

Chapter 1: An Introduction to Kammatthana

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Chapter Learning Objectives

After studying this chapter, students will be able to:

Explain the historical background of Kammatthana.

Differentiate the meanings of Kammatthana.

Explain the benefits of practicing Kammatthana.

Explain the importance of practicing Kammatthana.

Content Outline

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Historical Background of Kammatthana

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The Importance of Kammatthana

1.1 Introduction

Kammatthana is a mental training ground for the mind (citta) and mental factors (cetasika). It is a practice to cultivate tranquility in the mind, freeing it from hindrances (nīvarana), and to develop wisdom for a clear and true understanding of the nature of reality. Kammatthana refers to two methods: the method for calming the mind, called Samatha Kammatthana, and the method for developing wisdom, called Vipassanā Kammatthana.

Kammatthana is of great importance in Buddhism. It is the best path out of suffering that humanity has ever discovered, and its practices have been accumulated and passed down over a long period, from before the time of the Buddha, during his time, and continuously up to the present day.

1.2 Historical Background of Kammatthana

1.2.1 The History of Kammatthana Before the Time of the Buddha

The practice of Kammatthana before the time of the Buddha is mentioned in numerous Buddhist scriptures. These texts describe hermits and ascetics in the Himalayan forests who attained jhana and psychic powers (abhiññā), enabling them to perform various miracles. The attainment of jhana and psychic powers by these hermits and ascetics is a direct result of cultivating Samatha Kammatthana. This indicates that Samatha Kammatthana had been practiced for a very long time.

When Prince Siddhartha left home to seek enlightenment, he studied yoga with the ascetics Alara Kalama and Uddaka Ramaputta. He attained the eight attainments (the four form jhanas and the four formless jhanas). However, he

recognized that the formless jhanas did not lead to disenchantment, dispassion, cessation, peace, higher knowledge, enlightenment, or Nibbana. They only led to rebirth in the Nevasaññā-nāsaññāyatana Brahma realm. He then left their teachings to seek the path to the cessation of suffering on his own.

It is clear that the mental training known as Kammatthana existed before the time of the Buddha. However, it was mostly limited to Samatha Kammatthana and did not include the practice of Vipassana Kammatthana. Even though it was only Samatha Kammatthana, it does not mean that it was not beneficial for attaining Nibbana. In fact, cultivating Samatha Kammatthana is highly beneficial for attaining Nibbana and is not considered to be a deviation from the path. This confirms that Samatha Kammatthana existed in other traditions before the Buddha's time. However, Samatha alone is not enough to reach Nibbana. The Buddha later used the concentration gained from Samatha Kammatthana as a basis for cultivating Vipassana Kammatthana, and it was this that led to his enlightenment. Therefore, Vipassana Kammatthana is a unique teaching found only in Buddhism.

1.2.2 Kammatthana During the Time of the Buddha

After Prince Siddhartha left the palace, he sought to end suffering by studying the philosophies of various famous teachers. He tried many different methods, especially the practice of Samatha Kammatthana and the practice of self-mortification known as attakilamathanuyoga. People at that time believed these methods led to the cessation of suffering. In the end, the Buddha concluded that these methods were not the true path to liberation. He then turned to a new mental discipline, cultivating both Samatha and Vipassana Kammatthana.

The Buddha himself recounted his decision to choose this path to enlightenment: "Rajakumara, this recollection occurred to me: I remember when my father, the Sakyan king, was working the fields, I sat in the cool shade of a rose-apple tree. My mind was secluded from sensual pleasures and unwholesome states. I attained and remained in the first jhana, with thinking, pondering, joy, and happiness born of solitude. That, I sensed, was the path to enlightenment." This realization led him to practice with unwavering determination, meditating until his mind reached the 4th jhana. He then continued his meditation and attained three kinds of knowledge or wisdom: in the first watch of the night, he attained Pubbenivāsānussati-ñāṇa, the knowledge of his own past lives. In the middle watch of the night, he attained Cutūpapātā-ñāṇa, the divine eye that allowed him to see the death and rebirth of all beings. And in the last watch of the night, he attained Āsavakkhaya-ñāṇa, the knowledge of the Four Noble Truths, and a clear understanding of suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path to its cessation. This knowledge completely eradicated all defilements from his mind. As he said of his mind upon reaching liberation: "When I knew and saw the Four Noble Truths in this way, my mind was liberated from the defilements of sensual desire, existence, and ignorance. With this liberation, I had the knowledge that I was liberated. I clearly knew: birth is finished, the holy life has been lived, what was to be done is done, there is nothing further."

The Buddha attained the highest supra-mundane fruit and completely destroyed all defilements by following the principles of Kammatthana, especially Vipassana Kammatthana, which is the way of developing wisdom. He used Samatha Kammatthana as a firm foundation for his mind and then built on it with the practice of Vipassana Kammatthana.

The commentaries describe the practice of Kammatthana during the Buddha's time in several places. In summary, a monk who had faith and wanted to fulfill the duties of a renunciant had to undertake two kinds of duties in the Dhamma: Gantha-dhura and Vipassanā-dhura. Of the two, studying the words of the Buddha—the Tripitaka, one, two, or three parts—according to one's ability, memorizing the words, and being able to explain them, is called "Gantha-dhura."

The other duty, "Vipassana-dhura," is the constant contemplation of the decay and disappearance of the body. A monk who is happy in a secluded dwelling, who is light in his behavior, and who consistently practices Vipassana until he can attain Arahantship is said to be fulfilling "Vipassana-dhura." This means that after studying the theory, the Pariyatti, to understand the precepts, the monk's duties, and the teachings of the Buddha, they should then learn the methods of Kammatthana from the Buddha or their preceptor. Only when they have a good understanding should they fulfill the second duty, Vipassana-dhura. This involves contemplating the nature of the body and mind by observing the three characteristics—impermanence, suffering, and non-self—until it bears fruit, ultimately leading to the eradication of defilements and the attainment of Nibbana.

Monks who undertook Vipassana-dhura often separated themselves from the group and sought out suitable places for mental practice, such as a forest, a mountain, or a cave—secluded places that were not too far or too close to a village for alms. They then seriously practiced Vipassana Kammatthana until they were confident in their results before returning to see the Buddha.

The practice of Kammatthana as described in the Pali Canon and the commentaries indicates that during the Buddha's time, the practice was widespread, and practitioners quickly achieved results. This was because the Buddha and his disciples, who had already attained the results of the practice, were there to guide them. They were proactive in spreading Buddhism, traveling to various places to proclaim the Buddha's teachings and integrate them into people's lives. This is why Kammatthana practice was so widespread during the Buddha's time.

1.2.3 Kammatthana After the Buddha's Parinibbana

After the Buddha's Parinibbana, his disciples became more divided in their views. However, when it came to mental training, they continued to practice Samatha Kammatthana and Vipassana Kammatthana in line with the Satipatthana Sutta that the Buddha had taught. In the 3rd century BCE, during the reign of King Ashoka (around 236 BE), who ruled the Indian subcontinent, he developed great faith in Buddhism. He purified the religion of its blemishes and supported the Sangha in performing the Third Buddhist Council. After the Vinaya and Dhamma were organized, he sent missionaries to spread Buddhism to various lands in nine directions. This caused Buddhism to expand widely.

1.2.4 Kammatthana in the Modern Era

In the present day, the practice of Kammatthana is thriving, as demonstrated by the many venerable monks who are masters of both theory (Pariyatti) and practice. The fact that figures like Venerable Moggaliputta Tissa, Venerable Mahinda, and the other great monks who went on Dhamma missions were all Arahants shows the flourishing of Kammatthana, especially Vipassanā, in that era.

Among those great monks, Venerable Sona and Venerable Uttara, who brought Buddhism to the Suvarnabhumi region, are considered to have laid the foundation of Buddhism there. The key teachings they brought were from the Brahmajala Sutta. It is believed that they also brought the Vipassanā Kammatthana practice, which they had learned from Venerable Moggaliputta Tissa. This tradition has been passed down and preserved to the present day.

In modern Thailand, there are various forms of Kammatthana practice that have been developed by masters to suit different temperaments. The goal of all these methods is to calm the mind and to develop wisdom to see reality as it is. While the specific methods may look different, if they all lead to the same goal of mental tranquility and wisdom, they are considered to be within the scope of Buddhist Kammatthana. Here, we will briefly mention four of the most well-known styles of practice: the "Buddho" mantra meditation, the rising and falling method, Anapanasati, and the Sammarahang method.

The "Buddho" mantra meditation has a long history in Thailand. The most renowned master who pioneered this method was Luangpu Mun Bhuridatta. Ordained in 1893, he learned the initial Kammatthana practice from Luangpu Sao Kantasilo, using the mantra "Buddho." He was a determined practitioner who traveled and taught the Dhamma in various places, especially in the forests and

mountains, and he had many famous meditation disciples. Luangpu Mun's method not only uses the "Buddho" mantra to develop concentration but also applies it to Anapanasati Kammatthana. When breathing in, one repeats "Bud"; when breathing out, one repeats "dho." The word "Buddho" is a name for the Buddha, meaning "the one who knows, the one who is awake, the one who is joyful." Using this mantra with the breath is a skillful way to unify the mind, first by cultivating Samatha, then later developing Vipassanā.

The rising and falling meditation style has its center at Wat Mahathat Yuwarat Rangsarit in Bangkok. This method has been widely popular since 1953. Phra Dhammathiratchamahamuni (Chodok Yanasiddhi, P. 9), who was the great master of Vipassanā practice at the temple, played a key role in spreading this method. The rising and falling method came from the idea of Somdet Phutthachan (At Asaphamaha Thera), who, while teaching Buddhism at Wat Mahathat, believed that since Thailand had a theoretical curriculum for the Dhamma, it should also have a curriculum for its practice. He sent Phramaha Chodok Yanasiddhi, P. 9, to study this method in Yangon, Myanmar, at the Sasana Yissa meditation center under the guidance of Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw. After one year of study, he returned to Thailand in 1952, accompanied by two Burmese monks, Venerable Asapha Kammatthanachariya and Venerable Indavamsa Kammatthanachariya. In 1953, a Vipassanā Kammatthana center was established at Wat Mahathat, using the Uposatha Hall as the practice space. The center gained widespread interest, and many monks and laypeople came to practice. Later, in 1955, Somdet Phutthachan, who was at the time Phra Phimontham and the Sangha Minister of Administration, proposed to the Sangha Council that a formal department for Vipassanā practice be established. It was approved, and the Vipassanā Affairs Department was founded within the Thai Sangha, with its central office at Wat

Mahathat. Somdet Phutthachan served as the Director-General of Vipassanā Affairs, and Phra Dhammathiratchamahamuni (Chodok Yanasiddhi, then Phra Udomwichayana Thera) was the Great Master of Vipassanā Affairs. The department flourished and expanded both domestically and internationally. In 1981, Somdet Phutthachan (Kiaw Upaseno, P. 9), as the rector of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, directed the university to establish the Vipassanā Institute as a department to offer students a place to study and practice.

The Anapanasati method of Kammatthana is another widely practiced style in Thailand. This meditation is highly beneficial for both physical and mental health because it uses the breath, an object that everyone has within them. There are many famous teachers of this method, and most of them share the same approach to Anapanasati. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu was a renowned Buddhist scholar who contributed greatly to the propagation of Buddhism through his books, articles, lectures, and sermons. When speaking about practice, he always emphasized Anapanasati, explaining that it was the favorite meditation of the Buddha, who recommended it to his disciples. If one practices Anapanasati completely, other virtues like the Four Foundations of Mindfulness (Satipatthana 4) and the Noble Eightfold Path will also be perfected.

Other famous masters who taught the Anapanasati method include Somdet Phra Buddhaghosacariya (P.A. Payutto) and Phra Ajarn Somphop Chotipaño of Wat Nippethikaram in Sakon Nakhon province. Their principles and methods are mostly similar, based on the 16 steps of Anapanasati.

The Dhammakaya Vijja method of Kammatthana was originated by Phra Mongkhonthēpmuni (Sod Candasaro), also known as Luangpho Wat Paknam. He combined various meditation methods, using Aloka Kasina, Anapanasati, and Buddhanussati together. He used the Aloka Kasina as the central object. When the meditator focuses on the light Kasina, they can perceive a luminous, spherical image. By concentrating on this Kasina until they can hold the mental image and form a perfect replica in their mind, they can see a clear, bright, spherical image that remains in their mind's eye. The Dhammakaya Vijja is a widespread meditation method in Thailand. For the Samatha practice, the meditator is instructed to focus on a clear, spherical image the size of the pupil (or a size that can be clearly seen in the mind's eye) at the tip of the nose (left nostril for women, right for men). The mind should stay with this clear, spherical point at the tip of the nose while repeating the mantra "Samma Araham" to unite the mind.

1.3 The Meaning of Kammatthana

The word "Kammattthana" comes from the Pali word "Kammaṭṭhānaṃ." In Thai, it is written in a semi-Sanskrit form as "Kramthan." The word can be broken down into Kamma (action, work) + ṭṭhānaṃ (place, foundation). Put together, Kammaṭṭhānaṃ means "the foundation for the work of the mind and mental factors." It refers to the mental method for attaining a special state of mind (visesa dhamma). The definition states: Kriyā = Kammaṃ, "tiṭṭhati etthāti = ṭṭhānaṃ." An action is called Kamma. The practice of Samatha and Vipassanā is founded on an object, such as a Kasina, or on the body and mind (rupa-nama). Therefore, an object such as a Kasina or the body and mind is called a foundation.

There are two types of Kammatthana: Arammana Kammatthana and Arammanika Kammatthana.

Arammana Kammatthana refers to the object of Samatha (e.g., a Kasina) and the object of Vipassanā (i.e., the compounded formations of the three realms, or tebhūmika saṅkhārā dhamma). The definition is: Kammasa ṭhānaṃ = Kammatṭhānaṃ. The object that serves as the foundation for cultivating Samatha and Vipassanā is called "Kammatthana."

Arammanika Bhavana Kammatthana refers to the mental factors that focus on the object. This is the effort to cultivate Samatha and Vipassanā that arises repeatedly. The definition is: Kamme bhāvanā rabbo punappunaṃ kammasa ṭhānaṃ. The effort that arises again and again is the foundation for the effort that follows. The previous effort serves as the foundation for the successive effort. Therefore, the effort that arises first is called "Arammanika Bhavana Kammatthana."

In summary, the object of Samatha (like a Kasina) and the object of Vipassanā (the body and mind) are the Kammatthana. The continuous, successive effort is also called Kammatthana. Therefore, "Kammatthana" comprises both of these aspects: Arammana dhamma (the object, like an actor on a stage) and Arammanika dhamma (the observer, like a spectator). In the Mūla-ṭīkā commentary, the meaning of "Kammatthana" is given as:

Kammameva visesādhigamanassa ṭhānanti = Kammatṭhānaṃ. This means "the work is the foundation, the cause for the attainment of special virtues." Therefore, the work is called Kammatthana (the foundation that leads to the attainment of special virtues like the path, the fruit, and Nibbana).

Kamme bhāvanā rabbo tḥānanti = Kammatṭhānaṃ vā. Alternatively, "the effort to cultivate this work is the foundation for the attainment of jhana, the path, the fruit, and Nibbana." Therefore, it is also called Kammatthana.

These two definitions show that the cultivation of both Samatha and Vipassanā is called "Kammatthana" because it is the cause for the practitioner to attain jhana, the path, the fruit, and Nibbana.

Kammatthana means "the foundation of work," "the mental object of work," "a mental method," or "a method for training the mind and developing wisdom." This mental method is divided into two types: the method for calming the mind and the method for developing wisdom.

1. A Method for Calming the Mind

This method involves repeatedly a particular word or phrase (known as a Saddabhaṅgati). This is a form of self-discipline that creates a mental concept of the word. The mental concept, thought, or image we create from this repetition is a component of mental tranquility, known as Samatha Kammatthana.

2. A Method for Developing Wisdom

This method relies on moment-to-moment mindfulness, being aware of all sensations that arise from the six sense doors. It is a continuous and deliberate observation of mental phenomena as the body interacts with stimuli. By maintaining this focused attention, thoughts are cut off and cannot intrude. This practice doesn't allow for the formation of subsequent concepts, images, or ideas.

It is a direct and immediate awareness of the mental process as it unfolds, preventing any distortion of thought. This activity is what is known as Vipassanā Kammatthana.

Generally, Kammatthana can be classified into two main categories:

Samatha Kammatthana: The meditation for calming the mind, a method for training and developing the mind.

Vipassanā Kammatthana: The meditation for developing insight, a method for training and developing wisdom.

Samatha Kammatthana is the cultivation of mental tranquility to suppress the hindrances (nīvarana) until the mind becomes absorbed in various levels of jhana, such as the first jhana. If the jhana is not lost at the time of death, the practitioner will be reborn in the Brahma realms.

Vipassanā Kammatthana is the cultivation of wisdom that understands the true nature of present phenomena: that they are impermanent, suffering, and non-self. This practice leads to a clear and true understanding of the Noble Truths, allowing for the gradual cessation of defilements along the path until all defilements are extinguished and there is no more rebirth.

The Twofold Practice of Kammatthana

To understand the relationship between concentration (Samadhi) and wisdom (Pannā) in the practices that lead to the cessation of suffering, we must first understand the concept of Bhavana.

The word "Bhavana" means "that which should be developed," or "that which should be made to arise frequently in one's mind." The definition is given as:

"Bhāveti kusaladhamme āsevati vaḍḍheti etāyāti = bhāvanā." This means: "That which cultivates wholesome states, that which serves and promotes wholesome states, is called Bhavana." This refers to the wisdom that is the cause of cultivating and developing wholesome states.

"Punappunam kiriyāya bhāvetabbāti = bhāvanā." This means: "The Dhamma that wise people should make to arise, again and again, continuously, until it develops, is called Bhavana." This refers to the three types of Bhavana: Parikamma Bhavana (preliminary cultivation), Upacara Bhavana (access concentration), or Appana Bhavana (full absorption).

Another definition states: "Bhāvetabbā punappunam vaḍḍhetabbāti = bhāvanā." This means: "That which should be cultivated or developed frequently by a practitioner is called Bhavana."

This exposition of Bhavana is given because it is the practice that provides benefit to the practitioner, bringing physical and mental happiness in this life and the next, and ultimately leading to liberation from the cycle of rebirth.

There are two kinds of Bhavana:

Samatha Bhavana: The practice of focusing on an object to calm the mind from the defilements and hindrances.

Vipassanā Bhavana: The practice of developing insight to see the true nature of phenomena.

The Meaning of Samatha Bhavana

Samatha Bhavana is the practice of focusing on a single object to calm the mind and suppress the defilements and hindrances.

The word "Samatha" means "tranquility" or "calm." It refers to the practice of focusing on a single object to make the mind stable and calm, thereby suppressing the defilements and hindrances. In this context, "calm" has three meanings:

Calm from defilements and hindrances: The definition states: "Nīvaraṇe sametīti = samatho." This means: "That which calms down the defilements, such as sensual desire and others, is called Samatha." This refers to Samadhi or the One-pointedness (Ekaggatā) mental factor that accompanies wholesome mind states.

Another definition is: "Kāmacchandādiḥ paccaṇīkadhamma kilese sameti vināsetīti = samatho, Samādhissetaṃ nāmaṃ." This means: "That which calms down and destroys the defilements that are hostile mental factors, such as sensual desire, is called Samatha. The word Samatha is a name for Samadhi or one-pointedness of mind, because it calms down these hostile mental factors."

The one-pointedness of mind is called Samatha. When a practitioner enters the eight attainments, including access concentration, it is called Cittasamatha (mental tranquility). Why? Because the mental agitation and restlessness that meet with this one-pointedness of mind are calmed down and enter into a state of special tranquility. Therefore, this one-pointedness of mind is called Cittasamatha.

Calmness and stability on a single object, without scattering: The definition states: "Cittaṃ sametīti = samatho, or Suṭṭhu vā viśesena upasametīti = samatho." This means: "That which calms the mind that is focused on many objects and makes

it stable on a single object is called Samatha." Or, "That which enters into a deep state of special tranquility is called Samatha." The true meaning is that the mind reaches a state of one-pointedness. This refers to the Samadhi or one-pointedness mental factor that is present in the mind of an Arahant. According to this definition, it refers only to the nature of the mind that is stable on a single object, without needing to suppress defilements, because Arahants are already free from all defilements.

Calmness from the coarse jhana factors: The definition states: "Vitakkādi-olārika-dhamme sametīti = samatho." This means: "That which makes the coarse jhana factors, such as initial thought, calm down is called Samatha." This refers to the Samadhi or one-pointedness mental factor that is present in the second jhana, and so on, up to the fifth jhana.

Samatha, the practice of making the mind stable on a single object and calming it from defilements, can be further divided into two types:

Paritta Samatha: This refers to the Samatha Bhavana of a person who has not yet reached access concentration. It is called Paritta Samatha (small tranquility) because the mind is only at the level of wholesome thoughts, and the jhana factors are still weak.

Mahaggata Samatha: This refers to the Samatha Bhavana of a person who has reached absorption concentration (Appanā Bhāvanā), which is a Mahaggata Jhana (great tranquility). The mind is at the level of wholesome thoughts and the jhana factors are strong, allowing it to focus on the Samatha object with great firmness. The jhana factors are powerful enough to suppress the hindrances with the method of Vikkhambhana Pahana (suppression by force).

In the Dhammasangani of the Abhidhamma Pitaka, the word "Samatha" is defined as: "The stability of the mind, the steadfastness of the mind, its concentration, its non-scattering, its non-agitation, its single-pointedness, Samatha, the faculty of concentration, the power of concentration, right concentration." Therefore, Samatha Kammattana refers to the principles or methods of practice that lead to mental tranquility, mindfulness, and concentration, in that order. The result of Samatha Kammattana is tranquility. The final outcome of this practice, whether positive or negative, depends on how the practitioner uses the results. If used for a good purpose, such as to cultivate wisdom, it will have a positive outcome. Conversely, if used for a negative purpose, such as by Devadatta, it will lead to suffering in the cycle of rebirth.

The Meaning of Vipassanā Bhāvanā

The term Vipassanā Bhāvanā is a compound of three Pali words:

Vi (meaning "special," "distinct," or "in various ways")

Passanā (meaning "seeing," "knowing," or "perceiving")

Bhāvanā (meaning "cultivation," "development," or "making to be")

Combined, Vipassanā Bhāvanā refers to the cultivation of wisdom that leads to a special, clear, and distinct seeing of the true nature of all phenomena (rūpa and nāma). It is the realization that all conditioned things are impermanent (anicca), suffering (dukkha), and non-self (anattā).

It is the cultivation of wisdom to see reality as it truly is, progressing from the foundational practice of Satipaṭṭhāna (the Four Foundations of Mindfulness).

Through the development of mindfulness, one comes to see the true characteristics of both material and mental phenomena. When Satipaṭṭhāna becomes fully developed, Vipassanā ñāṇa (insight knowledge) arises. This wisdom, co-arising with wholesome consciousness, allows for a special kind of seeing—the direct realization of the three characteristics of impermanence, suffering, and non-self in all phenomena.

Vipassanā ñāṇa develops in successive stages, from the first stage (nāmarūpa-pariccheda-ñāṇa—knowledge of the distinction between mind and matter) up to the twelfth stage (anuloma-ñāṇa—conformity knowledge), all of which take conditioned phenomena (saṅkhārā) as their object. The thirteenth (gotrabhū-ñāṇa—change-of-lineage knowledge), fourteenth (magga-ñāṇa—path knowledge), and fifteenth (phala-ñāṇa—fruition knowledge) stages take the unconditioned, Nibbāna, as their object. The sixteenth stage (paccavekkhaṇa-ñāṇa—reviewing knowledge) takes the path, fruition, Nibbāna, defilements that have been abandoned, and defilements that remain as its objects.

The etymological definitions (vacanattha) of the term are as follows:

"Khandhādi-saṅkhata-dhamme aniccādi-vividhākārena passatīti = Vipassanā." It is called "Vipassanā" because it is a nature that sees conditioned phenomena, such as the aggregates (khandha), in various ways, such as impermanence. This refers to the wisdom that clearly sees conditioned phenomena as impermanent, suffering, and non-self.

"Aniccādi-vasena vividhākārena passatīti = Vipassanā." It is called "Vipassanā" because it sees the five aggregates (khandha), or mind and matter, in various ways,

based on their characteristics such as impermanence. This cultivation of wisdom is known as Aniccānupassanā (contemplation of impermanence) and so on.

The scriptures define Vipassanā as "the wisdom that sees mind and matter in various ways, based on their impermanent nature." In essence, the word Vipassanā is another name for paññā (wisdom).

Vipassanā wisdom is of two types: mundane (lokiya) and supramundane (lokuttara).

Mundane Vipassanā is the wisdom that arises with wholesome consciousness when one contemplates the five aggregates or mind-and-matter as they appear through the six sense doors, realizing their three characteristics.

Supramundane Vipassanā is the wisdom in the supramundane path consciousness that takes Nibbāna as its object.

Vipassanā Bhāvanā is the cultivation of wisdom to see mind-and-matter as impermanent, suffering, and non-self. This is further explained:

"Rūpādi-ārammaṇesu paññattiyā ca niccasukha-atta-subha-saññāya ca visesaena nāmarūpa-bhāvena vā aniccādi-ākārena vā passatīti = Vipassanā." It is called "Vipassanā" because it is a nature that sees various objects, such as visible forms, in a way that is distinct from conventional designation and sees them as impermanent, suffering, non-self, and unattractive, which is special and different from the perverted perceptions of permanence, pleasure, self, and beauty.

Another definition is:

"Pañca-kkhandhesu vividhena aniccādi-ākārena passatīti = Vipassanā." It is called "Vipassanā" because it clearly sees the five aggregates in various ways, such as impermanence, suffering, and non-self.

The Three Types of Vipassanā

The wisdom that sees mind-and-matter as impermanent, suffering, and non-self can be found in three contexts, as explained in the commentary Saddhammapakāsinī:

Sañkhāra-pariggahaṇaka-vipassanā: The Vipassanā wisdom that comprehends conditioned phenomena (mind and matter) as possessing the three characteristics. This is the foundation for the path.

Phala-samāpatti-vipassanā: The Vipassanā wisdom of a noble person (ariya-puggala) that leads to the attainment of fruition (phala-samāpatti).

Nirodha-samāpatti-vipassanā: The Vipassanā wisdom of a Non-returner or Arahant who has attained the eight meditative attainments, which is used to enter the attainment of cessation (nirodha-samāpatti).

Among these three, Sañkhāra-pariggahaṇaka-vipassanā, whether weak or strong, serves as the basis for the path. When it reaches the stage of Vuṭṭhāna-gāminī-vipassanā (insight that leads to emergence), it becomes a proximate cause for attaining the path. The only difference is whether the path is attained slowly or quickly. A slow path is called Dandhā-bhijñā-magga, while a quick one is called Khippā-bhijñā-magga.

Phala-samāpatti-vipassanā must be strong, like path consciousness, in order to enter the attainment of fruition. This is because strong Vipassanā is a factor that

helps fruition consciousness to arise. However, if a person is skilled in entering the attainment of fruition, a weaker Vipassanā can also be used.

Nirodha-samāpatti-vipassanā should be of a moderate intensity—neither too weak nor too strong. It is a Vipassanā that arises in alternation with Samatha (tranquility), and thus is also called Yuganaddha-vipassanā (paired insight and tranquility).

The Dhammasaṅgī of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka defines Vipassanā as: "Wisdom, the act of clear knowing, investigation, selection, investigation of phenomena, designation, specific designation, the state of knowing, the state of skill, the state of knowing finely, clear knowledge, deliberation, contemplation, wisdom like the earth, wisdom that destroys defilements, wisdom that leads the way, clear seeing, good knowing, wisdom like a goad, the faculty of wisdom, the power of wisdom, wisdom like a knife, wisdom like a palace, the light of wisdom, the brightness of wisdom, wisdom like a lamp, wisdom like a gem, non-delusion, discrimination of phenomena, right view."

1.4 The Benefits of Meditation Practice

The benefits of meditation practice (Kammaṭṭhāna) encompass the advantages of both Samatha (tranquility) meditation and Vipassanā (insight) meditation. The Pali term used in the scriptures for "benefit" is "Ānisaṃso," which means "that which brings forth results." This is explained by the following etymological definitions (vacanattha):

"**Ā** bhuso nīharitvā saṃsatīti = **Ā**ni saṃso." It is called **Ā**ni saṃso because it is a quality that is brought forth and praised exceedingly well.

"**Ā**ni sandatīti = **Ā**ni saṃso." It is called **Ā**ni saṃso because it is a quality that pours forth its fruits.

2.4.1 The Benefits of Samatha Meditation (Tranquility Meditation) as Found in the Suttas

The Sutta on Concentration (Samādhī Sutta), from the Roḥitassa-vagga (Section on Roḥitassa) of the Anguttara Nikāya, Duka-nipāta, describes four types of concentration development and their benefits:

"Bhikkhus, there are these four types of concentration development. When developed and practiced extensively, they lead to:

A pleasant dwelling in the present life.

The acquisition of knowledge and vision (ñāṇadassana).

Mindfulness and clear comprehension (sati sampajañña).

The cessation of defilements (āsaṃsa).

How does the development of concentration lead to a pleasant dwelling in the present life?

"In this Dhamma and Discipline, a bhikkhu, detached from sensual pleasures and unwholesome states, enters and remains in the first jhāna, which is accompanied by initial and sustained thought, with rapture and pleasure born of seclusion. With the fading away of initial and sustained thought, he enters and remains in the second jhāna, which has internal confidence and a unification of mind, without initial and sustained thought, with rapture and pleasure born of concentration.

With the fading away of rapture, he dwells in equanimity, mindful and clearly comprehending, and experiences pleasure with the body. He enters and remains in the third jhāna, of which the Noble Ones declare, ‘He dwells in equanimity, mindful, and at ease.’ With the abandoning of pleasure and pain, and with the previous disappearance of joy and sorrow, he enters and remains in the fourth jhāna, which is neither pleasant nor painful, with a purity of mindfulness established by equanimity. This is how the development of concentration, when developed and practiced extensively, leads to a pleasant dwelling in the present life."

How does the development of concentration lead to the acquisition of knowledge and vision? (In this context, knowledge and vision refer to celestial vision or dibbacakkhu-ñāṇa).

"In this Dhamma and Discipline, a bhikkhu attends to the perception of light (ālokasaññā) and resolves the perception of daytime (divāsaññā) so that night is like day and day is like night. With an unobstructed mind, he cultivates a luminous mind. This is how the development of concentration, when developed and practiced extensively, leads to the acquisition of knowledge and vision."

How does the development of concentration lead to mindfulness and clear comprehension?

"In this Dhamma and Discipline, a bhikkhu understands the arising, presence, and passing away of feelings; the arising, presence, and passing away of perceptions; and the arising, presence, and passing away of thoughts. This is how the development of concentration, when developed and practiced extensively, leads to mindfulness and clear comprehension."

How does the development of concentration lead to the cessation of defilements?

"In this Dhamma and Discipline, a bhikkhu habitually sees the arising and passing away of the five aggregates of clinging (upāḍānakkhandha), as in: 'Such is form, such is its arising, such is its passing away; such is feeling, such is its arising, such is its passing away; such is perception, such is its arising, such is its passing away; such are mental formations, such is their arising, such is their passing away; such is consciousness, such is its arising, such is its passing away.' This is how the development of concentration, when developed and practiced extensively, leads to the cessation of defilements."

These four benefits of meditation are explained in detail below:

To Dwell Pleasantly in the Present Life (Dīṭṭhaddhammasukhavihārī): This benefit refers to the practice of cultivating the four jhānas (from the first to the fourth) as a means of finding happiness. This aligns with the ten levels of happiness:

Kāmasukha: Happiness dependent on the five sensual pleasures (forms, sounds, smells, tastes, and tangible objects).

Happiness of the First Jhāna: When the perception of sensuality ceases.

Happiness of the Second Jhāna: When initial and sustained thought cease.

Happiness of the Third Jhāna: When rapture ceases.

Happiness of the Fourth Jhāna: When the breath ceases.

Happiness of the Dimension of Infinite Space: When the perception of form ceases.

Happiness of the Dimension of Infinite Consciousness: When the perception of infinite space ceases.

Happiness of the Dimension of Nothingness: When the perception of infinite consciousness ceases.

Happiness of the Dimension of Neither Perception Nor Non-Perception: When the perception of nothingness ceases.

Happiness of the Cessation of Perception and Feeling: When all perception and feeling cease.

The first of these ten is sensual happiness, followed by the happiness of the form **jhānas**, the formless **jhānas**, and finally, the cessation of perception and feeling. The Buddha and the Arahants often engage in these **jhānas** for rest and peaceful dwelling, which is called **Diṭṭhadhammasukhavihāra** (dwelling pleasantly in the present life).

To Obtain Knowledge and Vision (**Ñāṇadassana**): This refers to the cultivation of the perception of light (**ālokasaññā**) and the resolution of the perception of daytime (**divāsaññā**), so that one's mind becomes free from defilements and luminous. The commentaries explain that this refers to obtaining celestial vision (**dibbacakkhu**), which is considered the pinnacle of the five mundane special abilities (**lokiyābhijñā**) (namely, psychokinetic powers, celestial hearing, knowledge of others' minds, recollection of past lives, and celestial vision). This benefit, therefore, means using concentration to achieve extraordinary psychic powers.

For Mindfulness and Clear Comprehension (**Sati Sampajañña**): This involves continuously observing and being aware of the arising and passing away of one's thoughts and feelings throughout daily life. It is the clear and thorough

understanding of the arising, presence, and passing away of feelings, perceptions, and thoughts, maintaining a constant state of full awareness.

For the Cessation of Defilements (**Ā**savakkhaya): This refers to dwelling with a mind that constantly sees the arising, presence, and passing away of the five aggregates of clinging (form, feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness). Broadly, this means using concentration for the benefit of wisdom—as a foundation for the development of insight (Vipassan**ā**) to attain the ultimate goal, which is the knowledge of the cessation of defilements, or true knowledge and liberation.

2.4.2 The Benefits of Concentration as Found in the Commentaries

The commentaries summarize the benefits of concentration practice in five points, as described in the Visuddhimagga:

A pleasant dwelling in the present life (Di**ṭṭ**hadhammasukhavi**hā**ra): An Arahant develops concentration to enter attainments (sam**ā**patti) and dwell with a single-pointed mind throughout the day. This is described as a peaceful dwelling.

A foundation for insight (Vipassan**ā**): This is for trainees (sekha) and ordinary people who develop concentration with the purpose of using the stable mind, after emerging from the attainment, to practice insight. This type of concentration is a foundation for insight, as the Buddha said, "Bhikkhus, develop concentration. A concentrated mind knows and sees things as they truly are." This means knowing and seeing the arising and passing away of the five aggregates.

A foundation for special abilities (Abhiñ**ñā**): This is an advanced benefit for those who have attained the eight levels of attainment and wish to develop special abilities. The Buddha said that when a bhikkhu who cultivates higher

consciousness attends to the sign of concentration at the appropriate time, his mind becomes pliable, workable, clear, and firmly established for the cessation of defilements. He can then incline his mind towards any realization to be known by direct knowledge, such as the ability to perform psychic powers.

4) To Attain a Special Existence (Bhava Visesa)

This benefit refers to the highest level of concentration, appanā samādhi, which is the concentration of the jhāna mind. Laypeople who attain jhāna and do not fall away from it will be reborn in the brahmaloka, which is considered a special or higher realm of existence. For example, a person who attains the first jhāna in an ordinary way will be reborn as a companion of the Brahmāṇiśajjā devas. One who attains the first jhāna in a moderate way will be reborn as a companion of the Brahmāpurohita devas. And one who attains the first jhāna in a refined way will be reborn as a companion of the Mahābrahmā devas. Therefore, wise and discerning individuals, contemplating this truth, cultivate the supreme path to be free from old age and death. Having cultivated the pure path that leads beings to Nibbāna, they become free from all defilements and attain final Nibbāna by fully comprehending all defilements.

5) To Attain the Cessation Attainment (Nirodha-samāpatti)

This is a benefit of the highest level of concentration, appanā samādhi, exclusively for Anāgāmi (Non-returners) and Arahants who have attained all eight meditative attainments (samāpatti 8). With mastery over the five kinds of control (vāṭi) in entering and emerging from the jhānas, they can enter the cessation

attainment (nirodha-samāpatti) and experience bliss without a mind for up to seven days. This benefit is limited to those who have achieved this specific stage of practice. Ordinary people, Sotāpanna (Stream-enterers), or Sakadāgāmī (Once-returners), even if they attain all eight jhānas, cannot achieve this benefit.

The practice of meditation provides numerous benefits and values, including:

Helping to develop a high-quality mind that is calm.

Enabling a mind filled with wisdom that sees the true nature of phenomena, leading to letting go and non-clinging.

Freeing the mind from suffering.

Reducing or eliminating selfishness, making one ready to sacrifice personal gain for the benefit of society.

Allowing one to apply the principles of meditation to work and daily life problems.

These benefits can be categorized into four areas:

1.4.3 The Benefits of Cultivating Wisdom (Paññā)

In the Visuddhimagga, the Venerable Buddhaghosa describes many benefits of cultivating wisdom (paññā-bhāvanā). This is because the development of wisdom has hundreds of benefits, and it is not easy to fully describe the benefits of cultivating insight wisdom (Vipassanā-magga). Nevertheless, he outlines four main benefits:

To destroy various defilements.

To experience the taste of the noble fruits.

To be able to enter the cessation attainment.

To achieve various states, such as the state of a person worthy of offerings (āhuṇeyya).

Since the cultivation of noble wisdom has so many benefits, as mentioned above, a wise person should therefore take delight in cultivating this noble wisdom.

1.5 The Importance of Kammaṭṭhāna Practice

The importance of Kammaṭṭhāna practice is generally aligned with three goals in life:

To attain happiness in the present life.

To attain happiness in the life to come.

To attain the ultimate happiness, which is Nibbāna.

Here are the details of each point:

1. To Attain Happiness in the Present Life

Everyone desires happiness. True happiness, free from any suffering, must begin with the practice of Kammaṭṭhāna. In other words, Kammaṭṭhāna practice is essential for living a truly happy life.

Meditation is considered a crucial path for the well-being of every person born into this world. This is because human beings are composed of two important parts: the body and the mind. For life to proceed happily and completely, it depends on the conditions of both the body and the mind. While it's necessary to care for the body's comfort—which is why humans seek the four basic

necessities and other conveniences—it is even more necessary to maintain a happy state of mind.

The Buddha clearly stated: "The Dhammas are preceded by mind, led by mind, and made by mind. If one speaks or acts with an evil mind, suffering follows him, just as the wheel follows the hoof of the ox. If one speaks or acts with a pure mind, happiness follows him, just as a shadow that never leaves." Therefore, if we were to prioritize, the mind always comes before the body. As the saying goes, "The mind is the master, the body is the servant." Even if the body is comfortable and has all the sensual pleasures, with an abundance of wealth and a retinue of servants, we cannot conclude that the person is happy. Conversely, a person who doesn't possess much material wealth but has only the four basic necessities for survival can already find initial happiness in life. This is the happiness that comes from being free from worries about money and possessions, like a bird in the sky that has only its wings and tail to care for. Furthermore, if that person cultivates the mind and trains it to be calm, free from the five hindrances, and single-pointed, they will experience a great sense of joy, cheerfulness, and inner radiance that cannot be bought with money.

The Buddha said: "Sukhi-no cittaṃ samādhīyati samāhito yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti." This means, "The mind of a happy person becomes concentrated. A person with a concentrated mind knows and sees things as they truly are." This implies that concentration (samādhī), happiness (sukha), and wisdom (paññā) are interdependent and cannot be separated. As the Pali verse states: "Natthi jhānaṃ apaññassa natthi paññā ajhāyino. Yamhi jhānañca paññā ca sa ve nibbāna santike." This translates to: "There is no jhāna for one without wisdom; there is no

wisdom for one without jhāna. In whom both jhāna and wisdom exist, he is indeed close to Nibbāna."

The happiness born from mental cultivation is constant for a practitioner, regardless of their posture. Happiness always follows them. This is illustrated by the story of Prince Hatthaka of Ālavi, who asked the Buddha if he slept well, while the Buddha was resting on a bed of leaves on rough ground. The Buddha replied, "Yes, prince, the Tathāgata sleeps well. Of those in the world who sleep well, the Tathāgata is one." This was because the Buddha's mind was filled with overflowing happiness. Even if the body is uncomfortable, the mind can still be happy. The happiness that arises from cultivation is something that a practitioner must realize and experience for themselves; it cannot be done by anyone else. This is shown in the Sandiṭṭhika Sutta:

"Brahmin, when you clearly know the inner mental corruptions that are present in you as 'there is inner mental corruption in me,' and clearly know the inner mental corruptions that are not present as 'there is no inner mental corruption in me,' that is the Dhamma to be seen by oneself, not dependent on time, inviting all to come and see, to be understood by the wise for themselves." The Brahmin replied, "Excellent, Venerable Gotama! Your teaching is clear and beautiful... I take refuge in you, from this day forth for as long as I live."

2. To Attain Happiness in the Life to Come (Sampārāya)

Besides bringing happiness to the practitioner, the cultivation of meditation is also considered a practice in line with the Buddha's teachings. As the Buddha said in the Ovādapāṭimokkha (the fundamental principles of Buddhism):

"Sabbapāpassa akaraṇaṃ, kusalassūpasampadā. Sacittapariyodapanaṃ, etaṃ Buddhāna sāsanaṃ."

This means: "To abstain from all evil, to cultivate wholesome states, and to purify one's own mind—this is the teaching of the Buddhas."

This indicates that besides abstaining from unwholesome deeds and accumulating merit, everyone has a crucial duty to their life: to cultivate the mind to make it pure, free from the five hindrances and other defilements that make the mind impure. This essential task is not only for Buddhists but is a duty for everyone in the world. Regardless of our race, religion, or background, we all have the same defilements lying latent within our minds. The only difference is whether we are aware of them or not. Therefore, the best way to solve this is to eliminate the defilements embedded in our minds. The most effective method that yields real results is the practice of Kammaṭṭhāna.

When we practice according to the Buddha's teachings, we are rewarded with happiness. Our minds become pure and free from defilements. This happiness is not limited to this life; even after passing away, we will be reborn in a heavenly realm and experience divine happiness that is far more refined than human happiness. The Buddha said in the Pasannacitta Sutta:

"Bhikkhus, with my mind, I know the minds of certain individuals in this world who have a purified mind and know this: 'If this person dies now, they will be established in a heavenly realm, as if they have been invited and placed there.' Why is that? Because their mind is pure. Bhikkhus, it is because of having a pure mind that some beings in this world, after death, are reborn in a good destination, in a heavenly realm."

3. To Attain the Ultimate Happiness, which is Nibbāna

Not only that, the practice of Kammaṭṭhāna also leads to the cessation of suffering and the attainment of true happiness. The Buddha said: "Nibbānaṃ paramaṃ sukhaṃ," meaning "Nibbāna is the ultimate happiness." For anyone who wishes to be liberated from the cycle of suffering and break the cycle of birth and death in Saṃsāra, the practice of Kammaṭṭhāna is absolutely essential and of the utmost importance. Without diligently practicing meditation, it is impossible to eliminate the mass of defilements and strive towards Nibbāna, as the scriptures show:

"And whoever has firm faith in the Noble Discipline, a mind endowed with moral shame and fear of wrongdoing, and wisdom, and is restrained by precepts, we call that person 'one who lives happily in the Noble Discipline.' He attains happiness that is not based on material things, and his equanimity is firmly established. He abandons the five hindrances, and always exerts effort. He attains the jhānas in which the mind is single-pointed. With wisdom that protects himself, he is mindful and knows the cessation of all fetters as it truly is. His mind is rightly liberated from clinging. If he has a rightly liberated mind, and is firm in the cessation of the fetter of existence, with knowledge that 'my liberation is unshakable,' that is the supreme knowledge, that is the supreme happiness, that knowledge is without sorrow, dustless, and supreme security, superior to being debt-free."

And in another section of the commentary Sāratthappakāsinī, on the Candūpama Sutta, it is said: "Just as a man is not pierced by stumps and thorns, so a bhikkhu is not pierced by the thorns of lust and so on. Just as that man, free from harm, can look as he wishes, and happily go wherever he wants, so the bhikkhu, dependent on a family, living on offerings like robes and so forth,

cultivates Kammaṭṭhāna, contemplates conditioned things, attains Arahantship, is happy with the supramundane happiness, and goes to the direction of Nibbāna, where he has never gone before."

This explains the Buddha's saying: "Bhikkhus, be like the moon. Separate your body and mind. Be constantly new, without wantonness, when you enter families. Just as a man would separate his body and mind and look at an old well, a rugged mountain, or a river with broken parts, so too should you be like the moon. Separate your body and mind, be constantly new, and without wantonness, when you enter families. Just as a palm of a hand is not attached to, grasping, or clinging to the air, so the mind of a bhikkhu who enters a family is not attached to, grasping, or clinging to those families, thinking, 'May those who desire gain get gain, and may those who desire merit make merit.' Just as a bhikkhu is content with his own gain, so he should be content with the gain of others. Only a bhikkhu like this is fit to enter families."

To attain the knowledge of omniscience, a person must wholeheartedly and devotedly cultivate Perfections, risking their very life. Even if countless obstacles stand in the way of attaining Nibbāna, they are not afraid or discouraged. Instead, they remain steadfast and resolute in their resolve, continuing to cultivate their Perfections tirelessly until they reach the shore of supreme enlightenment. These individuals have a deep love for merit in their hearts, and the one merit that can never be abandoned is the merit gained from Kammaṭṭhāna practice. This merit alone can lead us to success. The merit gained from generosity or observing precepts is not enough. This is not to say that those two forms of merit are insignificant, but Kammaṭṭhāna is the specific merit that can lead to the highest goal, Nibbāna.

The practice of Kammaṭṭhāna found in the Pali Canon is extensive, including both Samatha (tranquility) and Vipassanā (insight) meditation. However, the most important and complete principles of Kammaṭṭhāna practice are found in the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta. In this sutta, the word sati (mindfulness) means good, wise, or wholesome recollection and attention according to Buddhist principles. Therefore, mindfulness in this sutta is synonymous with sammā sati (right mindfulness), which is the seventh factor of the Noble Eightfold Path. Mindfulness is also the first factor of the Seven Factors of Enlightenment because it is the foundation for the development of the other six factors. The successful outcome of Kammaṭṭhāna practice, which is to see things as they truly are, depends on mindfulness as its core principle. Without mindfulness, all Kammaṭṭhāna practice is impossible.

The word Paṭṭhāna means "to establish firmly" or "to set in place." This means to maintain a steadfast mind and a constant state of self-awareness. Therefore, the Pali phrase "Satiṃ upaṭṭhapetvā," used in the sutta, means to maintain mindfulness or to establish mindfulness directly on the meditation subject.

Another interpretation of Satipaṭṭhāna is "the foundation for mindfulness" or "a practice where mindfulness is the leader." As a result, this sutta emphasizes the importance and necessity of mindfulness for the task of eliminating defilements and in all general activities, as the Buddha stated: "Bhikkhus, I declare that mindfulness is a Dhamma that is necessary for use in all cases." The text also shows that there are only four areas where we should apply mindfulness in life:

The body and its behavior: Using mindfulness, one should contemplate the body and its actions simply as they are at that moment, without allowing any sense of

a person, self, "I," or "he/she" to mix in with the body and its actions. This is called **Kāyānupassanā**.

Feeling (vedanā): This refers to feelings of pleasure, pain, etc. Using mindfulness, one should contemplate these feelings simply as they are at that moment, without allowing any sense of a person, self, "I," or "he/she" to mix in with the feelings that arise. This is called **Vedanānupassanā**.

The mind (citta): The mind is what knows an object. Using mindfulness, one should contemplate the mind simply as it is at that moment, without allowing any sense of a person, self, "I," or "he/she" to mix in with the mind's current state. This is called **Cittānupassanā**.

Phenomena (dhammas) that arise in the body, feeling, and mind: Using mindfulness, one should contemplate these phenomena simply as they are, as they arise in that moment, without allowing any sense of a person, self, "I," or "he/she" to mix in with the phenomena that are happening. This is called **Dhammānupassanā**.

To make the practice of the four foundations of mindfulness effective, the practitioner must possess three key qualities:

Ātāpī (Ardent): This means always being vigilant and putting forth continuous effort. One must strive to prevent unwholesome states from arising in the mind, to eliminate unwholesome states that have already arisen, to give rise to wholesome states that have not yet arisen, and to maintain and further develop wholesome states that have already arisen.

Satimā (Mindful): This means having mindfulness—the ability to recollect and remember before acting, speaking, or thinking. One should not let the mind wander and think aimlessly under the influence of defilements.

Sampajāno (Clearly Comprehending): This means having clear comprehension—a full awareness while acting, speaking, or thinking. Sampajañña is a form of wisdom that has the duty of clearly knowing what mindfulness has set its attention on, understanding the purpose of the action, what is being done, how to deal with it, and avoiding any delusion or misunderstanding.

These three qualities are essential for cultivating Satipaṭṭhāna. They each have a distinct function but are always interconnected in practice. Ātāpa (ardency) keeps the mind from becoming discouraged and pushes it forward, encouraging the development of wholesome states. Sampajañña (clear comprehension) helps one to contemplate and keep up with the object of awareness, preventing delusion from taking over and ensuring a correct understanding of reality. Sati (mindfulness) has the duty of holding the object for Sampajañña to examine, allowing one to be aware of the object at all times without forgetting or getting confused. Other wholesome qualities also arise with these three.

When a practitioner diligently cultivates Satipaṭṭhāna by using mindfulness and clear comprehension to focus on the body, feelings, mind, and the phenomena related to them in the present moment, it leads to a clear and direct understanding of the true nature of those phenomena as they are occurring. It is clear that the essence of this practice is to have only mindfulness and clear comprehension with the pure, present moment object, without any sense of a self, "I," or "he/she" arising in the mind. It is free from any mental fabrication or judgment of good, bad, right, or wrong. Only pure awareness remains. This means

one must face everything that arises in the present moment with mindfulness and clear comprehension, knowing things as they truly are, without allowing the feeling of a self—the root cause of all unwholesome states—to arise. This practice of Satipaṭṭhāna is the path that leads to the wisdom of knowing things as they truly are (yathābhūtañāṇadassana), until the mind lets go and is no longer a place for defilements to rely upon. When the result of the practice reaches this stage, the cultivation of the four foundations of mindfulness is said to have reached its completion.

Conclusion

Having studied the historical background of Kammaṭṭhāna practice, you can see its development through various periods. Even before the time of the Buddha, Kammaṭṭhāna was practiced, especially Samatha meditation, which progressed to its highest stage, the eight attainments (samāpatti 8), lacking only Vipassanā meditation.

Later, in the time of the Buddha, Prince Siddhattha sought liberation from suffering. He undertook every stage of Samatha meditation and also practiced various forms of self-mortification. Ultimately, he discovered the definitive method for destroying defilements: Vipassanā meditation. He then taught and disseminated both Samatha and Vipassanā meditation, understanding that practicing both together would mutually support each other and lead to the cessation of suffering more quickly.

After the Buddha's Parinibbāna, his disciples have continuously carried on the practice of Kammaṭṭhāna to the present day. As a result, in Thailand, there are

various approaches to Kammaṭṭhāna practice, encompassing both Samatha and Vipassanā, as you have studied.

The term Kammaṭṭhāna means "the basis for mental work" or "the work that is the foundation for attaining jhāna, the path, fruition, and Nibbāna." It also refers to a skillful means for calming the mind. It is divided into two types: a method for calming the mind from hindrances and a method for developing wisdom.

When categorized by type, there are two: Samatha and Vipassanā. Of the two, Samatha, in terms of its core factor, is the one-pointedness of mind (ekaggatā) in wholesome consciousness, functional consciousness, mundane wholesome consciousness, and mundane functional consciousness. It has three meanings:

It is a state that calms or suppresses defilements.

It is a state that calms the factors that are hostile to the jhāna factors, such as sensual desire, by making them disappear.

It is a state that calms a mind that has been distracted by many objects, allowing it to become steady on a single object.

It is a state that calms the coarser jhāna factors, such as initial thought, by abandoning them.

Vipassanā, on the other hand, is the cultivation of wisdom to see mind and matter as impermanent, suffering, and non-self. According to the etymological definitions, it means the cultivation of wisdom that clearly sees various objects, such as visible forms, in a way that is distinct from conventional designation. It also clearly sees objects as being impermanent, suffering, non-self, and unattractive, in a way that is distinct from the perverted perceptions of permanence, pleasure, and self. In another sense, it is the cultivation of wisdom that clearly sees the five aggregates

in various ways, such as impermanence, suffering, and non-self. The core factor of Vipassanā is the wisdom factor (paññā-cetasika) co-arising with wholesome consciousness or functional consciousness.

The benefits of cultivating Samatha are that when a practitioner develops concentration, both mundane and supramundane, and their mind is established and calm, they attain the following benefits:

A pleasant dwelling in the present life (Dīṭṭhadhammasukhavihārī).

The acquisition of special abilities (Abhijñā).

Attainment of a special existence.

The acquisition of knowledge and vision (ñāṇadassana).

Mindfulness and clear comprehension.

The cessation of defilements.

The attainment of cessation (Nirodha-samāpatti).

A foundation for insight (Vipassanā).

The benefits of cultivating wisdom (paññā-bhāvanā) include:

The destruction of various defilements.

The tasting of the noble fruits.

The ability to enter the cessation attainment.

The achievement of various states, such as the state of a person worthy of offerings (āhuṇeyya).

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End-of-Chapter Questions

Instructions: This is a subjective exam with 10 questions. Students must answer all of them.

Prior to the time of the Buddha, was the practice of mental training, known as Kammaṭṭhāna, already in existence? If so, among which groups of people did it appear, and what was the highest stage it had developed to?

Provide your opinion on the benefits of Samādhī (Samatha) and the eight attainments (samāpatti 8) that Prince Siddhattha had achieved. Were they beneficial? If so, why?

Describe the history and method of Kammaṭṭhāna practice of at least one tradition in Thailand.

What is the meaning of the word “Kammaṭṭhāna”? Please explain and provide its etymological definition (vacanāttha).

What is the meaning of the word “Samatha”? Please explain with its etymological definition for a general understanding.

What is the meaning of the word “Vipassanā”? Please explain with its etymological definition for a general understanding.

Explain all the benefits of Samatha Kammaṭṭhāna in their proper order.

Explain all the benefits of Vipassanā Kammaṭṭhāna in their proper order.

Explain the importance of Kammaṭṭhāna practice in a general sense.

Explain the importance of Kammaṭṭhāna practice according to the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta.

Instructions: This is a multiple-choice exam with 10 questions. Students must answer all of them by selecting the single most correct answer.

Which of the following is related to the hermits and ascetics who lived a celibate life in the Himālaya forest?

- a. Vipassanā
- b. Vimokkha (Liberation)
- c. Phala-samāpatti (Fruition Attainment)
- d. Jhāna (Meditative Absorption)

Which of the following refers to the quality that the Buddha attained while staying at the two ascetics' hermitages?

- a. Jhāna-samāpatti (Jhāna Attainment)
- b. Nirodha-samāpatti (Cessation Attainment)
- c. Phala-samāpatti (Fruition Attainment)
- d. Abhiññā-samāpatti (Higher Knowledge Attainment)

Which of the following best defines "Cutūpapāta-ñāṇa"?

- a. The ability to recollect past lives.
- b. The ability to see the passing away and rebirth of beings.
- c. The ability to know the minds of other beings.
- d. The ability to display various bodies.

In the first watch of the night, what quality did the Buddha attain?

- a. Cutūpapāta-ñāṇa (Knowledge of the Passing Away and Rebirth of Beings)
- b. Pubbenivāsānussati-ñāṇa (Knowledge of the Recollection of Past Lives)
- c. Paracittavijñānanā-ñāṇa (Knowledge of Knowing Others' Minds)
- d. Āsavakkhaya-ñāṇa (Knowledge of the Cessation of Defilements)

Which of the following Thai great elders is associated with the "Ānāpānassati" Kammaṭṭhāna practice?

- a. Luang Por Sodh Candasaro of Wat Pak Nam Bhasicharoen, Bangkok
- b. Luang Por Thian Jittasubho
- c. Buddhadaśa Bhikkhu of Wat Suan Mokkhabalārāma
- d. Phra Dhammatheerarājamahāmuni (Chodok Ñāṇasiddhi) of Wat Mahāthāt

Which of the following correctly defines the etymological phrase "Kilese sametīti = Samatho"?

- a. The nature that is calm and still.
- b. The nature that makes the hindrances calm and still.
- c. The nature that makes a mind that has received various objects calm and still on a single object.
- d. The nature that makes coarse factors calm and suppressed.

Which of the following correctly defines the etymological phrase "Cittaṃ sametīti = Samatho"?

- a. The nature that is calm and still.
- b. The nature that makes the hindrances calm and still.
- c. The nature that makes a mind that has received various objects calm and still on a single object.
- d. The nature that makes coarse factors calm and suppressed.

Which of the following correctly defines the etymological phrase "Aniccādi-vasena vividhākārena passatīti = Vipassanā"?

- a. The nature that makes the hindrances calm and still.
- b. The nature that makes a mind that has received various objects calm and still on a single object.
- c. The nature that clearly sees mind and matter in various ways, such as impermanence.
- d. The nature that clearly sees conditioned phenomena, such as the five aggregates, as impermanent, suffering, non-self, and unattractive.

The phrase “a means for developing wisdom” is most closely related to the meaning of which of the following?

- a. Samatha Bhāvanā
- b. Vipassanā Bhāvanā
- c. Kammaṭṭhāna Bhāvanā
- d. Saṅkhāra-pariggāhaka-vipassanā

The phrase “Uddham^ṃsoto” is related to which individual?

- a. An ordinary person (pūthujjana)
- b. A Stream-enterer (sotā^āpanna)
- c. A Once-returner (sakadā^āgā^āmī)
- d. A Non-returner (anā^āgā^āmī)

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