

A Manual of Respiration

Ānāpāna Dīpanī



Venerable Ledi Sayādaw

Aggamahāpaṇḍita, D.Litt.

consciousness, temperature, and nutriment. There are two causes of mental elements: external sense objects, and internal sense organs. Differentiating them into materiality and mentality, these phenomena, together with their arising and disappearance, must be observed repeatedly, in the light of their characteristics: *“Rūpaṃ aniccaṃ khayaṭṭhena dukkhaṃ bhayaṭṭhena, anattā asāraṇaṭṭhena* — materiality is impermanent and subject to decay, unpleasant and to be feared, and is not self and without essence — until they are seen as they really are with wisdom. Thus must one strive to develop insight.

This shows concisely how to proceed to insight according to the method, “Contemplating impermanence... *etc.*, as given in the fourth tetrad of the Ānāpānassatisutta.

Another way is to view the material and mental phenomena of one’s body as one ordinarily knows them until one penetrates and perceives them with wisdom, treating the in-breath and out-breath as access concentration. Here, access may be explained as follows. When a meditator begins to put forth effort, he must first concentrate and tranquillise the mind, and he views out-breath and in-breath for this purpose. He follows this procedure on every occasion that he puts forth effort. This preliminary concentration and tranquillisation is the business of access concentration. It is only after the mind has been concentrated and tranquillised that one must practice, observing whatever part of the body that one wishes to observe.

This shows concisely how to proceed to insight from the counting stage. More detailed expositions may be found in the Āhāra Dīpanī and the Anatta Dīpanī.

In the case of proceeding to insight from the connection stage, or from the access concentration of the fixing stage, or from the first, second, third, and fourth jhānas of the attainment concentration of the fixing stage, the method may be gathered from what has been shown in the case of the counting stage.

As regards the three remaining purifications, the ten insight knowledges, and path and fruition knowledges of Stream-winning, see the meditation objects section of my Paramattha Saṅkhitta.

This ends the concise exposition of the meditation exercises mindfulness of respiration as given in the Ānāpānassati Sutta and the commentary thereon.

This Ends the Ānāpāna Dīpanī

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mixed up with the material aggregate, or a being, or “I.” When this is clearly perceived, purification of view in mentality is achieved and, when purification of view is achieved in consciousness, it is also achieved in the other mental elements of mindfulness, effort, and knowledge.

This ends the purification of view in mentality, and the purification of view.

Purification by Overcoming Doubt. When the functions of the five elements consisting of the four material elements and one mental element are penetrated by wisdom, effort must be made to achieve the knowledge of purification by overcoming doubt. When the knowledge of dependent origination is attained, purification by overcoming doubt is achieved.

Doubt (*kaṅkha*) means mental vacillation (*vicikicchā*). In the infinitely long round of rebirths there are many wrong views and theories about the functions of the above-mentioned five elements to which beings subscribe. These beings lean towards these wrong views and wrong theories, such as belief in soul or permanence, because they do not know the dependent origination of the material and mental elements. This is ordinary doubt. “Did I not exist in the past?” and such thoughts are special doubt. Of the four basic elements that exist within the body there are material phenomena that are caused by kamma, there are material phenomena caused by consciousness, there are material phenomena caused by temperature, and there are material phenomena caused by nutriment. These four causes of material phenomena should be known.

Within the body there are material phenomena caused by kamma that are incessantly arising without a moment’s break — like the continuous flow of a river. There are also material phenomena caused by consciousness that are thus continuously arising. Similarly there are material phenomena caused by changes in temperature, and material phenomena caused by nutriment.

In the case of the mind element there are thoughts arising that are dependent on particular objects of thought (such as out-breath and in-breath), each particular thought being connected with and dependent on each particular out-breath and in-breath as the case may be, like the connection and dependency of shadows and reflection of sunlight.

This shows concisely the dependent origination of the five basic elements. If this dependent origination can be realised with wisdom, purification by overcoming doubt is accomplished. The views of soul and permanence will be overcome.

This ends purification by overcoming doubt.

Summary. Thus there are five basic elements of earth, water, fire, air, and consciousness. There are four causes of the material elements: kamma,

in-breath.” This is the belief that is firmly rooted in the minds of worldlings. One must rid oneself of this deep and firmly rooted belief in the perception of one’s body by ridding oneself of it in the parts of the body that are out-breaths and in-breaths.

The way to get rid of this view is as follows: when the eye of wisdom penetrates to the four primary elements, and the ultimate reality is perceived, such things as shape and form in out-breath and in-breath disappear, and every time one contemplates them, the deep firm root of personality view disappears. One perceives that there are in reality no shape and form — no out-breath and in-breath. One perceives that there only exists the four primary elements. Thus Purification of View is achieved.

It is the same with respect to the other parts of the body such as hairs of the head, hairs of the body, *etc.* There exists, on the one hand, the deeply rooted habitual perception of shape and form, such as, “this is hair of the head,” and on the other hand, there the four primary elements. When these four primary elements are penetrated and clearly perceived with wisdom in the hairs of the head, the deeply rooted wrong perception of shape and form will disappear. It will be perceived that the hairs of the head do not in reality exist. When it is thus seen, personality view in the hairs of the head is achieved. Proceed in the same way with the hairs of the body, *etc.*

This ends the purification of view in materiality.

Purification of View in Mentality. There is the mind that adverts toward towards the objects of out-breath and in-breath. There is the mind that adverts toward the four primary elements. There are attributes of that mind such as mindfulness, effort, and knowledge. These are all mental elements. The function of knowing the objects is the mind. That of recollecting them repeatedly is mindfulness. That of striving is effort. That of proficiency is knowledge.

Thinking and perceiving, “I shall advert my mind towards out-breath and in-breath” is the function of the deeply rooted personality view in the mind. One must overcome this deeply rooted personality view. How does one overcome this personality view? The advertence towards the out-breath and in-breath is a functional element — a mental element. When that element appears at the mind door advertence towards out-breath and in-breath occurs. It is merely a mental function. It is not the material aggregate. It is not the function of the material aggregate. It is not an entity or a being. It is not the function of a being. It is not “I.” It is not the functioning of an “I.” It is an element that in the Abhidhamma is called thought, consciousness, or mentality. It is thus that one must try to perceive. Let it not be confused and

Ānāpāna Dīpanī

Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammāsambuddhassa

I

Request and Acceptance

On the repeated request of the Lekaing Myosa Wunshidaw Kinwun Mingyi, I proceeded to Mandalay on the 11th waning day of the month of Tabaung, 1265 B.E. (March 1904), and delivered sermons to the Saṅgha and the laity for three days and three nights while sojourning in front of Kinwun Mingyi’s house.

While I was thus engaged, the Kinwun Mingyi’s son who is the Myo-ok of Pathein, and one Maung Khin who is the head clerk of the Deputy Commissioner’s office in Mandalay, requested me to write a manual on the practice of Ānāpānassati (exercise of attention or mindfulness on out-breath and in-breath) for their lifelong guidance and benefit, and in accordance with that request, I — the presiding Sayādaw of Ledi Forest Monastery of Mon-ywā — shall now expound concisely the Ānāpānassati Sutta as given in the Uparipaṇṇāsa of the Majjhimanikāya.

II

Exhortation to Strive for Spiritual Progress

In accordance with the admonition contained in the Dhammapada:

Tiṇṇaṃ aññātaraṃ yāmaṃ, paṭijageyya paṇḍito. (Dhp v 157)

“A wise man should purify himself by striving for spiritual progress during at least one of the three periods of life.”

Wise and good people who have the ability to see clearly the relation of cause and effect should renounce and relinquish success in the attainment of wealth (*bhoga sampatti*) and should put forth effort to achieve spiritual progress (*bhava sampatti*) right from the first period of life. If effort during the first period of life is not possible, effort should be made during the second period of life. If effort during the second period of life is not possible, effort should be made as soon as one enters the third period of life.

The essential meaning is that if one lives in close association with the attainment of wealth during all three periods of life, one fails to take full advantage of the opportunity to obtain the manifold benefits that this life offers — this life which is like a great ‘wishing tree’ whence one may pluck many desirable things.

Since this is a time of failure and misfortune (*vipatti*) when beings are apt to die and disappear quickly and easily, it is appropriate that one should demarcate the age of fifty or fifty-five as the end of the period for the attainment of wealth. Thereafter, one should renounce and relinquish the attainment of wealth so that one may achieve the advantages that one's encounter with a Buddhasāna, which is so difficult to attain, offers.

There are many ways of striving for spiritual progress.

There is first the way of King Temi and King Hatthipāla who renounced the pleasures and enjoyments of the throne and palace while still young during the first period of life and adopted the lives of ascetics in the forest.

There is also the way of the long line of eighty-four thousand kings from King Maghadeva to King Nemi who ruled their kingdoms and enjoyed the pleasures and luxuries of royalty during the first and second periods of life, but stepped down in favour of their eldest sons during the third period of life. They then led lonely lives in the royal gardens practicing meditation on the four sublime states (*brahmavihāra*) until they attained the absorptions (*jhāna*), and continued to live in solitude enjoying the pleasures of these attainments until their deaths.

Then there is the way of the Universal King Mahāsudassana who did not even leave his royal palace to live in the royal gardens, but continued to reside in the great golden palace called Dhammapāsāda ornamented with precious gems built for him by Sakka, the King of Tāvātimsa. He continued to live alone in that luxurious palace practising the four sublime states until the absorptions were attained.

There is also the way of the King of Takkaṣiḷa who, on seeing the meditation exercises on respiration (*ānāpāna kammaṭṭhāna*) inscribed on golden palm leaves sent to him by the King of Rājagaha, continued to reside alone on the uppermost storey of his seven-storeyed palace practising mindfulness of respiration until he attained the fourth jhāna.

Wise Buddhists of the present day should try to emulate these distinguished persons of great future destiny and should select and adopt one or other of the practices for spiritual progress. Although, during the first period of life, they may pursue and live amidst the pleasures and enjoyments of the attainment of wealth, they should renounce and relinquish their worldly interests and concerns in good time. They should renounce and relinquish such practices as unchastity and association with friends and companions, which are habits inimical to the development of concentration. Retaining contact with only the person who serves them food, they should strive for their spiritual progress.

The Five Stages of Purification (*Visuddhi*). On the path of insight there are five stages of purity: 1) Purification of view (*diṭṭhi visuddhi*), 2) Purification by overcoming doubt (*kaṅkhāvitaraṇa visuddhi*), 3) Purification by knowledge and vision of what is path and not-path (*maggāmaggañāṇadassana visuddhi*), 4) Purification by knowledge of the course of practice (*paṭipadā ñāṇadassana visuddhi*), 5) Purification by knowledge and vision (*ñāṇadassana visuddhi*).

Purification of View in Materiality. I shall now show how purification of view in materiality is achieved.

In the material phenomena of out-breath and in-breath eight material elements are always present: earth (*paṭhavī*), water (*āpo*), fire (*tejo*), air (*vāyo*), colour (*vaṇṇa*), odour (*gandha*), taste (*rasa*), and vitality (*ojā*). When sound is produced it contains nine elements, the additional element being sound (*sadda*). Among all these elements the basic elements are earth, water, fire, and air.

The function of the earth element is hardness. In all material phenomena there exists this basic element of hardness. In those things in which earth predominates, the quality of hardness can be touched or felt. In such things as the sun's rays and moon's rays the hardness cannot be felt, but its existence can be logically realised. For example, how can water bind if there is no solidity to bind? How can fire burn if there is no solidity to burn? How can air produce motion if there is no solidity to push?

In the material groups of out-breath and in-breath, the binding function that causes the grouping is that of water. The heat and cold in the groups are caused by fire. Motion is caused by air. In out-breath and in-breath it is air that predominates. If one can appreciate the existence of these four primary elements in the out-breath and in-breath then one can appreciate their existence in the whole body and, in pursuance of that appreciation, if one can penetrate and perceive their existence in the out-breath and in-breath then one can also penetrate and perceive their existence in the whole body.

In the ultimate reality there exists in the out-breath and in-breath only these four primary elements of earth, water, fire, and air. It is when the eye of wisdom can penetrate and perceive these four primary elements that it can be said that one views reality. If the perception does not penetrate far enough and does not reach these four elements, stopping short at such things as the shape and form of out-breaths and in-breaths, then one is still on the path of personality belief (*sakkāya diṭṭhi*). According to this belief: "The beginning out-breath is at the navel. Its end is at the tip of the nose. It originates once at the beginning. It disappears once at the end. There is no repeated origination or disappearance in the middle. Similarly for the

regard mindfulness of respiration as access concentration and proceed to insight by taking any of the five aggregates as the object of attention.

In the Ānāpānassati Sutta that is here dealt with, in accordance with the text “Contemplating impermanence, *etc.*,” the method given continues associating the practice of insight with mindfulness of respiration. The meaning is that when out-breaths are exhaled and in-breaths inhaled, they must be done with the additional special endeavour of the mind adverted on their characteristic of impermanence and thus try to perceive their impermanence clearly.

From the Counting and Connection Stages. In these two stages the work consists solely of keeping the attention on the out-breaths and in-breaths and to perceive them with wisdom. Hence, if one wishes to proceed to insight from these stages, the effort must be based on physical phenomena.

From the Fixing Stage. In the stage of access concentration there are two phases: mindfulness of feelings and mindfulness of consciousness. The second tetrad (where it is said, “Perceiving rapture...” “Perceiving bliss...”) is mindfulness of feelings phase. The third tetrad (where it is said “Perceiving the mind...”) is the mindfulness of consciousness phase. If one wishes to proceed to insight from the mindfulness of feelings, the effort must be based on the mental phenomena of feelings. If one wishes to proceed from the mindfulness of consciousness the effort must be based on the mental phenomena of consciousness. If one wishes to proceed from the stage of attainment concentration the effort can be based either on feeling or consciousness or any of the characteristics of jhāna that one has attained.

Vipassanā Based on Materiality. When effort in the counting stage is accomplished, instead of proceeding next to the connection stage, one must proceed to the insight into impermanence stage in accordance with the text, “Contemplating impermanence... *etc.*”

The momentary concentration (*khaṇika samādhi*) that one achieved in the counting stage must be regarded as access concentration. A person who wishes to practise insight, being an ordinary human being, may not find it possible to put forth effort for the whole day. He must, therefore, allocate three or four hours a day, and put forth effort punctually and regularly every day. When he starts practice he must first overcome the wandering tendencies of the mind and establish mindfulness of respiration. It is only after he has overcome the wandering tendencies that he must start advertence of the mind towards insight. He must not relinquish mindfulness of respiration, but must continue to develop it until he gains insight and attains Path and Fruition knowledge. Even when he enters Fruition knowledge he must regard mindfulness of respiration as access concentration.

III

Drifting in Samsāra Due to an Unstable Mind

For ordinary householders, striving for spiritual progress means firmly establishing oneself in morality consisting of eight precepts with right livelihood as the eighth (*ājīvaṭṭhamaka sīla*), and diligently practising mindfulness of the body (*kāyagatā sati*), meditation exercises for tranquillity (*samatha kammaṭṭhāna*), and meditation exercises for insight (*vipassanā kammaṭṭhāna*), within this lifetime, while one still has the rare opportunity of encounter with the Buddhasāsa (*Buddhuppāda dullabha*) and the rare opportunity of human rebirth (*manussatta dullabha*).

Before taking up the meditation exercises for tranquillity and insight, one must practice mindfulness of the body, which is one of the exercises of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*). I will explain with an example why it is necessary to practice mindfulness from the outset.

In this world, a mad man who has no control over his mind is of no use either in work for his own benefit or for the benefit of others. Even when eating, he is liable to upset his plate and walk away. It is impossible for him to concentrate on work for the benefit of others. When this mad person is properly treated he becomes sane and mentally stable enough to perform work both for his own benefit as well as for the benefit of others, just like normal people.

Similarly, ordinary sane people resemble the mad man who has no control over his mind when they undertake the subtle work of tranquillity and insight. For example, when paying homage to the Buddha, the minds of normal people do not remain steadfastly and continuously concentrated on the noble and incomparable qualities of the Buddha. Even when repeating the stanza “*Itipiso...*” their minds wander. If they were obliged to start again from the beginning whenever their attention strayed, their task of repeating the stanza would never be successfully completed. It is only because they have committed the stanza to memory that they are able to repeat it to the end. The same happens in all the exercises for mental training and development. This is how ordinary sane people are just like mad persons when it comes to developing concentration and insight.

Let all take heed! In the case of such persons who have no control over their minds, far from being able to achieve the path (*magga*) its fruition (*phala*), and nibbāna, their rebirth in one of the fortunate realms (*sugatī*) after death is uncertain. In this world, people who have no control over their legs cannot

successfully perform work that must be done with the legs. People who have no control over their hands cannot successfully perform work that must be done with the hands. People who have no control over their speech cannot successfully perform work that must be done with speech. People who have no control over their minds cannot successfully perform work that must be done with the mind. The work of meditation must be performed solely with the mind. Hence it is that worldlings, both laity and Saṅgha, who have no control over their minds cannot successfully practise meditation. Their efforts are mere imitations.

Consider the case of a boatman who has not mastered the steering of his boat, floating down the swift and strong currents of a great river, his craft filled with merchandise. During the night he does not see the towns, havens, and anchorages that lie along the banks. During the day, although he can see the towns, havens, and anchorages, he is unable to stop and anchor at any of them because of his inability to steer his boat and thus he drifts down to the ocean looking at those towns, havens, and anchorages with longing and admiration.

In this simile, the great river with the swift and strong currents together with the ocean is Saṃsāra with its four floods (*oghas*). The boat laden with merchandise is the five aggregates (*khandha*) of a living being. The boatman who cannot control his boat is a worldling (*puthujjana*). Stretches of the river lined with forests, where no towns, havens, and anchorages exist, are the empty world-cycles where no Buddhasāna appears. The period of night when the boatman cannot see the towns, havens, and anchorages may be compared to the plight of those beings who though reborn during the appearance of a Buddhasāna in this world are nevertheless ignorant or unmindful of it because they happen to be in one or the other of the eight inopportune places. The period of day when the towns, havens, and anchorages can be seen, but the boatman is unable to stop and anchor at any of them because of his inability to steer his boat and thus drifts down to the ocean looking at those towns, havens, and anchorages with longing and admiration, may be compared to the plight of those who, though Buddhists, do not make any effort to practise meditation, and thus resemble insane persons having no control over their minds. They are unable to attain the towns, havens, and anchorages, which are the absorptions attained through meditation exercises in tranquillity, insight knowledge (*vipassanā ñāṇa*), path knowledge (*magga ñāṇa*), fruition knowledge (*phala ñāṇa*), and nibbāna; and paying respects to and evoking admiration for the three gems of the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha. They drift without

At present, people within the Buddhasāna have the opportunity to work towards the attainment of stopping rebirth, so they should focus all their efforts on achieving this. If they wish to put a stop to rebirth they must strive for knowledge and liberation. To achieve knowledge and liberation, they must establish the seven factors of enlightenment. To establish the seven factors of enlightenment, they must establish the four foundations of mindfulness. To establish the four foundations of mindfulness, they must undertake the practice of mindfulness of respiration. If mindfulness of respiration, the four foundations of mindfulness, the seven factors of enlightenment, and knowledge and liberation are accomplished, the thirty-seven requisites of enlightenment are also accomplished. This is the condensed meaning of the Ānāpānassati Sutta.

The way to achieve this knowledge and liberation speedily is no other than what has been shown in the fourth tetrad, where it is said, “Contemplating impermanence, I will exhale”...etc. After the seven factors of enlightenment are established, the knowledge and liberation of the path and fruition of Stream-winning and the stopping of rebirth with some remainder (*sa-upādisesa nibbāna*) — nibbāna with the aggregates of grasping remaining will be achieved. At this point, wrong views and doubts cease, while deliverance from unwholesome acts and wrong livelihoods, and thus from rebirth in the lower realms, is obtained. This can be attained in this very life.

XVII

How to Proceed to Insight

I shall now show concisely the work of the fourth tetrad.

When can one proceed to Vipassanā? In the Ānāpānassati Sutta and the Commentary, the order of practice is to undertake the work of the fourth tetrad only after the attainment of the four jhānas. If one can adhere strictly to this order it is ideal. However, if one finds oneself unable to follow this order of practice one may proceed to insight from the third jhāna. It is permissible to proceed to insight also from the second jhāna, or from the first jhāna, or from access concentration before jhāna is attained, or from the connection stage, or even from the counting stage after the wandering tendencies of the mind have been overcome.

Two Methods. One may proceed to insight while still adhering to the work of keeping the attention on the out-breath and in-breath, or one may

XVI

How Knowledge and Liberation are Fulfilled

To show how to proceed from mindfulness of respiration to insight, path knowledge (which is *vijjā*) and fruition knowledge (which is *vimutti*), the Buddha said:

Kathaṃ bhāvitā ca, bhikkhave, satta bojjhaṅgā kathaṃ bahulikatā vijjā vimuttiṃ paripūrenti? Idha, bhikkhave, bhikkhu sati-saṃbojjhaṅgaṃ bhaveti vivekanissitaṃ virāganissitaṃ nirodhanissitaṃ vosaggaparināmiṃ...Evaṃ bhāvitā kho, bhikkhave, satta saṃbojjhaṅgā evaṃ bahulikatā vijjā vimuttiṃ paripūrenti. (M.iii.88)

“How, monks, must the seven factors of enlightenment be developed and made much of to achieve knowledge and liberation? Here, monks, a monk develops the enlightenment factor of mindfulness, depending on seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, and ripening in relinquishment...Thus developed and made much of, monks, the seven factors of enlightenment fulfil knowledge and liberation.”

Seclusion (*viveka*), dispassion (*virāga*), cessation (*nirodha*), and relinquishment (*vosagga*) are all synonyms for nibbāna. “Practising with the aim of achieving nibbāna in this very life” is what is meant by depending on seclusion, etc. It is also called depending on stopping the cycle of rebirth (*vivaṭṭanissita*). If effort is made merely to acquire merit it is depending on the cycle of rebirth (*vaṭṭanissita*).

If one practises according to the counting method, the connection method, and the fixing method (where access concentration and attainment concentration are entered), one fulfils the four foundations of mindfulness and the seven factors of enlightenment. However, if one does so with an inclination towards the Deva and Brahma existences after death, the seven factors of enlightenment become dependent on the cycle of rebirths. If one stops short with the attainment of access concentration, attainment concentration, and contemplation of impermanence, one is liable to become inclined towards depending on the cycle of rebirths. Hence, depending on seclusion, dispassion, cessation, and relinquishment mean putting forth effort with a view to attaining the stopping of rebirth in this very life and not stopping short with such attainments as access concentration and attainment concentration. Stopping rebirth means nibbāna.

control to the empty world cycles posing as donors of monasteries, donors of the four requisites, ordinary bhikkhus, and famous Mahātheras honoured for their extensive learning.

This is the picture of the drifting that has occurred to beings in the infinitely long Saṃsāra.

IV

Mindfulness of the Body before Tranquillity and Insight

In this present life, if beings continually fail to practise mindfulness of the body, and thus continue to live without control over their minds, although they may be Buddhists, they will be drifting and submerged in Saṃsāra just as they have been in the past. Lacking control over the mind, they are certain to drift in Saṃsāra because without mental control, the work of tranquillity and insight cannot be undertaken. Gaining control of the mind is, on the other hand, the certain path to nibbāna, because it enables the work of tranquillity and insight to be undertaken. Meditation on mindfulness of the body is the effort to gain control of the mind.

Even though one is unable to undertake the higher work of tranquillity and insight, the Buddha said that if one can firmly control one’s mind and succeed in keeping it at will within one’s body, one enjoys the taste of nibbāna:

Amataṃ tesaṃ viraddhaṃ, yesaṃ kāyagatā sati viraddhā.

Amataṃ tesaṃ aviraddhaṃ, yesaṃ kāyagatā sati aviraddhā.

Amataṃ tesaṃ aparibhuttaṃ, yesaṃ kāyagatā sati aparibhuttā.

Amataṃ tesaṃ paribhuttaṃ, yesaṃ kāyagatā sati paribhuttā.

“Those who have missed mindfulness of the body, have missed nibbāna. Those who have not missed mindfulness of the body, have not missed nibbāna. Those who have not made use of mindfulness of the body, have not made use of nibbāna. Those who have made use of mindfulness of the body, have made use of nibbāna.” (A.i.46)

The essential meaning is that if one is established in mindfulness of the body one can successfully undertake the work of tranquillity and insight because one has firm control over one’s mind, thus it is certain that in this very life one cannot miss nibbāna. If, however, like the mad man, one has no control over one’s mind because one continues to neglect the work of mindfulness of the body, one is unable to fulfil the work of tranquillity and insight, and hence will miss nibbāna.

There are many degrees of control over one's mind.

In this world, ordinary persons who are not insane have sufficient control over their minds to perform the various tasks, both individual and social, that arise among humans. This is one kind of control.

Within the Buddhasāsana, the morality of controlling the senses (*indriya saṃvara sīla*) is one kind of control. However, it cannot be said to be dependable.

Establishing oneself in mindfulness of the body, being the proximate cause (*padaṭṭhāna*) of tranquillity and insight meditation, is firm control. The attainment of access concentration (*upacāra samādhi*) just before entering any of the absorptions, is firmer control. Firmer still is attainment concentration (*appanā samādhi*) reached during full absorption. The eight stages of attainment concentration are controls that become progressively firmer as each higher stage is reached. In the matter of tranquillity, the attainments of the higher spiritual powers (*abhiññāna*) represents the highest level of control.

This is the path of tranquillity called "Samatha Yānika."

The path of insight is called "Vipassanā Yānika."

Here ends the section showing that mindfulness of the body must precede the work of tranquillity and insight.

V

Why Mindfulness of Respiration Should be Practised

The people of the present day, both lay and monastic, who have encountered the Buddhasāsana, should abhor and fear the state of having no control over their minds and should, as early as possible, adopt and practise one or other of the exercises for mindfulness of the body given in the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta of the Dighanikāya (DN 22) so that they may secure firm control of their minds.

In the Kāyagatāsati Sutta (MN 119) of the last fifty of the Middle-length Sayings, eighteen kinds of exercises for mindfulness of the body are given; namely, mindfulness of respiration (*ānāpāna*), mindfulness of the postures [of sitting, standing, walking, and lying down] (*iriyāpatha*), clear comprehension of actions (*sampajañña*), attention to the impurities of the body (*paṭikkūla manasikāra*), analysis of the elements (*dhātu manasikāra*), nine cemetery contemplations (*sivathika*), and four absorptions.

In the Ānāpānassati Sutta (MN 118), also of the last fifty, it is shown how the work of mindfulness of the body and the four full absorptions of tranquillity meditation, insight meditation, development of the path, and

Work on the fourth tetrad, such as contemplating impermanence, is establishing mindfulness of mental objects (*dhammānupassana satipaṭṭhāna*). Here, again, while attention continues to be placed on out-breath and in-breath, effort is made to clearly perceive abandonment by overcoming unwholesome states, such as covetousness (*abhijjā*) and sorrow (*domanassa*), with wisdom.

"Yo yaṃ abhijjādomanassānaṃ pahānaṃ taṃ paññāya disvā sādhukaṃ ajjhupekkhitā hoti." "Having seen with wisdom the abandoning of covetousness and grief, he closely looks on with equanimity." (M.iii.84)

Because mental objects such as impermanence are contemplated together with out-breath and in-breath, it is also proper to call it establishing mindfulness of mental objects.

XV

How the Factors of Enlightenment are Fulfilled

I shall now show how a person who accomplishes mindfulness of respiration also fulfils the seven factors of enlightenment.

Since the work of mindfulness of respiration consists of making the mindfulness firmer and stronger every day, it amounts to the enlightenment factor of mindfulness. When, to a meditator practising mindfulness of respiration, the attention becomes firm, and there is no moment when he is without attention, then the enlightenment factor of mindfulness is fulfilled.

When a meditator practising mindfulness of respiration gains insight into the phenomena associated with that practice, then the enlightenment factor of investigation of phenomena is fulfilled.

The arousing of energy in the practice of mindfulness of respiration is the fulfilment of the enlightenment factor of energy.

When the stage of contemplating rapture is reached, the progressive development of rapture is the fulfilment of the enlightenment factor of rapture.

When rapture is attained while practising mindfulness of respiration, the hindrances of sloth and torpor are allayed and calmed, and the progressive development of this calming down is the enlightenment factor of tranquillity.

When tranquillity develops, concentration develops. This is the enlightenment factor of concentration.

When concentration develops there is no longer any occasion for anxiety and concern arising out of an inattentive mind, thus the enlightenment factor of equanimity develops.

The Pāli Text shows in detail how the seven factors of enlightenment are fulfilled in the establishment of each of the four foundations of mindfulness.

‘Contemplating impermanence, I will exhale’ he trains himself.

‘Contemplating impermanence, I will inhale’ he trains himself.

‘Contemplating dispassion, I will exhale’ he trains himself.

‘Contemplating dispassion, I will inhale’ he trains himself.

‘Contemplating cessation, I will exhale’ he trains himself.

‘Contemplating cessation, I will inhale’ he trains himself.

‘Contemplating relinquishment, I will exhale’ he trains himself.

‘Contemplating relinquishment, I will inhale’ he trains himself.

The way to proceed to insight will be dealt with later.

This ends the fourth tetrad.

XIV

How the Foundations of Mindfulness are Fulfilled

The Buddha said that those who cultivate and make much of mindfulness of respiration also fulfil the development of the four foundations of mindfulness. I shall here give just the essential meaning.

In the four tetrads dealt with above, effort in the first tetrad, which includes the counting and connection stages, consists entirely of establishing mindfulness of the body (*kāyānupassana satipaṭṭhāna*). The out-breath and in-breath, being part of the aggregate of materiality (*rūpakkhanda*) are called body (*kāya*). “*Kāyesu kāyaññātarāhaṃ bhikkhave etaṃ vadāmi yadidaṃ assāpassāsā.*” “I say that this is a certain body among the bodies, namely, in-breathing and out-breathing.” (M.iii.83)

Effort in the second tetrad consists of establishing mindfulness of feelings (*vedanānupassana satipaṭṭhāna*). “*Vedanāsu vedanaññātarāhaṃ bhikkhave etaṃ vadāmi. Yadidaṃ assāpassāsānaṃ sādhuṃ manasikāraṃ.*” “I say that this is a certain feeling among the feelings, namely, giving close attention to in-breathing and out-breathing.” (M.iii.84)

“*Sādhukam*” (close, thorough) indicates the special endeavour that is required in “*Pītipaṭṭisaṃvedī... etc.*” Here, while attention continues to be placed on out-breath and in-breath, effort is made to clearly perceive the feelings with wisdom, and thus work in the second tetrad is called establishing mindfulness of feelings.

Work in the third tetrad consists of establishing mindfulness of consciousness (*cittānupassana satipaṭṭhāna*). Here, also, while attention continues to be placed on out-breath and in-breath, effort is made to completely perceive the mind with wisdom.

realisation of fruition (the last two are known as “knowledge of liberation”) are accomplished by the practice of mindfulness of respiration alone.

It is also the custom for all Buddhas to attain supreme enlightenment through the method of mindfulness of respiration, and having attained Buddhahood, all Buddhas have continued to remain established in mindfulness of respiration without any lapse until they attain Parinibbāna.

In the matter of tranquillity meditation: of the forty meditation exercises that are prescribed, mindfulness of respiration is the easiest to establish continuously at all times. The Buddha extolled mindfulness of respiration more than he did the other meditation exercises. The commentators also called mindfulness of respiration “the realm of the great” (*mahāpūrisa bhūmi*). Mindfulness of respiration is not a meditation exercise that is suitable for ordinary persons. It is suited only for persons of great wisdom.

Hence, for the benefit of those wise people who wish to emulate the way of the aforementioned King Pakkūsāti of Takkaṣiṇa, who spent the rest of his life alone on the top-most storey of his seven-storeyed palace practicing meditation beginning with mindfulness of the body until he achieved the fourth jhāna, and thus wish to strive for spiritual progress including and accompanying advantages that the rare opportunity of an encounter with a Buddhasāna offers, I will now expound concisely the Ānāpānassati Sutta as given in the last fifty (MN 118).

VI

Mindfulness of Respiration Leads to Nibbāna

“*Ānāpānassati, bhikkhave, bhāvitā bahulikatā cattāro satipaṭṭhāne paripūrenti. Cattāro satipaṭṭhānā bhāvitā bahulikatā satta bojjhaṅge paripūrenti. Satta bojjhaṅgā bhāvitā bahulikatā vijjā vimuttiṃ paripūrenti.*” (MN 118)

“Monks. If mindfulness of respiration is cultivated and made much of, the four foundations of mindfulness are fulfilled and perfected. If the four foundations of mindfulness are cultivated and made much of, the seven factors of enlightenment (*bojjhaṅga*) are fulfilled and perfected. If the seven factors of enlightenment are cultivated and made much of, knowledge (*vijjā*) and liberation (*vimutti*) are fulfilled and perfected.”

Here, knowledge means the four path knowledges, and liberation means the four fruition knowledges. The essential meaning is that if mindfulness of

respiration is practiced diligently for days and months, the work of the four foundations of mindfulness, the seven factors of enlightenment, and of knowledge and liberation are automatically accomplished. The foundations of mindfulness, the factors of enlightenment, and knowledge and liberation comprise the thirty-seven requisites of enlightenment (*bodhipakkhiyadhammā*) so the development of the thirty-seven requisites of enlightenment are automatically fulfilled.

This ends the exposition of the introduction to the Ānāpānassati Sutta.

VII

Posture for Meditation

Idha pana bhikkhave bhikkhu araṇṇagatovā rukkhamūlagatovā suñṇāgāragatovā nisīdati pallaṅkaṃ ābhujitvā¹ ujum kāyaṃ paṇidhāya parimukhaṃ² satim upaṭṭhapetvā.

“Here, monks, having gone to a forest, or to the root of a tree, or to an empty place, having sat cross-legged with his body erect, he keeps his attention firmly fixed on the object of meditation.”

This ends the posture for meditation.

VIII

The First Tetrad

So satova assasati satova passasati.

Dīghaṃ vā assasanto ‘Dīghaṃ assasāmī’ti pajānāti. Dīghaṃ vā passasanto ‘Dīghaṃ passasāmī’ti pajānāti. Rassaṃ vā assasanto ‘Rassaṃ assasāmī’ti pajānāti. Rassaṃ vā passasanto ‘Rassaṃ passasāmī’ti pajānāti.

‘Sabbakāyappaṭisaṃvedī assasissāmī’ti sikkhati.

‘Sabbakāyappaṭisaṃvedī passasissāmī’ti sikkhati.

‘Passambhayaṃ kāyasaṅkhāraṃ assasissāmī’ti sikkhati.

‘Passambhayaṃ kāyasaṅkhāraṃ passasissāmī’ti sikkhati.

First Stage: The meditator with steady attention exhales an out-breath and with steady attention inhales an in-breath.

Second Stage: While exhaling a long breath he knows that he exhales a long out-breath. While inhaling a long breath he knows that he inhales a long in-breath.

¹ The Buddha says “*pallaṅkaṃ ābhujitvā*” because the cross-legged posture is especially suitable for meditation. However, any of the four postures diligently adopted will suffice.

² *Parimukhaṃ* means, literally, “in front of his face.” It means he does not look around here and there, but pays attention to his meditation object (of respiration at the nostrils). ed.

‘Samādahaṃ cittaṃ assasissāmī’ti sikkhati. ‘Samādahaṃ cittaṃ passasissāmī’ti sikkhati.

‘Vimocayaṃ cittaṃ assasissāmī’ti sikkhati. ‘Vimocayaṃ cittaṃ passasissāmī’ti sikkhati.

‘Perceiving the mind, I will exhale’ he trains himself. ‘Perceiving the mind, I will inhale’ he trains himself.

‘Delighting the mind, I will exhale’ he trains himself. ‘Delighting the mind, I will inhale’ he trains himself.

‘Concentrating the mind, I will exhale’ he trains himself.

‘Concentrating the mind, I will inhale’ he trains himself.

‘Freeing the mind, I will exhale’ he trains himself. ‘Freeing the mind, I will inhale’ he trains himself.

1. Entering the four jhānas repeatedly to make the perception of the mind extremely clear is “perceiving the mind.”

2. When the perception of the mind is extremely clear, making the mind extremely delighted, by entering the first and second jhānas (which are associated with rapture) repeatedly is “delighting the mind.”

3. When the mind is extremely delighted, making the mind extremely concentrated, by entering the third and fourth jhānas, is “concentrating the mind.”

4. Freeing the mind of obstacles by entering the four jhānas repeatedly is “freeing the mind.”

The Commentary associates this tetrad also with attainment concentration. It, however, contains practices associated with access concentration as well.

This ends the third tetrad.

XIII

The Fourth Tetrad

I shall now explain the fourth tetrad which gives the method of proceeding from mindfulness of respiration to insight.

‘Aniccānupassī assasissāmī’ti sikkhati. ‘Aniccānupassī passasissāmī’ti sikkhati.

‘Virāgānupassī assasissāmī’ti sikkhati. ‘Virāgānupassī passasissāmī’ti sikkhati.

‘Nirodhānupassī assasissāmī’ti sikkhati. ‘Nirodhānupassī passasissāmī’ti sikkhati.

‘Paṭinissaggānupassī assasissāmī’ti sikkhati. ‘Paṭinissaggānupassī passasissāmī’ti sikkhati.

‘Cittasaṅkhārapaṭisaṃvedī assasissāmī’ti sikkhati.

‘Cittasaṅkhārapaṭisaṃvedī passasissāmī’ti sikkhati.

‘Passambhayaṃ cittasaṅkhāraṃ assasissāmī’ti sikkhati.

‘Passambhayaṃ cittasaṅkhāraṃ passasissāmī’ti sikkhati.

‘Perceiving rapture, I will exhale’ he trains himself. ‘Perceiving rapture, I will inhale’ he trains himself.

‘Perceiving bliss, I will exhale’ he trains himself. ‘Perceiving bliss, I will inhale’ he trains himself.

‘Perceiving the mental formations, I will exhale’ he trains himself.

‘Perceiving the mental formations, I will inhale’ he trains himself.

‘Calming the mental formations, I will exhale’ he trains himself.

‘Calming the mental formations, I will inhale’ he trains himself.

1. When the counterpart sign appears, putting forth effort until the attainment of the first and second jhāna, in which rapture (*pīti*) predominates, is what is meant by “perceiving rapture.”

2. Putting forth effort until the attainment of the third jhāna, in which bliss (*sukha*) predominates, is what is meant by “perceiving bliss.”

3. Putting forth effort until the attainment of the fourth jhāna, in which the mental formation (*cittasaṅkhāra*) of equanimity predominates, is what is meant by “perceiving mental formations.”

4. Putting forth effort to calm down the coarse feelings and perceptions is what is meant by “Calming down the mental formations.”

The Commentary associates this tetrad with attainment concentration, but the perceptions of rapture, bliss, and equanimity are also associated with access concentration, which is attained after the first appearance of the counterpart sign.

This ends the second tetrad.

XII

The Third Tetrad

I shall now explain the third tetrad which gives the practice when entering attainment concentration.

‘Cittapaṭisaṃvedī assasissāmī’ti sikkhati. ‘Cittapaṭisaṃvedī

passasissāmī’ti sikkhati.

‘Abhippamodayaṃ cittaṃ assasissāmī’ti sikkhati.

‘Abhippamodayaṃ cittaṃ passasissāmī’ti sikkhati.

While exhaling a short out-breath he knows that he exhales a short out-breath. While inhaling a short in-breath he knows that he inhales a short in-breath.

Third Stage: While exhaling he trains himself to perceive the entire out-breath; its beginning, middle, and end. While inhaling he trains himself to perceive the whole in-breath; its beginning, middle, and end.

Fourth Stage: While exhaling he trains himself to allay and calm down the out-breath. While inhaling he trains himself to allay and calm the in-breath.

In the first stage, the meditator must try to keep the attention firmly fixed on the out-breath and in-breath.

In the second stage the meditator must try to perceive the long and short out and in-breath respectively.

In the third stage the meditator must try to perceive the entire out and in-breath — the beginning, middle, and end.

In the fourth stage the meditator must try to allay and calm down the out and in-breath until it becomes extremely subtle.

In the first stage it is not yet possible to perceive such details as the lengths of the out and in-breath. In this stage one has to keep one’s attention on the tip of the nose or the upper lip, as the case may be, wherever the striking of the out and in-breath can be clearly grasped. The meditator must try to be aware of every out and in-breath that occurs. The meditator must try for one hour, or two hours, or for whatever length of time he is able to put forth effort, during which time the attention must be firmly tied, as it were, to the tip of the nose, or to the upper lip as the case may be, and the meditator must persist until such time as every out and in-breath is perceived without any breath escaping his attention.

In the second stage, when the keeping of the attention on the out and in-breaths has been mastered, the meditator must try to perceive the long out and in-breath as long and the short out and in-breath as short. Even during the space of one sitting, long as well as short breaths occur. Every long and short breath must be so perceived, and the perception must cover every breath, not one out-breath or one in-breath being missed. When the breaths are exhaled and inhaled quickly they are short. Thus perceiving the long and short out and in-breaths consists of perceiving the slow and quick out and in-breaths.

In the third stage, when the perception of the long and short out and in-breaths has been mastered, every breath occurring in the body must be perceived in its entirety, right from its starting point within the body, through its middle, to the point where it ends within the body; the extremities of the breaths (start or end as the case may be) being at the tip of the nose and at the navel.

In the fourth stage, when the perception of every breath in its entirety has been mastered, the coarse and rough breaths must be calmed down and allayed by degrees, making them more and more gentle and subtle, until the stage is reached when it seems that the out-breaths and in-breaths have entirely disappeared.

IX

The Method of the Commentary

In the Commentary there are three main stages of effort:

1. Counting (*gaṇanā*): here, the attention is placed on the out-breath and in-breath by the method of counting them.
2. Connection (*anubandhanā*): here, the attention is placed continuously on the out-breath and in-breath and is made stronger and firmer, but the counting is discontinued.
3. Fixing (*ṭhapanā*): here, the effort is intensified until the higher stages of attainments are achieved.

There are two places where the out-breath and in-breath may be grasped: at the tip of the nose or at the upper lip. To some people the striking of the breath on the tip of the nose is clearer, while to others the striking of the breath on the upper lip is clearer. Attention must be placed on the spot where the perception is clear (This spot may be called the “point of touch”). At the outset, effort must be made to keep the attention on the “point of touch” by counting the number of times the out-breath and in-breath strike the spot. In the next stage, effort must be made to keep the attention on the out-breath and in-breath without the aid of counting. Finally, the effort is continued to make the attention stronger and firmer.

There are two methods of counting, slow and fast, according as the attention is weak or strong. At first, the mind is unsteady and fickle, and the attention is weak, thus one is not attentive or mindful of every breath that occurs. Some breaths escape the attention. Only those breaths that are clearly perceived with mindfulness are counted, while those that are not clearly perceived are left out of the reckoning. Counting thus progresses slowly. It is the slow stage.

Counting is done in six cycles (*vāra*). In the first cycle, counting proceeds from one to five; then, in the second, from one to six; in the third, from one to seven; in the fourth, from one to eight; in the fifth, from one to nine; and in the sixth, from one to ten. After the sixth cycle, one must begin again from the first cycle. Sometimes, these six cycles are counted as one.

First, place the attention on the “point of touch,” and when an out-breath or in-breath is clearly perceived, start counting “one.” Continue counting

the out and in-breaths become calmed down and allayed of their own accord even from the counting stage, and in my experience, I have come across persons whose out and in-breaths automatically disappeared.

Herein, this is what the Commentary says: “*Gaṇanāvaseneva pana manasikārakālatō pabhutī anukkāmato oḷārika-assāsapassāsa nirodhavasena kāyadarathe vūpasante kāyopi cittampi lahukaṃ hoti, sarīraṃ ākāse laṅghanākārappattaṃ viya hoti.*” “After he has given his attention to counting, when the bodily disturbance has been stilled by the gradual cessation of gross in-breaths and out-breaths, then both the body and the mind become light: the physical body is as though it were ready to leap up into the air.” (Vism.282)

I have known people whose bodies have risen about the height of four fingers’ breadth in the air.

When the stage of this disappearance of the out and in-breaths is reached without taking the attention off the “point of touch,” an attempt must be made to perceive the disappeared out and in-breaths, and when they are perceived again clearly, the counterpart signs appear. At that stage the hindrances, such as fear, dread, sleep, indolence, *etc.*, are overcome, and *jhāna* is attained.

This ends the reconciliation between the Commentary and the Pāli Text.

This also ends the counting, connection, and fixing methods of the Commentary where seven stages are given viz., counting (*gaṇanā*), connection (*anubandhanā*), touching (*phusanā*), fixing (*ṭhapanā*), observing (*sallakkhaṇā*), turning away (*vivaṭṭhanā*), and purification (*pārisuddhi*), are given.

The first tetrad is the main and essential stage. At the present day, if work in the first tetrad is successfully accomplished, one can proceed to tranquillity and insight meditation as one desires.

Here ends the first tetrad.

XI

The Second Tetrad

I shall now show the second tetrad which is to be attempted or practised in the fixing stage, which is the stage of the attainment concentration (*appanā jhāna*).

‘Pītippaṭisaṃvedī assasissāmī’ti sikkhati, ‘Pītippaṭisaṃvedī passasissāmī’ti sikkhati.

‘Sukhappaṭisaṃvedī assasissāmī’ti sikkhati, sukhappaṭisaṃvedī passasissāmī’ti sikkhati.

necessary to trace the entire breath from beginning to end. All that is necessary is that, while keeping the attention fixed on the “point of touch,” additional endeavour has to be made to be aware of the lengths of the breaths that brush the “point of touch.” Long breaths brush the spot for a long time while short breaths brush the spot for a short period. The mind has the ability to become extremely expansive and thus it is possible to be aware of the long and short breaths that go out and come in even while keeping one’s attention steadily fixed on the “point of touch.”

When the long and short breaths have been clearly perceived, effort has to be made to perceive the entire structure of each breath — the beginning, middle, and end — even while keeping one’s attention fixed on the “point of touch.” In accordance with the Pāli Text which says “*Sabbakāyappaṭisaṃvedī assasissāmī’ti sikkhati. Sabbakāyappaṭisaṃvedī passasissāmī’ti sikkhati.*” Which means that when an out-breath is released it must not be done unmindfully, one must be fully aware of it right from its start within the body and follow it along its course until it reaches its end within the body at the “point of touch.” It is with this added endeavour of being aware of it in its totality that the breath must be released. Similarly, when an in-breath is inhaled one must do so with awareness right from its start within the body at the “point of touch” and follow it until it reaches its end at the navel within the body.

While thus following the out and in-breath from beginning to end, the attention must continue to be fixed at the “point of touch.” The breath must not be followed from beginning to end by allowing the attention to leave the “point of touch.” If endeavour is made with resolution to follow the out and in-breaths without, at the same time, allowing the attention to leave the “point of touch,” then, even while the attention continues to be fixed on the “point of touch,” the form and shape of the out and in-breaths will gradually appear clearly in their entirety.

When the beginning, middle, and end of the out and in-breaths have been clearly perceived, if the rough and coarse out and in-breaths do not become automatically calmed and allayed to the point of disappearance then, in accordance with the text of the fourth section of the first tetrad of the Pāli Text, wherein it is said, “*Passambhayaṃ kāyasaṅknāraṃ assasissāmī’ti sikkhati, passambhayaṃ kāyasaṅkhāraṃ passasissāmī’ti sikkhati,*” a special and additional endeavour must be made to make them more and more subtle and the out-breath and in-breath must be released with the resolution to make such an endeavour. The process must not be left unmindfully to take its own course. In the method given in the Commentary, however, it is stated that

two, three, four, *etc.*, when the ensuing out-breaths and in-breaths are clearly perceived. If any of them are not clearly perceived, stop the progressive counting by continuing to count one, one, one, *etc.*, until the next clear perception of out-breath and in-breath, when the counting advances to two. When the count reaches five, in the first cycle, start again from one. Proceed in this manner until the sixth cycle is completed. Since only those breaths that are clearly perceived are counted, it is called the slow count.

When the counting has been done repeatedly many times, the number of breaths that are clearly perceived will increase. The spacing between each progressive count will decrease. When every breath is clearly perceived, the counting will progress uninterruptedly and become fast. One must proceed until no breath is missed out from the counting.

It is not necessary to count orally. A mental count is sufficient. Some people prefer to count orally. Others count one bead at the end of each sixth cycle, and they resolve to count a certain number of rounds of beads a day. The essential thing is to make the perception clear and the attention strong and firm.

When the stage is reached when every out and in-breath is clearly perceived without the aid of counting, when no out and in-breath escapes the attention, the counting must be discontinued and the connection method adopted. Here, the connection method means putting forth effort to keep the attention continuously on the “point of touch,” and to perceive every out and in-breath without counting them. It means repeating the effort made in the counting stage in order to make perception clearer and attention stronger and firmer, but without the aid of counting.

How long is this effort by the connection method to be made? Until the counterpart sign (*paṭibhāga nimitta*) — that arises at a higher level of concentration — appears.

When attention becomes fixed on the out and in-breath (i.e. when a certain degree of concentration is achieved), manifestations appear, such as masses of fluffy wool, or gusts of wind, or clusters of stars, or gems or pearls, or strings of pearls, *etc.*, in various shapes, groups, and colours. These are the counterpart signs.

The connection method must be maintained until such time as the counterpart signs appear clearly whenever effort is made.

During the counting and connection stages, attention must still be kept on the “point of touch.” From the time that the counterpart signs appear, effort must be made according to the fixing (*ṭhapanā*) method. Counterpart signs are

manifestations and resemble new mental objects. Not being natural phenomena, they easily disappear, and once they disappear, it is difficult to invoke them again. Hence, when counterpart signs appear, it is necessary to put forth special effort with increased energy in fixing the attention on them to prevent them from disappearing and to make them become clearer day by day. The putting forth of this special additional effort is known as the fixing method.

When the fixing stage is reached, the seven unsuitable things (*asappāya*) must be shunned, while the seven suitable ones must be cultivated. The ten proficiencies in ecstatic concentration (*appanā kosalla*) must be accomplished.

The seven unsuitable things are: 1) place, 2) alms-food resort, 3) talk, 4) friends and associates, 5) food, 6) climate, and 7) body postures, which cause diminution of meditative effort. The seven suitable things are the same seven items, but which cause increase in meditative effort.

The ten proficiencies in ecstatic concentration are: 1) cleanliness of body and utensils, 2) harmonising the five controlling faculties, 3) proficiency in the object of attention, 4) restraining the exuberant mind, 5) uplifting the depressed mind, 6) making the dry mind pleasant, 7) composure towards the balanced mind, 8) avoiding persons who do not possess concentration, 9) associating with persons who possess concentration, and 10) having a mind that is always inclined towards jhāna.

Equipping oneself with and fulfilling these aforementioned qualities, one must make special exertion for days and months to fix one's attention on the counterpart signs so that they become steady. This fixing effort must be put forth until the fourth jhāna is attained.

The images of out-breath and in-breath that appear in the counting stage are called preparatory signs (*parikamma nimitta*). In the connecting stage, they are called acquired signs (*uggaha nimitta*). The manifestations that appear in the fixing stage are called counterpart signs (*paṭibhāga nimitta*).

The concentration that is achieved during the appearance of preparatory signs and acquired signs is preparatory concentration. The concentration that is developed with the attention fixed on counterpart signs during the fixing stage, but before the attainment of jhāna is called access concentration. The four jhānas achieved by the first tetrad are called attainment concentration.

In the counting and connection stages, the out-breath and in-breath, which are the objects of meditation, gradually become allayed and calmed down, and ultimately are apt to become so subtle that they appear to have disappeared altogether. When that occurs, one must continue to fix the attention on the "point of touch" and must attempt to grasp the out-breath

and in-breath at that point. When the out-breath and in-breath are perceived again clearly, it will not be long before the counterpart sign appears. Then jhāna will be attained. Here, jhāna means the attainment concentration of the sensual realm, which has overcome the five hindrances (*pañca nīvaraṇa*).

The process of calming down the out and in-breath to the point of disappearance, which occurs in the method given in the Commentary, occurs automatically and one need not strive for it. I have seen meditators in whom out and in-breath have calmed down to the point of disappearance. However, one needs to strive for it when the connection stage is reached, as it says in the Pāḷi Text: "As he exhales he trains himself to allay and calm down the out-breath. As he inhales he trains himself to allay and calm the in-breath."

When the apparent disappearance of the out and in-breath occurs, people who are inexperienced in meditation are liable to think that the breathing has actually stopped, so they may abandon meditation. Let all be heedful of this fact.

X

The Commentary Reconciled With the Text

We now need to reconcile the method given in the Commentary [the Visuddhimagga, not the Ānāpānassati Sutta Commentary ed.] with the Pāḷi Text.

The counting stage, when the attention is fixed on the "point of touch" and the attempt is made to make that attention strong and firm by the method of counting, is the first stage of the first tetrad of the Pāḷi Text. In this stage, the main work is to overcome the habit of the mind that repeatedly wanders away from the point of attention to other objects, and it is for this purpose that the method of counting is adopted. The time is not yet ripe for perceiving the long and short breaths, but in accordance with the Pāḷi Text — "*Satova Assasati, Satova Passasati*" — effort must be confined to keeping the attention fixed on the out-breath and in-breath.

Herein, this is what the Commentary says: "*Bahivisaṭṭavittakkavicchedaṃ katvā assāpappassāsārammaṇe sati samthaṇṭhāpanaṭṭhaṃ yeva hi gaṇanā'ti*." "For counting is simply a device for settling mindfulness on the in-breaths and out-breaths as object by cutting off the external dissipation of applied thoughts." (Vism.280)

After the counting stage, when the connection stage is reached, effort must be put forth according to the second stage of the first tetrad. In accordance with the text, "*Dīghaṃ vā assasanto dīghaṃ assasissamī'tī pajānāti, etc.*", attention has to be fixed on the "point of touch" and, with the attention so fixed, the long and short have to be perceived. In doing this it is not