of mind.

...a yogi should have an unbendable desire for realising higher things in life....this desire will draw him forward and will draw the right things towards him

...you must believe, that you deserve good concentration, ...and work for that self-esteem

...developing the perception of 'friend', of 'goodness', of 'beauty' (even of god) in one's breath (the higher and more sublime one can conceive/ perceive the breath the better it is for samadhi)

...living life first, and wherever there is an obstacle arising going, back to one's breath

What is it that you tend to tackle with spontaneous mindfulness, so that without an effort, your whole heart is in it?

Either the mind is continuously attacked by external objects,...becoming one with them,... or every arising mind, arises with mindfulness of our spiritual path...thus allowing us to become master of our reality, become master of our mind.

No longer should our actions be determined purely by external considerations, but they should more and more be determined by internal considerations....no longer the qualities of the object should be the determining factor, but the way the subject will get effected by the object.

Based on the eye and an object, consciousness arises....there is consciousness, that is consciousness, not some complicated thing... Consciousness associated with greed, with hate, with delusion... or consciousness associated with non-greed, non-hate, non-delusion.

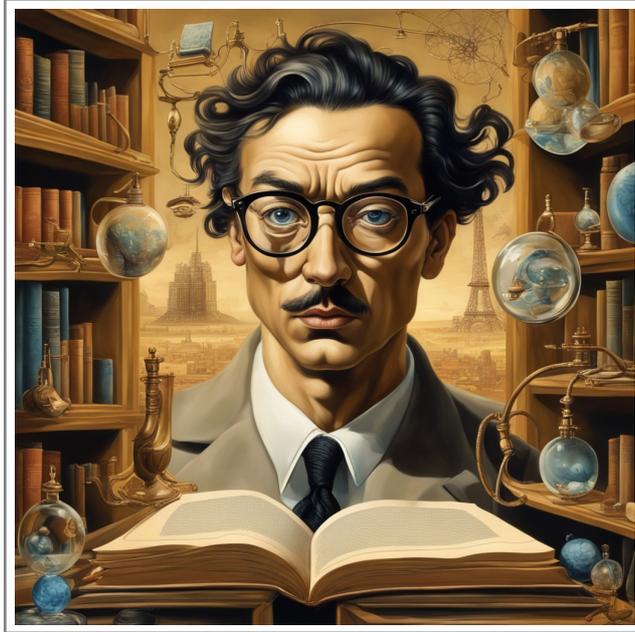
Some sound is spoken and the heart contracts, some other sound is spoken and the heart expands....sometimes the object is pure

(Dhamma), but the base (heart) isn't, sometimes the base is pure, but the object isn't (Adhamma).

Having in the course of living life found one chief feature (greed, hate, delusion, dullness, stupidity, timidity, dishonesty, etc...), which is likely to lead one to an undesirable rebirth,...one uses a certain meditation subject (/or one evokes the power of a certain helpful force) in order to overcome that obstructive force in one's life... doing in this way one may gain new powers (such as power of wisdom, power of energy, ..of confidence/faith, ..of mindfulness,.. of samadhi (..of knowledge, of freedom)).

...making use of aversive forces for one's own advantage...as the wind and the rough sea might crush the unexperienced sailor, but can be put to the advantage of the experienced sailor, so too a meditator should make use of the aversive forces he encounters for his spiritual developmentonly where there is a challenge, can he really progress, only where there is something difficult to give, is there the possibility of growing in generosity, only where there is the temptation of lying, is there the possibility of growing in truthfulness...a spiritual person looks onto the world in a different manner,...never he asks 'what is it?', but ever his question will be, 'what meaning does it have for me' (and my spiritual path)/ how can I make use of it for my spiritual path.... Growing in self-knowledge (i.e. understanding yourself) only can come in this way,....and it is this self-knowledge, that is the most precious thing a man can get in life...this is the main way to grow out of samsara (out of mechanical life)...like the lotus grows out of the mud.

Mind, Memory and Conception



*"Knock and ye will be opened, ask and ye shall receive"
...the mysteries of old will be revealed to the discerning one*

LEARNING AND THINKING

In order to develop in life, we must learn, and we must learn the right type of things. What the right type of things to learn are, depends in turn on the setting of a goal for oneself.

It is the goal, for the sake of which one learns, that gives the meaning to the items of learning...only when the learning is viewed in relation to that goal, can a judgment be made as to whether an item of learning is correct or incorrect.

Of course initially both the understanding of the goal, as well as the meanings the particularly items of learning have, may be only vague. So usually one's learning will remain rather unfocused and obscure a thing, often for long periods of time.

Yet through repetition and through the reinforcement of one's goal, the meanings of the items of learning start to become more and more clear. The right objects of learning will be clearly perceived as leading to one's goal. They will be perceived to have characteristics distinctly different from the wrong one's. Hence learning is generally a gradual process.

In relation to meditation this means, that unless you meditate having some clear intention such as that you aim at enlightenment or to realise some higher human state, you will not be able to decide whether what you do in meditation is the right or wrong activity.

In ordinary life, learning means the acquisition (taking in) of knowledge relevant for making a living...for dealing with the stuff of the 5 senses (in a way that promises profit in the realm of the 5 senses)...In spiritual life learning means the acquisition of knowledge relevant for becoming a more perfected human being.

Knowledge relevant for perfection, is a knowledge that can help a person to penetrate below the surface of things...As there is no end in learning all the things of the world,...there is the possibility of an end of learning things that one does not perceive to be ultimately meaningful. As a person becomes more learned in things which possess true meaning, he will also become more skilled in foregoing all learning that appears to be ultimately meaningless.

[\(For learning in relation to time see last chapter\)](#)

MEMORY

Remembering is not only a process of reproducing a certain thing from the past, but is also a constructive or creative process, because remembering is also a processes of modifying or adding something new to what was learned or experienced in the past. Or putting it into more buddhist terms, when you remember, you access past kamma, but at the same time also make new kamma through your act of remembering.

Many people studying Buddhism think of 'Mindfulness' as being only awareness, but it is quite clear that the word 'sati' as it is used in the Buddhist scriptures includes remembering of what one has learned (hence memory).

Then the question might arise,: 'What is it, that you want to remember ?'...is it your fathers dogmas? or your mothers moralyour friends opinions or your teachers doctrines ?...is it your future riches or your past belongings?..... some chants of old...or some recent song?..Thus,.. good indeed it is to yearn, to find things few or even one, that to remember is your concern.

Along that line, one should occasionally question oneself as to what one's main intentions for living an ordained life are..."do you want to free yourself from something?, ...you want to become better than your parents? ...you want to have impeccable sila?...you want to free yourself from drugs or some bad habit?... you want to become a sage?...you hope for supernatural powers?..."

If we learn to remember rightly, and we get to know ourselves like this, it will be easier to determine the realm for a solution (the realm where you should primarily put your attention and acquire a faculty of memory)... If you weren't able to live in lay life a life of pure sila, you

will know, that right living is first something to work on, ...if you were lazy at work or at school, perhaps you should put your emphasise on right effort. If you know restlessness was your main problem, then focus mostly on sitting meditation ...choose a quality of mind which you want to develop and than live life keeping that in mind...earn it through work, give it its time through rest,...bring it up as you would bring up a child.

Remembering or writing down what good quality one wants to invite into one's life (may also be related to mettā practice..'may I be...';....and thus also to prayer) ... one might come to know that some qualities might require unpleasant situations to develop... putting such realisation into practice, one may learn to make use of all the ups and downs of life to develop a certain quality. Such type of practice is also the best preparation for death.

INVESTIGATION

In regards to meditation...often meditation teachers advice their students not to investigate too much, when the student is reporting to have many wandering thoughts.... with such suggestion not to investigate (when practicing for example anapanasati)...usually 2 problems will be there: investigation about how to meditate (how to do the breath-thing) and investigation about how not to investigate....Thus a better suggestion might be,..."it is right, that you investigate...but try to ask also questions of those who succeed..try to find time to read about meditation...try to adopt to the place/condition (learn chanting, vinaya, etc.) ...in order to have more confidence about the framework in which this meditation thing is applicable". As a matter of fact, usually you can be aware of a certain thing in itself only after you have acquired a sufficient conception about that thing (or after you have been able to make a certain relation

towards a thing of a somewhat similar kind that you had already some conception about)¹. And the more elaborate the concept, the longer you can hold the particular thing in your awareness, without being distracted.

WAYS OF GETTING TO KNOW YOUR MIND:

Asking questions is a major vehicle on the path of a yogi...'where am I?',...'what can I attain'...'what is the proper way', ...'what is the next step'...It is the asking of good questions, that allows us to receive good knowledge and remember.

...before you sleep, or as meditation.. .. try to remember some situation during the day or further in the past....and try to see your mind in that situation...Could you have reacted better...or do you find, that you acted pretty good...Can you estimate the other persons mind?...Can you learn something from the situation?...Can you learn something from him?...How might the situation look from the other persons perspective?..Can you pick up some good qualities in him/her which you might be lacking..

IDAPPACCAYATA - THE LAW OF CONDITIONALITY

...when what is, what else will be there?,...with the arising of what, what will arise?,....when what is not there, what else does not come to be?...with the cessation of what, what else ceases?.....

...when there is worry, what else has come to be?...when worry ceases, what else will have ceased?

¹ You can have a perception of some general characteristics of an entirely unknown phenomena, its colour or form etc., but you cannot 'grasp' the phenomena itself without a sufficient conception.

...when there is unclarity of mind, what else will come to be?, with the cessation of unclarity, what else will cease to be? ...when there is restlessness of mind...

...when there is wholesomeness/goodness of mind, what else will be there?...if goodness ceases, what else will cease? ...when such and such a feeling arises, what will usually will be the situation of the mind?...

If you never question yourself...other people might invent you,...that is, whatever another person is telling you about who you are ...how will you know whether or not he is right?

Thus be honest with yourself, ...investigate your thoughts, don't just push them away,..they can be your teacher...although their content might contradict the image of yourself....if you can't make your mind a good friend, you can't be a good friend to anyone...you will just use anyone and anything to flee from yourself ...and also,...don't just forbid everything to your mind...if he reveals his wishes to you, if there is a possibility of fulfilling it, perhaps you should try to find a way,... if not you are teaching it with wisdom ...A monk should be a good friend and teacher to his mind.....and being a teacher and friend like this, he is also one who knows himself and gets to know himself...learning to know himself like this, he can learn to stay desire- and faultless.

CONTRADICTIONS

One "I" says all materiality is impermanent, but the next 20, 50, 100 "Is" spend the whole day studying and managing things related to materiality, that is how to deal with people, how to arrange property etc. taking things very seriously.... but we can give a whole Dhammatalk about all materiality being impermanent...."There is no self", but I am a Bhikkhu and I go back to my monastery, to my Abbot

etc. taking things very seriously.... All mentality is impermanent, but I spend the whole year in studying Pali, because otherwise people might look down on me etc., etc....Meditation can not be taken out of its context, otherwise we run into absurdities... These things start only to make sense, when we are truly devoted to serious self study, for a considerable amount of time. And self study has to go or ideally should go hand in hand with studying a language for self study, studying a cosmology that shows how things fit into a bigger picture, as well as with having some associates or teacher to exchange our experiences with.

....look at your contradictions:... "one has to be tough" and " I need love".....

... "One should be contented with little"...and "I don't feel comfortable"...

... "there is no self"...but, "I want to progress"

... "One should stay alone" and "I feel lonely"...

... "One should sit much"...and "sitting I feel restless"...

Solving the riddle of one's own contradictions, one day we may succeed in solving the great riddles of the contradictions of life itself

....spiritual development comes through asking the right kind of questions:...what am I meant to do, what can I do, what are my resources, what do I want/ do I like to do...

...in regard to your environment...you may ask yourself the question, 'What does life here mean?, What does living here mean?, What does being a monk here mean, what does being a buddhist here mean, ?..'...am I satisfied with the established meaning of these things?

...through our own inquiry, based on what we have learned before,....we are creating for ourselves a map and a vision of reality

Moving one's attention inward, the mind may be known. Whenever we do something wholesome...whether it be reading a book, drawing a picture or looking at the trees, doing puja, doing something nice for another person or sweeping with the mind through the body...there we can try to grasp the mind,...being watchful when the mind arises, than is the time to gain wisdom. Grasping the mind we can not do with the body, but only with the mind... if we give it the right name, then we can grasp it...'I should do better', 'I'm not good enough', 'I have to work harder' ...let's start with a word like 'self-hatred'...how deeply halls it the echo of your parents strictness...this is the time to get to know oneself, ...this is the time to move on in life

...'I have to try harder to succeed'...Is it true? Is that the real problem?...how about stepping back and looking what the real problem is?

...much of this is meant to draw attention towards the fact that its never really only about "me and my meditation"....For even if we think it is, it will be likely to be only'worrying, worrying, worrying'...and than when sitting, perhaps relaxing a bit,.....how long you want to do that?

New Laws

Reflecting while eating...You eat too much, so that physical matter enwraps and blinds your consciousness...and you will have to do the work of this world again, following the laws of this world. On the other hand, what will happen, when you stop eating when you perceive the blinding spell of matter,... and when you free yourself from the anxiety that it won't be enough to get you through the day,... then you will see, that many times things will be quite otherwise than your fear would have imagined... You remember a medicine that you could legally take, or you find, that having freed yourself from worry, being pure, your bodily energy lasts much longer than you would have thought it does ...Suddenly you might recognise new laws and opportunities and ways of doing things without fear and worry.

Whenever we notice certain qualities of the higher mind (wholesome mental factors/characteristics of the spirit), of the higher body (astral body/ qi-body), of higher wisdom (intuitive wisdom) in us, ...at that time we are under higher laws and the lower (physical) laws can not bind us.

CONSCIOUSNESS

Higher mind-states realise the importance of understanding unchanging things...lower mind-states consider primarily the immediate things of life as the most important... understanding this, a bhikkhu desiring progress, should understand the suffering nature in lower mind states, while striving to attain the higher.

Thus one may very well call meditation a battle between consciousness and worldly conditions.

CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT CONSCIOUSNESS FOR MEDITATION- PRACTICE

Consciousness can be made continuous and controllable by special efforts and special study. Here we mean by consciousness ...consciousness from within, that is, what is usually called mindfulness. Calling it here consciousness, has the advantage, that it will keep the exposition in touch with metaphysical teachings (including those of other systems), thus keeping the old bond between psychology and metaphysics, rather than considering it purely from an ordinary human perspective.

One way of doing work on consciousness, is by studying

DEGREES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

1. duration (how long one was conscious)/
2. frequency and appearance (how often one became conscious)/
3. extent and penetration...of what one was conscious

Ordinarily a man in his natural state, can with great effort be conscious of one subject for two minutes or less...but through development, as well as through building up a relation with a certain subject it can be greatly extended.

QUESTIONS TO ASK:

"How much time it usually takes until I return to my meditation object or to any sign of calm?"

"For how long am I usually distracted?"

Make a resolve, to shortcut distractedness and quicken your time of remembering your meditation (meditation object or meditation related thinking)

HOW TO OVERCOME DISTRACTEDNESS?

By clearly making a mark, that this action in relation to what matters more, was/is a distraction.

By giving an appropriate name to the distraction (especially for frequently recurring one's) (hindrances, bonds, defilements, etc.), so as to find an respective antidote for frequently recurring issues.

By making the "coming back to what matters"- sequence an agreeable one.

By making the "being occupied with what matters" condition more agreeable.

By connecting the occupation (i.e. meditation) with both near and further goals.

Another way of studying consciousness is by studying consciousness through...

STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

...man has possibility of 4 states of consciousness: sleep, waking-state, self-consciousness and objective consciousness

...most people experience only the first two....self-conscious they are only in exceptional moments, in highly emotional states, in moments of danger, in very new and unexpected circumstances and situations, and only sometimes in quite ordinary moments, when nothing happens

...an important aim of spiritual practice is, to make these fleeting moments more continuous or even permanent

MENTAL PROCESSING IN DIFFERENT SPHERES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

The quality or success of the processing of objects or situations, will usually, but not always increase when a persons consciousness is attaining to a higher sphere.¹ While consciousness is emphasising one particular sphere of experience, there may still arise certain resultant mind-states from the past. These, when consciousness remains emphasising the higher sphere will be processed in line with the new sphere of experience. For example a person emphasising the harmonious or pleasant breath, a nimitta or pleasant qi-flow within the body, will usually easily let go of any lower mind states of anger or greed at least as long his consciousness is for the most part emphasising that harmonious breath or nimitta. The purification happens more or less automatically, as the mind will usually intuitively processes the lower as less real than the higher.

¹ Not always, because for some person, wisdom in regard to for example sense-sphere related things, may be more refined than the wisdom required to temporarily attain to a higher sphere.

CONSCIOUSNESS AND KNOWLEDGE

It is the nature of the subconscious mind to make random connections between unrelated things (→ Sankhara)...But to the degree a person learns to turn sense-impressions into knowledge and to connect one item of knowledge with another item of knowledge, he moves out of the realm of randomness (out of the realm of dependent origination or the defilement round) ...turning the wheel of liberation, the wheel of Dhamma.

As long Knowledge is only unconnected bits of information, while the subconscious mind is a bundle of random connections,...there is no possibility of winning more than momentarily the battle for peace. It is only, when knowledge becomes a network of understanding, that permanent peace becomes a possibility.

CONCLUSION ABOUT CONSCIOUSNESS

A wise person can wait until the stars are on his side (fate is on his side)...he throws his deepest desire into the depth of his well where nobody can find it,...looking into the sky, he is watching out for a favourable constellation....when the stars are on his side...he may salvage his treasure and offer it to the gods.

Thus, put out your goal and live life in such a way, that that goal slips ever deeper into your unconscious mind...from there it will inform your conscious mind, which conscious experiences are conducive to that goal and how to pay attention to them.

CONCEPTS & HIGHER TRUTHS

Through processing the objects of the 5 senses, man evolves concepts in regard to the world in which he finds himself...These concepts once anchored in him (lit. 'taken in'- tadārammaṇa) will bind him to that particular sphere of existence.

Desirous of going higher, attempting to attain higher spheres of consciousness (Jhānas), man requires more "All-encompassing" ("All" in a relative sense) -concepts, that allow for a broader vision of things.¹

Of those who become accomplished in experiences of a higher nature and a broader vision, some seek initiation into the higher secrets of the ultimate nature of the world and the path to its transcendence.

CONCEPTS AND KNOWLEDGE

Concepts become a faculty of Knowledge. Knowledge in turn can be subdivided into worldly knowledge and philosophical/ religious knowledge.

Worldly Knowledge, if entirely disconnected from any philosophical or religious conception, will only bind a person to the world. Yet, being bound to the human world until a certain stage of development must not necessarily be thought of as disadvantageous. Those concepts which the organism has learned to respond towards, will delineate the spectrum in which kamma making takes place.

Yet, as man evolves, ready made concepts become more and more numerous and man acquiring them, finds it oftentimes impossible to make his organism respond to each of them.

¹ Ideas like 'loving kindness for all beings', 'all-encompassing compassion' and 'unconditional goodness' or 'totalities' like the kasinas (f.ex. fire-kasina for those who have much kamma along the line of fire-worship, earth for those who could evoke all-encompassing perceptions of earth (mother earth etc.), colours like white, which could produce all-encompassing perceptions of purity; or yellow...reminding of gold and thus divine-splendour, etc.)...were in ancient times the more commonly used, but in modern times, where psychological knowledge is more readily available, for many people it makes perhaps much more sense to directly work with psycho-physical ideas...along the line of the satipatthanas in conjunction with any inspiring idea that lifts up the mind

To the degree he fails, his organism will yield again more influence over his mind and consciousness. And thus a person will be forced to take on a more rudimentary form of existence of reacting to sense-impressions in accordance with prior kamma (thus mental processes will run primarily only until a rudimentary classification of received impressions, where after the mind just falls back into the life-continuum).

When people start to take up meditation or any form of activity directed at harmonising their mind with their body, this will usually be an important result thereof, that they again become more capable of longer mental processes and of making their organism respond to acquired concepts.

MAKING CONCEPTS REAL

An acquired concept, that the mind has taken in on faith, without any further reflection, just adds to the "life stuff". Yet sooner or later that will raise its head and thus become an object of mind-door adverting. If that mind-door adverting mind rejects that object as irrelevant or uninteresting, especially if repeatedly, it will arise less and less frequent at the mind-door and after some time will be out of reach of awareness altogether.

While when the mind is taking up the concept, i.e. thinking about it, on the one hand it will build up the higher faculties (5 indriyas), while on the other hand it will develop supportive kamma, thus conditioning a more frequent arising of the concept at the mind-door.

Building up thus a relation with that concept, it starts to be taken in (tadarammana) and thus slowly will condition the workings of consciousness itself. That is, it will condition, how and what kind of things consciousness perceives (cognises) in the first place.

This becomes very important, when considering about meditation, because in order to have even an interest in meditation, you will have to learn to look at the world in quite a new way.

Then, in order to gain experiences in meditation, you will have to find an entrance into an altogether new world...and from there on acquire altogether new concepts related to that new world. These will help you to coordinate within that world, staying in it for longer periods of time.

CONCEPTS REGARDING THE 5 SENSORY WORLD

- I'm a monk
- A monk should do such and such type of things, should learn such and such type of things
- Such and such person is a superior person, such and such person is an inferior person, that person is dangerous, that person is my friend...
- Such and such are my duties, such and such things are optional
- If I do this, I will get that result (breaking a rule, some person might reprimand me., doing such and such, I may get more freedom)
- ...

CONCEPTS REGARDING THE FINE MATERIAL SPHERE OR MEDITATION IN GENERAL

- Having pleasant feeling in the body, anger or negativity is not likely to arise
- If the mind is collected, no desire for other (worldly) things will arise
- Sustainment of mind on the breath (or some subtle sensation), can counteract doubts and confusions

- Too repeated application of mind without getting any good results, may cause doubt to arise
- Pushing a little in meditation energy can be produced. Pushing too much, energy may quickly dissipate
- Repeated experiences of lightness and uprightness of the body may change a person into an optimistic good character
- ...
- more archaic concepts that could cause similar results for non-buddhists, would be perhaps something like... 'god is unity', 'god is all understanding, balance etc.' or something like- 'god is unchanging' (...which would lead a person to aspire for continuity and sustainment in meditation)¹

CONCEPTS REGARDING ULTIMATE THINGS

- All physical matter is composed of particles
- The mind can be distinguished into various mental factors
- There is a definite sequence regarding (the occurrence of) mental phenomena
- There are various planes of existence, and they relate to the various states of consciousness or ways consciousness can function
- ...

We are trying to make real concepts in regard to 5 sensory existence, in order to not easily fall into the lower realms.

¹ In olden days, where there existed little of psychological knowledge in the way we know it ...religious practice usually had to start with symbols representing a god or something of a higher nature, but in modern days, where psychological knowledge is quite wide spread, it makes much more sense, to start off attempts at jhanas with a psychological understanding

We are trying to make real, concepts related to the fine-material realm, in order to transcend 5 sensory existence...

And we are trying to make real concepts of an ultimate nature (related to arupa-realm?), in order to transcend the reality of the fine-material world.

MEASURE OF GOOD CONCEPTS

The success in any endeavour in any of those spheres of existence, depends a. on acquiring good quality concepts and b. skillfulness in making them a reality

A good concept (from a worldly perspective, from the perspective of consciousness) is one, that helps a person to skillfully develop his latent faculties into powers

Good concepts in regard to the 5 sensory world, are those, which allow us to prosper and find peace and happiness in the 5 sensory world

Good concepts in regard to the fine material world, are those which help us to find peace and happiness within ourselves

Good concepts regarding things of an ultimate nature are those, which help to explain All and everything

From a spiritual perspective, a good concept is any one, that basing itself on the law of cause and effect, helps a person to move beyond worldliness

A bad concept is one, which serves no useful purpose whatsoever

When one's experiences start to align with one's conceptual understanding of things, they begin to become real. Thus, gaining life-experiences and processing them by means of a suitable concept can make any such concept a non-conceptual reality. Or the other way around acquiring good concepts and then seeking out related life-experiences can equally turn these concepts into non-conceptual realities.

...Conceptualising thus, consciousness starts establishing itself on a certain plane and will not easily fall, wherever the wind blows it...it will become more conditioned by the concepts than by the events of life...hence the importance of acquiring good concepts

The more all-encompassing one's conceptions of higher things are, the less one will have to do things in the outer world in order to fix one's kamma.

Higher Dhamma



"What is by knowing which, I may come to know all?"

Of those who become accomplished in experiences of a higher nature and a broader vision, some seek initiation into the higher secrets of the ultimate nature of the world and the path to its transcendence.



To follow a spiritual path, one has to understand the superiority of spiritual knowledge over other kinds of knowledgeNobody would sacrifice his life for some knowledge of geography,...but throughout time, people did risk and sacrifice their lives to acquire, protect and attain spiritual knowledge.

In studying spiritual systems, one learns to see things from the inside, where things are connected and alive... one will learn how to treat

things not just based on appearances but based on certain inner and more universal values...getting thus ever more close to life itself.. as all outer things are but lifeless shadows, cast by a lack of life giving light...

Seeing in this way, we start to understand what reality is made up of, we start to understand how reality works, and by understanding thus, ultimately we can start manipulating reality in accordance with what we consider more desirable.

FOUR ELEMENTS

The four elements were known to most cultures of the past (although in some cultures there were 5). To get any handle on matter, making it an object of the conscious mind in order to diminish its hidden influence over that mind, one has to somewhat learn to classify it.

Only in this way a person may learn to master matter, becoming its ruler, rather than being the ruled by it.

The first steps in analytical meditations is usually the comprehension and balancing of those four elements.

The 4 elements may be thought of as the material into which your kammical energy will reincarnate.

If you become master of these elements ...you can enormously speed up your own evolution..., that is, prevent skillfully the growth of the unwholesome and accelerate the growth of the wholesome factors in your life.

Then, when the view into the body becomes clear, a person aiming at mental development, will have to acquire some understanding of the mechanics of the body and how the bodies inner functions relate to the mind.

BODY, MIND AND CONSCIOUSNESS

Our Body transforms food into energy,... that energy travels throughout the body along certain channels (the blood vessels for the most part). Spreading through the body, it feeds certain centres in the body where many nerve-ends come together. These nerve-ends are in direct contact with what is now called the sub-conscious mind...which is in turn in contact with (and influences) our conscious mind. By bringing the conscious mind into contact with these centres, we can learn to access the content of our subconscious mind...and thus we can start making changes on what to different degrees for different people is the very driving force for the conscious mind.

But the energy which is flowing throughout our body is not just in contact with these energy centres within, but also receives information from the 5 senses, so to say 'without'. For ordinary people all these types of informations get so mingled up that it will be pretty impossible to tell apart where a particular type of information came from. Yet as man evolves, he becomes better in distinguishing the source of a particular type of information and thus more capable of responding to different types of informations, both within and without.¹

A less evolved type of person eats, when he feels sad, starves himself, when he is already weak...gets angry at a mere by-passer when an impulse of anger has arisen within, feeds himself with even more information, when his mind is already running wild...is not capable of making distinctions in regards to the outside world (for example between a superior person and an inferior person, etc.)...as well as in regards to his internal world (what is a truth, what is a lie, etc.).

¹ in Theravada buddhism all that arises based on these centres is termed 'the sixth sense'

CONSCIOUS ACTIONS:

Conscious actions, after they have been repeatedly skilfully performed...can be passed on to the subconscious mind. This, being based for the most part in the sympathetic nervous system will bring forth the activity automatically in conditions similar to those that were present when performed consciously. This is one of the main secrets of mental and spiritual development...of developing good habits and of actively changing one's life...

ABHIDHAMMA WAY OF PUTTING IT:

The Buddhist Abhidhamma model evidently aimed at describing these things in a very similar fashion...The vithi-model shows, that in regard to the 5 sensory world man has the faculty or power to investigate and name (voṭṭhapana) the objects of the world which he has received through his 5 sense-doors....these will form the content of his thoughts (javana-phase) ...and when he has pondered upon them long enough,...they will be registered (tadārammaṇa) as ideas, which will form a part of his life-continuum (mind-stream or character) ...they will become part of who he is and bind him to that particular sphere of existence.

PATICCA SAMUPPĀDA - THE CHAIN OF BECOMING

Unfathomable like the deep dark depth of an ocean, is the deep dark depth of ignorance, out of which in random fashion sprout formation after formation. Those are the kammical seeds of an infinite past, which like little saplings whose planting has been long forgotten pierce through into the field of consciousness. There they grow and prosper, becoming manifest as the things of the world, and the mind that is ensouling them. Slowly becoming manifold as the various spheres of the senses. Through those, consciousness learns to know what is pleasant, what unpleasant and what neutral. Delighting in the one and

reviling the other, becoming attached to the one and seeking distance from the other. Thus the experiences of life start modifying the existence that grew out of the kammical seeds whose offspring it has become. Yet, having reached so far into manifestation, it has to follow the laws of manifest life and sooner or later yield to its own disintegration, leaving behind only the seeds, that were in the fruits of its blossom.

THE LAW OF KAMMA

For a Buddhist practitioner, gaining a comprehensive understanding of the law of kamma, is one of the essential things to aim at. So I will include here a small elucidation of this very fundamental law, along the line of Abhidhamma.

Suppose, for example a good meditator, attains samadhi, and picks up a certain kamma related to his spiritual path. Presumably, many times in the past he has been a monk, a priest, shaman, or scholar or something of that sort,...perhaps in the first place initiated, through the sight of some such person of knowledge. Then in many further lives, he off and on gathers kammical seeds (generating supportive kamma) related to that initial kamma. Which means, that after kamma generating thoughts related to this particular kamma, a binding or registering consciousness (tadārammaṇa) arises, which binds those new types of kamma to the stock of related previous kamma.

In some lives, that kammical seed finds some opportunity to grow within an introspective consciousness (mind-door adverting), getting fed by a further desire for growth (vithi- a thought accompanied by a wholesome desire) (kamma is the seed, consciousness is the field desire for more is the moisture).

That kammical seed sprouting thus in consciousness, occasionally grows into speech and actions. Those verbal and physical actions in turn create circumstances and opportunities for further growth of that

kamma. Which in some lives mean, that that person will take on the mode of life of a monk or priest or scholar.

But then, as is the nature of the physical manifestation of those kammical seeds that were responsible for the coming into being of the physical body, this manifestation has to yield itself to the laws of the physical world and in due time decay and perish. Yet, in accordance with certain laws governing the nature of the mind, at the near death moment of the physical manifestation of certain seeds that generated the physical body (meaning, at the near death moment of the body), there will arise certain mind states, (depending on the quality of the faculties at that time), which will initiate, based on certain fundamental tendencies, the continuation of certain kammical seeds in a future body.

Once the future physical body is taken on, certain tendencies of a more fundamental kind, will agree to the new existence (bhāvanikkantika lobha). And thus, in the initial period of the new existence, usually only the more fundamental kammical seeds will have a chance of growing while much new kammical seeds are getting generated through responses made to impressions coming from the physical senses. Thus, there may come lives in which kammical seeds related to phases of further development will have no chances of growth due to having to cope too continuously with impressions coming through the sphere of the 5 senses.

Then again, there may come lives in which a person will be able to more frequently raise himself above sensory conditions. Thus good kammical seeds related to the higher faculties¹ are getting generated and those from the past are getting supported and nurtured.

If these attain to a more permanent condition, becoming part of a persons character...and remaining so until near-death moment, that persons consciousness after death still will move back into latency (life-continuum of the past) as happens during life in deep dreamless

¹ in Buddhism usually 5: faith, spiritual or heroic exertion, mindfulness and reflection, samadhi (inner unification) and wisdom

sleep, but then, when becoming manifest again, may not become manifest in a physical body, as the person's identification has already shifted from a self-perception of a sense-sphere being with a physical body, towards a more lofty type of being that rather finds self-expression through spiritual exertion, reflection and higher intellection. Thus, that person may find himself reborn in a fine-material body, and upon recovering its senses, may find himself surrounded by surroundings of equally finer matter.

TIME

Most people never have enough time, rarely have a good time and in general, time seems to be something that works rather against them.

A person working on a spiritual path can not get around the problem of time...acquiring more control over one's life means also acquiring more control over time...

For getting a handle on the problem of time, one has to acquire a new way of considering about time... 'objective' time as we inherit it from science and culture is not likely to change according to our needs...but there is the possibility of alongside with 'objective' time to also consider about time subjectively...and thus widening one's possibilities in life.

For the person who works on a spiritual path...the primary task will be to make the inside grow,...consciousness (of one's path) and conscience has to slowly acquire dominion over sense impressions and a mere sensory existence...and with that, change has to occur from a time concept emphasising the importance of the externals, towards a time concept emphasising the importance of the internals.

CENTRES OF GRAVITY

The earth takes approximately 365 days to circle around the sun, the moon takes around 27 days for its rotation around the earth and it takes about 24 hours for the earth to rotate around its own axis,...These are the measuring rods which we have learnt to use to calculate time.

But a meditator who seeks to develop a centre of gravity within himself, who seeks to become celestial himself,...will find these time-considerations less and less appropriate. So he seeks out more appropriate ways of measuring his time:

When we feel far removed from our own centre of gravity, time becomes more and more of a burden. Our nights of gloomy mood become longer and longer, while our happy days are rarer.

While on the other hand side, as we move closer towards our own centre of gravity, we find our days are becoming brighter and our dark moods become shorter.

As we rotatingly move on our orbit of life, whenever we feel it is our daylight hour, we should look around what can be done to improve the conditions of life...and whenever we perceive our sunlight to go down, we should be more restful and when we have to move about be more careful and attentive.

TIME AND THE ELEMENTS

Time depends on space, ...if there is no space, there is no time/ little space little time. Space in turn depends on the 4 great elements. When the body (or in general the field of perception) is full of coarse elements, then there is no or little space

...when these coarse elements occupy the field of perception, then there will be only space for coarse and short instances of mind to arise, ...thus the discontinuity of the mind (and elements) will be the obvious

...when an object (made of the 4 elements) enters the field of the senses, if it is an disagreeable object (or for a person in training, a perception contrary to his training), painful feelings may arise while processing it ...thus coarse elements occupy the field of awareness,...focussing on the space between them, time may be expanded and thus there comes the possibility for the arising of the mind, (...thus one can go towards non-perceptibility of one's pain and anguish (which might usually just mean, that one temporarily numbs oneself) ... until the mind has enough strength to let go...which is through non-identification...)

...if the mind comes on the other hand into contact, with an agreeable object (for a person in training, something resonating with his training),...pleasant feeling will arise,...with pleasant feeling there will be subtle and refined elements in the body...with subtle and refined elements, space will not be obvious, discontinuity will not be obvious, thus there will be no or little perception of time.

TIME AND PLANES OF EXISTENCE:

In order to get some direct perception of the idea of time...and how time is effected by our own state of consciousness...the Abhidhamma model offers a hierarchy of planes of existence...from the very lowest of planes, the plane of hell, up to the very highest of planes of the formless gods...giving to each some very definite time value of the lifespan of those beings.

Now such model can be very valuable, if one learns to recognise the characteristics of those gods and lower beings within oneself as well as in others.

The more one knows (and the more experience one has), the greater one's possibility to change certain things.

As an example, one could pay attention to one's time-perception in different circumstances...such as when doing ordinary human work, when doing work of a less ordinary type (e.g. mental work), or when allowing the mind to roll in some nonsensical wandering thought, in contrast to, when using or applying the mind...when rushing through life chased by some perpetual thought... or when bringing the mind in contact again with the lower realms of matter and unfinished kamma...making it enter the world of one's body...

To get out of the laws of the human realm, one has to find ways to develop states of consciousness corresponding to beings of an higher order and thus understanding something about time as it functions in those higher planes may prove quite valuable in developing those states.

A DIFFERENT SYSTEM...A DIFFERENT WAY OF UNDERSTANDING WHAT RELIGIONS VALUE AS THEIR HIGHER TEACHINGS:

Here I only want to show one example of how other systems worked their science in order to solve the riddles of life. So as to help to grasp that same science in one's own tradition.

LAW OF GENDER

According to the hermetic teachings of ancient Egypt (in as far the authors knowledge can be trusted), everything in the universe was considered to posses a male and female aspect....even a thing like a chair...the male aspect being the appearance and the outgoing, outflowing active, outward directed aspect, that is its colour, its shape etc., its female aspect is its receptive (passive) aspect, that is, what it is used for... Another example is a bowl...the metal, colour, shape is its

male aspect, the hollowness, space, receiving part is its feminine aspect.

Also the attracting force for its usage is part of the female aspect of things.

The mind too considered along the line of that system has the same division into a male and a female aspect, an active and a passive part...

The outer part determines the inner and vice versa.

The outer is the apparent order and structure, the inner often is the more chaotic yet more living...culture entails that the outer gives structure to the inner and the inner gives meaning and aliveness (and mystery) to the outer.

The feminine aspect lets go, accepts and receives, it is its meaning for others.

The male aspect manipulates, educates and transforms (changes),...it is its meaning for itself.

The feminine is formless, passive and organic.

The masculine is form, active, structure and the synthetic.

In ordinary people and circumstances, the male and female aspect do not work together, but often work one against another or simply each one is doing his own work without relation or consideration for the other.

The quality of a truly wise person, is that both aspects are in total balance in him or her...he can transform another thing/person without using force, but by showing the male aspect to the female aspect and the female aspect to the male aspect... by showing culture and order and direction (in a noble, true form) towards the nature and being part....and by showing nature, aliveness and depth to the male aspect.

If the feminine aspect is thus educated and cultured and the male aspect is thus natural and grounded in life, it will be like a perfect couple: each partner living only for the completion of the other.

The feminine aspect in every person has to be transformed, educated and cultivated, the male aspect in every person has to be softened and kept alive.

LAW OF GENDER APPLIED:

The application of such science would mean, that e.g. if a person realises the polarity or gender of a certain thing (/person/ habitual mental condition etc), he can manipulate it by using either the opposite principle or the same.

This principle can also be applied to different levels in a persons life.... as when a person mostly operates on the level of form and diversity, that is, he is somewhat engaged with other people, fulfilling perhaps various duties.... he should find a balance between activity and passivity... in such circumstances meditation will mostly mean to become more passive and receptive, going deeper within himself....

The situation will be different if a person has no outer activities, then meditation requires perhaps more active effort, so as to not be drawn to deep into the passive (perhaps the sphere of nothingness or neither perception nor non perception?).....

This is only for showing how such system or such Higher Dhamma may be used to penetrate beyond the surface of pretty much anything in life.

The penetration of even one spiritual principle, one spiritual law, can help a person to generate knowledge (almost infinitely) in any given moment/in any given situation...and by that, gain power over that situation.

MAGIC

Generally I believe, that a person who does not understand about the how's and why's of the lower types of magic will not likely be able to get much success in what I call the higher types of magic of doing work with consciousness and on consciousness.

There are three types of magic: Black Magic, White Magic and Divine Magic. Black Magic is the use of the power of the will for selfish purposes, White Magic is the use of the will for unselfish purposes,...Divine Magic, or perhaps in more Buddhist terms Dhamma-magic, is the work of the will in line with universal/ cosmic principles...doing anything (however small and insignificant) as an act that is benefiting the whole.

Thus magic can be a measuring stick as to whether something rightfully deserves the title Higher Dhamma or not.

Here one idea of how an understanding of the lower type of magic can help us to an understanding of the higher magic of the Dhamma:

Giving power to one's wish....placing one's awareness on a certain need or lack....trying to feel if one can perceive a corresponding sensation within the body, where one primarily feels the lack....asking for the fulfillment of that lack in the form of a prayer, or just by making the determination in one's mind, to attract the lack-fulfilling thing...This is the main principle of doing 'ordinary' acts of magic...

An alternative to such attempt of magic, will be to determine the disappearance of that sensation within the body, thus fulfilling a perhaps deeper or certainly more mature wish..., the wish for inner fulfillment through desirelessness.

Real magic, in its better meaning is not the fulfillment of phantasies and dreams, but to be able to work in harmony with the universe and to find solutions for lives problems with the help of universal principles.

Although, being able to make use of the forces of the universe, for one's own advantage, in many cases will have to precede working only with universal principles (which in the ancient way of thinking would respond to worshipping and working with the higher gods, rather than with the lower, as in the former case).

BEGINNING WITH SMALL ACTS OF MAGIC...

If you know how, even in the insignificant matters you can train. E.g. your nose itches. Not reacting to it, after calm deliberation you decide that you want to scratch it for the purpose of removing the itch. You scratch it, ...the itch disappears. That was your act of magic. Your nose itches and you scratch it without clear deliberation, ...that is the magic of your nose...

This is just one small way, through which we can learn the big principles...

Another example...You clear your mind and consider: What will be up today? What will be the issues of the day?...making calculations as to what are your powers in dealing with the issues of the day...setting intentions, as to how you could make use of the issues of the day for making advancements on your path or how to change the direction of the upcoming events towards being useful for your path. Using your mind in this way, you learn to master your own life.

As the mind learns, to make deliberate connections (f.ex. reflecting on the experiences of the day, rather than allowing the subconscious mind to formulate useless or even harmful connections at night in the form of dreams), random connection making ceases.

When random connection-making ceases, the direction of life and mind can come under conscious control.

ENERGY

The problem of energy: ... True knowledge gives power. With true knowledge one can find ways of transforming the material circumstances of one's life into useable energy, which in turn can be made use of for the benefit of oneself and others...

...one person, squeezes an orange and with the juice gets some short boost of energy for a moment, another person splits an atom and with that lights up a whole city for a week...whose knowledge is more powerful?

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS OF HIGHER DHAMMA KNOWLEDGE

An understanding of the four elements can help us to find means for their balancing...an understanding of the factors of mind can help us finding an respective antidote for undesirable factors as well as to find ways/possibilities for developing and maintaining desirable factors of mind ...knowing the instrument of cognition...we can make more accurate calculation in life (which states of consciousness relate to the higher, which to the lower planes),..an understanding of how the mind processes information, can help us understanding the past and the future (and thus where we are heading)...an understanding of the path, can help us to move beyond randomness.

THE MENTAL BODY

The Mental Body is one key concept of some of the esoteric traditions brought to the west¹, which will prove very valuable an idea for anyone who wants to study the mind.

Here I just want to give a few considerations of my own understanding, to give this valuable knowledge out to the reader of this little book.

Let us consider the idea of a mental body, containing gross and subtle material....gross thoughts weave into it gross material, subtle thoughts weave into it subtle material....

Gross material in our mental body vibrates in resonance with gross forms of material exterior to ourselves, subtle material in our mental body vibrates with subtle matter...that why a person with a mental body containing mostly subtle matter can see e.g. many variations and subtleties in e.g. some picture of an artist, or he can gain a very deep understanding of something just by being told a small stanza of something, while a person possessing a mental body made primarily of coarse matter will only perceive the words, without getting much meaning from it.

Thought creates character, and character determines how we perceive the world, which in turn determines our experiences in life.

...if we want to weave into our mental body some idea as e.g. 'I want to stay here (in the monastery) for a long time'....the only chance there is for the accomplishment of that determination is by constantly or at least repeatedly refine or redefine our conception (weave extended conceptions into our mental body) of what 'here' means as well as what 'I' means....

¹ the tradition referred to here is the Theosophical Society

...if we do not do so, then our solid idea of what 'here' means does not correspond with the actual here that is present, our solid 'I' will be attracted to an imaginary place and thus will find no binding in the actual 'here'...and if our idea of 'I' is not worked at, then it will be just one fantasy being bound to another fantasy...thus the magic will have no power

If you want to accomplish some act of learning, some act of inviting some virtue or abolishing some fraud or vice, ...any act of magic, ...you will have to weave that desire into your mental body and then weave a design around it, but seeing to it, that it does not interfere with/how it relates to the stuff in your mental body, that proved already to be useful....

The purer your mental body is, that means the less contradictions it contains, the faster will be your intuition/the faster your intuition will be able to inform you regarding the truth or essence of something.

Knowledge is dependent on memory, memory is dependent on thought, thought is dependent on perception and perception is dependent on sensation. Sensation means, taking in from the senses...so, if you develop more control about what comes in through your senses, you will also start controlling what type of knowledge grows in you and what type of knowledge diminishes.

DIFFERENCE IN GOVERNING LAWS

What kinds of forces and laws govern us, depend on our spiritual development... the coarser our habitual states of mind, the more we are governed primarily by the various laws of the material and thus also social world...but on the other hand if we dwell more and more in lofty thoughts and lofty states of being, the gravity of certain laws and

forces can have no power over us (while different types/kinds of laws will start to govern us).

By subjecting ourselves to one set of laws, we can escape another set of laws.

E.g. if our mind is in contact with the breath, the laws of the world, of time, of people, etc. ceases to govern us. If our body is unhealthy, and our mind is often in contact with this unhealthy aspect of the body, a law will work on our mind keeping it in a scattered condition, keeping it in a non-confident condition, keeping it in a worrying condition.

But for one who knows the laws, there will be different ways to escape such type of law... one is by subjecting ourselves to the law of people, law of society etc., which might help to solve the problem, but which might bring with it many other complications. Yet, another way to escape that law, would be to enter the law of the elements, which is a law of an higher order... while being in contact only with the element aspect of that 'unhealthy body', wholesome mind states will arise and many laws of a low order won't be able to affect one...on a still deeper level if one can experience the life force (qi) one will be again only subject to laws of a still higher order ...

...Evidently there are many benefits to being subject to laws of a higher order only, as well as to being free from the influences of the laws of a lower order. Such as the experience of ever greater levels of freedom, of happiness, of unity, of wisdom, of simplicity etc.

Noticing the benefits and laws of the higher, more subtle planes,....will start making those higher things real...and thus bring one's life more into alignment with higher things....this is how life is made easier, loftier and deeper.

Many one goes, wherever the wind blows him. This has been formulated as a law. The law of accident. Working on a path, a person is working to escape from the law of accident and come under the law of will. Not a will that is accidental and thus itself under the law of accident, but a will, that is informed by life-knowledge.

As you become more attuned to the laws of the cosmos, your actions (thoughts and speech) start to acquire universal significance.

LAWS ON DIFFERENT PLANES OF EXISTENCE

If you follow the laws of earth well and intelligently, you may be able to procure positive results of a worldly nature.

If you have a thought based on a concept related to the deva-world... your consciousness part-takes of the laws of the deva-world. As for example when you give something to someone, without a thought of attachment, just thinking 'it is good to give'. Thinking in this way, your thinking is in alignment with the laws of the deva-world, where everything is ever provided, where everything is ever flowing and where holding onto something, hindering the flow of life, will be so self evidently painful. Thus your consciousness being attuned to those laws, will start to function in alignment with those laws, i.e. you will learn to live in heaven on earth.

On earth you have to toil hard for your daily bread. While tuning into higher spheres, just ridding yourself of desire makes you worthy of gifts and a worthy recipient of the bounty that you start perceiving all around you, once you cleared the veil of worldly delusions.

Then further,... if you attain samadhi, you yourself will start to become the centre of abundance and you will be law unto yourself more than in any of those previous conditions.

On the reverse side of things, if you break the laws of the human world (without taking refuge in any higher laws), you will get various undesirable results in that world. And if you do thus due to your consciousness being attuned to the coarsest of physical laws, you will get only results that are in accordance with those laws. You will be moulded in accordance with physical laws, where the strongest force bends or crushes all matter susceptible to it. There will be no consideration for your feelings or even mind.

LEARNING, ACTING AND TIME IN RELATION TO THE DIFFERENT PARTS OF MAN

On the physical level, everything is slow ...if you want to learn something, you will require continuous input from the outside...and you can learn only one item at a time...on the level of emotions (astral/fine-material plane-...e.g. learning s.th. with interest)...memory lasts longer,...and the mind learns to connect things ...more is seen in a learned item,...thus more is learned at a time. On the level of the mind, again time will work differently,...what has come in contact with the mind, is learned (retained) and will take a long time to fade...it will immediately connect with anything related (far or near/closely or otherwise) ...one item learned will immediately break of into its details and subtleties...thus learning one thing, one may come to know a great many things...on the level of consciousness ...past and future of an item may be immediately seen...its history, its way of coming about, as well as its possible progression into the future.

In a similar manner, this principle can be applied the other way around...sometimes you have some vague (or even less vague) knowing (perhaps based on some prior experience), as to, ...'this is wrong', 'that is right'...but if your thinking principle does not contain enough material to properly formulate your knowing into words (or more concrete thought)...by the time some decision arose, that 'perhaps I should not do this thing'...you already did it ...because the

link between the different parts is missing...in a similar way, if you know something is for example wrong and your thinking principle contains enough material, but you lack training in the emotional body, which means, you are not altogether enthusiastic about your spiritual path (you lack viriya)...than again you won't be able to act in accordance with your higher understanding in time...but if you have the knowing (i.e. of what is right) and your mind has the proper amount of material to formulate your knowing into something more concrete (thoughts, words) and you possess the enthusiasm...you will ever be able to act according to your higher understanding (your knowledge).

SIN

On the level of the sense-sphere, "Sin" is not to follow the laws, morality and instructions of people of a higher mind. On the level of the fine-material sphere, "Sin" is to allow energy to wrongly accumulate, to allow energy to go through the wrong channel or to allow energy to diminish beyond a certain minimum. On the level of mind, "Sin" is to think in a way, that contradicts one's higher understanding. On the level of consciousness, "Sin" is to not see the essence of what is present.

PARAMATTHA - ULTIMATE TRUTH

As long as the appearances of things affect a person, that long they are real and not only concepts...if certain philosophical ideas regarding mind and matter start affecting a person, they can be said to become more real...if all objects cease to be considered according to outer, worldly ideas...they cease to be real and when taken up for consideration might be considered as concepts only.

Thus to proclaim a Nama or a Rupa that exists in some ultimate sense or that has some ultimate mode of existence independent from the

perceiving consciousness is not in accordance with the fundamental teachings of the Buddha (Viññana paccaya Nama-Rupa)

It is only a very superior consciousness, that can perceive things of an ultimate nature, which we might perhaps call a philosophical consciousness using western terminology...or a supra-mundane consciousness using Buddhist terminology.

Hence the key to understanding ultimate truth lies in the changing of consciousness.

Only by extracting the essence of many experiences can we attain to a superior truth (ultimate truth). If we just adopt it from without, it will be just an unrealised concept.

Meditation means making spiritual and philosophical conceptions a reality as well as reducing the reality of the world of conventions.

Thus, we are trying to realise ultimate truth, in order to transcend the impermanent, suffering and non-self/non-meaning¹ nature that is inherent in ordinary existence (inherent in conventional truth and conventional reality). Only when we have learned to align our thoughts, actions and speech with some higher truth that we ourselves have realised, does it become possible to truly act, speak and think rightly.

CONCLUSION

Studying in these ways higher things, we begin to notice higher things....

Actually many times in life there may open up a door or portal just before us, going through which, many magical things may happen. However most people are too busy with their life as to notice it, ...they

¹ (atta-attha formerly only orally transmitted...thus, considering one word one may have to consider about words with a similar spelling... attha...has various meanings, one being 'meaning', 'essence', atta is translated as 'self', but sometime also as 'something that is taken up'...from the suttas, it is quiet clear, that the Buddha possessed quiet a bit of humour and many times made a pun of established ideas in order to show a hidden meaning in words of established meaning, that in most cases was more applicable.

will just pass by without noticing ...few are those, who notice the subtler things of life.

The extension of the moment, the depth of the momentis where magical things are happening...the sound or sight of an animal, or human being, can give us an experience of their experience if our mind is sensitive and calm. A speck of dust can teach you the secrets of the universe. A feeling in regard to another person, may show to you all of his history or a thought may reveal to you the conditions of life, if you have learned to give importance to life, by studying life.

For success in one's spiritual endeavours one has to notice the gap in ordinary reality and make it grow, until ordinary reality wastes away and everything perceived has a spiritual meaning.

