



MEDITATIVE DEFILEMENTS

UPAKKILESA DHARMA

GAMPAHA PEMASIRI MAHĀTHERA

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Meditative Defilements - Upakkilesa Dharama

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Author's preface

When I was about twelve years of age, I learned yoga from my school principal. Later, I studied hypnotism and similar technique from teachers who came to Sri Lanka from India. These motivated my search about the functioning of the mind. In this process, I met skilled mediation teachers. This was how I was prompted towards *samatha* and *vipassanā* practice.

From youth till my middle years, with great liking and interest, I taught preliminary meditation to *yogis*. This brought me a certain reputation and many students, both Sri Lankans and foreigners. However, with time, I lost my interest in teaching. The reason was that increasingly, the minds of the *yogis* I came across were muddled. By the time I help them disentangle their minds, they revert to their former states. Upakkilesa - also known as meditative defilements - are the main reason for this to happen to *yogis*. This is why I thought of discussing these *upakkilesa*.*

With *mettā*

Gampaha Pemasiri Mahāthera

11 February 2015
Sumathipāla NāHimi Senasun Arana
Kanduboda, Delgoda,
Sri Lanka.

* Compiled from the afternoon *Dhamma* discussions at the Monastery.

To the reader

A Buddhist is one who takes refuge in the noble triple gem, with a view to realizing the four noble truths or *nibbāna* (enlightenment). Taking refuge in or believing in the triple gem in itself, does not bring one to *nibbāna*. One needs to exert wholesome effort based on that belief. One needs to engage in samatha (tranquility) and *vipassanā* (insight) meditation. This may also be described as engaging in the way of the *satipaṭṭhāna* (the establishment of mindfulness) or doing *vipassanā*.

In this extremely long *saṃsāric* (round of rebirth) journey, many who have developed their *pāramitā* (perfections: or tranquility and insight practice) and *indriya* (faculties) have attained path-fruit by listening to a simple discourse - based on the three salient features - from a Buddha or a disciple of the Buddha. Especially in the time of the Buddha, or in the times that followed immediately after, stories abound of the large numbers of monks, nuns, and those of various levels of piety and purity who have realized *nibbāna*. While this is so, an impartial enquiry in to the *saṃsāric* situation shows that attainment to at least the first stage of *nibbāna* is not an easy task. The following analogy from a *Dhamma* publication illustrates this well: “If a person were to receive five hundred lashes with a crow-bar on his back every morning, noon, and evening for a hundred years, it would be acceptable if it ensured ones’ realization of the four noble truths.” This shows the value and difficulty of realizing *nibbāna*.

What we need to understand from this is that we must exert wholesome effort, make whatever sacrifice, and undergo any difficulty to attain the first stage of *nibbāna*.

While the numbers of those who were fortunate to attain *nibbāna* with ease have gradually decreased, what is greatly felt today is the need for regular advice and correction on the path to *nibbāna*. Therefore, those who are keen on practicing this path should consider those who exert little or no effort on it as unsuitable companions who would shorten the life of the dispensation.

At present, it is evident that meditation schools in countries like Myanmar, Sri Lanka, and Thailand guide their students in *samatha* and *vipassanā* meditation. It is a great noble service to the dispensation. Those who follow residential meditation programs at these centers gradually develop *sati*, *samādhi*, and *paññā* (wisdom). Amongst them, a few may enter the path to *nibbāna*, in even a small measure. Nevertheless, such application of effort will considerably assist their realization of the *Dhamma*, in time.

Those who are not laden with *diṭṭhi* (rigid views) and opinions arising from a confused minds, who are virtuous, have *saddhā* (confidence in the triple-gem), make the right effort, and are alert and prudent, are able to go a long way on the path to *nibbāna* if they also seek a teacher's instructions.

In recent times, it was the Most Venerable U Sobhana Mahāthera who popularized the noble line of meditation teachers in the name of "Mahāsi". The spread of this practical method of insight meditation in both the east and the west began over fifty years ago. It was established in our country by the Most Venerable Kahatapitiye Sri Sumathipāla Mahāthera, the Most Venerable U Sujātha Mahāthera and others with exceptional experience in the method. With the Kanduboda Vipassanā Meditation Centre as the focal point, the Most Venerable Sri Sumathipāla Mahāthera was

responsible for the growth of meditation centers and yogis, both in Sri Lanka and overseas. The author of this valuable body of *Dhamma*, the Most Venerable Gampaha Pemasiri, Abbot of the Kanduboda Sri Sumathipāla Nā Himi Arana, trained under the Most Venerable Sri Sumathipāla Mahāthera, and who pioneered the training and teaching of many *yogi*'s, qualifies, in the full sense of the word, to be called a meditation master.

At present, one finds many who are considered to be, or call themselves, meditation teachers. Other than the ability of these well-intending people to deliver lectures on meditation, it would be worthwhile to enquire how many could truly guide an aspirant in meditation to *nibbāna*. It is common to hear of many such aspirants getting stuck in wrong attitudes, deceit, conceit, and wrong views.

Frequently, meditators may find themselves being deceived as they progress in meditation. Some experience a novel mental awakening, levity, or mental clarity, and may wrongly believe that they have attained *jhānic* fruition (an absorption) or a path-fruition. At times, these *upakkilesa* (meditative defilements) can be seen in meditation teachers too.

In this day and age it is increasingly seen that the *Dhamma* is being mis-presented by both the laity and the ordained. These mis-presentations may cause confusion, conceit and views in those with minimal virtue. Hence it is no secret that some may fall prey to the *upakkilesa* that come in the guise of faith, wisdom, or generosity. This being so, keen meditators, too, can be misled by *upakkilesa*.

The most respected Gampaha Pemasiri Mahāthera makes a pertinent *Dhamma* analysis here which can be more

instructive to present-day meditation teachers than to students of meditation. Why? Because there are many instances where meditation teachers distort and fail to follow what they have learned through a good lineage of teachers, and so confuse and abandon their students. Due to such erroneous teaching, the noble and practical path to *nibbāna* has been confused and students left with wrong attitudes. As a result, they may even fail to develop their meditative practice this entire life.

The practical experiences and the analysis of the *upakkileśa* of the meditative mind shown here will be significantly practical and important. Repeated usage of this book will help rectify wrong views and skewed attitudes. Very sincerely, we state that this may serve as an invaluable handbook to meditation teachers.

Most honorably we accord blessings of good health and long life on the most respected Gampaha Pemasiri Mahāthera and may he serve the present dispensation by guiding those beings that come to follow the Buddha.

May the blessings of the Noble Triple Gem be with you all.

**Most Venerable Inguruwatte
Piyanda Mahā Nāyaka Thera**

Chief Meditation Advisor
Chief Prelate of the Sri Lanka Swejīn Mahā Nikāya
Abbot of the International Siyane Vipassanā Meditation Centre
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The most suited person for preliminary meditation practice

Let's say that someone comes to train in meditation. One who does not know anything about it. Absolutely nothing. He hasn't met any teachers. He hasn't listened to *Dhamma* sermons, nor learnt it from books. This is the most suited person. It is very difficult to teach those who have read an array of books, learnt meditation from various teachers, and have attended meditation classes here and there. Their minds are veiled. Closed. It is not easy to explain to them the various aspects of the practice. This is why it has become so difficult to teach meditation these days.

It is difficult to fill such a person's "bucket". They are filled with ideas. Since they are filled, they cannot be taught. It takes an excessive amount of time to remove their habits and practices. On the other hand, it is easy to guide a person who has no prior knowledge. Why? His mind has only sensual desire. His mind has only aversion. There is only sloth and torpor. There is only restlessness and remorse. There is only doubt. There are only his *kilesa* (defilements). This person may have a particular problem. Maybe a problem related to the spouse. Or a problem related to his son or daughter. Or a problem related to his work place. But that is all there is. It is very easy to teach such a person the preliminary practice of meditation.

Meditation versus preliminary meditation practice

The word meditation means "to develop". It refers to repeatedly building on what one has trained to do. Before one could meditate one needs to train in it and this is referred

to as the preliminary meditation practice. Meditation is really only a word. Most do not meditate. They merely say: “We are coming for meditation”, “We are going for meditation.” What they actually do is a preparatory exercise. Therefore, it is more accurate if they say: “We are going to train in meditation”, or “We are going for a preliminary training in meditation”. Keeping the precepts is necessary for this preparatory stage. Restraint is necessary. Restraint is a part of virtue. One’s livelihood must be pure too. One needs to be sincere in his interactions and dealings with others. One cannot be manipulative or shrewd. One’s words and thoughts must, at all times, be congruent with one’s actions. One cannot be in the habit of saying one thing and doing another. However, it is difficult for one to be perfect in this way. It is only *arahants* (noble individuals who has eradicated all *kilesa*) who can be like this. However, if one can perfect this way of being, one has made it. But invariably one fails. There is always some deception or trickery. There is always a mismatch or incongruity.

Being sincere in the ordinary world is a different matter. It may depend on one’s friendships, relationships, or teacher-student associations. One may not lie to his teacher, or to his parents, or to his friends. But he may lie to others. He may lie to a person who is not his friend or relative. Do you see the difference? One who is committed and thorough in the preliminary practice of meditation will not be like that. Now do you understand how perfectly one needs to be restrained and disciplined if he is to train in meditation? Many facets have to be developed.

Preliminary meditation practice is not meditation. *Jhāna* and the path-knowledges being exempted, all else is considered as preliminary meditation practice. Why is this

so? If one's preliminary meditation practice is abandoned for some reason, that person reverts to his old ways. Let's say that he came very close to attaining a path-knowledge. And then something causes him to abandon his practice. Other than a *Mahābodhisattva* (great Buddha aspirant), all others revert to their earlier nature. Let's consider a monk who is meditating well, doing well with the preliminary training. After a while, he may abandon his training. Later, he may even disrobe. With this decline, the *nīvaraṇa* (hindrances) start working within him more than before. Why is that? Because he failed to enter proper meditation. On the other hand, if a yogi had progressed in *samatha* (tranquility meditation) and reached a *jhāna*, he will be that way for a long time. Having mastery over a *jhāna* is meditation. In *vipassanā* (insight meditation), meditation is the experiencing of the *bojjhaṅga* (factors of enlightenment) after a path-knowledge. A *jhāna* is attained with the suppression of the *nīvaraṇa*. A path-knowledge is experienced when the *nīvaraṇa* are eradicated. On the other hand, in preliminary meditation, the *nīvaraṇa* are only suppressed. That is why it's not prudent to evaluate oneself as "my *nīvaraṇa* are few" or "my mind is well concentrated." It is alright to be tranquil, but these states are not stable. Without giving oneself credit, one must continue with the meditation training.

When one continues with the preliminary meditation practice, one sees the inadequacies in his restraint. It is here that the *yogi* needs to practice *manasikāra* (attention to the present moment/noting the present moment). It is not the existing level of restraint that one needs to note, but rather the inadequacies in one's restraint. Let's take the example of a *yogi* who goes for his meals, highly restrained. This

restraint is an aspect of virtue required in the preliminary training. Let's say this was a young man. He sees a beautiful young girl. A thought may occur to him: "I wish I didn't see her." He may also get the fear: "I wonder if my *nīvaraṇa* will arise." There is *vyāpāda* (aversion). If not, *kāmacchanda* (desire) may arise. At this point he is not restrained. In such situation, how does a regular yogi practice *manasikāra*? He notes the objects that arose. That is, the beautiful young girl. Noting as seeing a "girl" or "tree" or "dog" is of no use. By doing so one may have *manasikāra* but there is no *sati* (mindfulness) or *sampajañña* (clear comprehension). They are not present because the *nīvaraṇa* arose in his mind. On another occasion, let's say, he also observed the mind that arose when he saw the girl. Let's also say that when he saw the mind, he saw that it remained unattached to the object, the girl. And that it remained not averse, as well. Now, that is where *sati* will arise. Then where does *sampajañña* function? - where the mind remained free from craving and aversion.

A *yogi* must be aware of everything that arises. If what arises is a *nīvaraṇa*, to note it as "*nīvaraṇa*", is not correct. If one so notes, then one should also note the word used. In other words, one should note the mind that arises. For instance, when one is eating, one may observe a mind state that arises regarding a person close by, or the food. It is these objects that arises that one needs to note. In this way, many objects may arise. One needs to reflect on them. If the object comes up again, then the *yogi* must note it again. This is what the *yogi* needs to do, rather than remain restrained and repress the *nīvaraṇa* that has arisen. That serves no useful purpose. One may become restrained, but may fail to observe the *nīvaraṇa* within that restraint. There is no progress there.

One remains at the same level because he failed to note the *nīvaraṇa*. But there is some degree of calm. That is because his virtue has reduced his restlessness. When one is training in meditation, it is not only *nīvaraṇa* that arise. Thoughts like “The Buddha was a person like this” or “He has said such things”, also arises. If he fails to note objects like these too, he does not progress anymore. These type of thought objects arise due to his *saddhā* (confidence in the Triple Gem).

This *saddhā* occurs, slightly, as it’s opposite, the *nīvaraṇa* of *kāmacchanda*, gets suppressed. So, even if one sees the Buddha, one should note it as “seeing”. If one thinks, one needs to note it as “thinking”. Sometimes *Dhamma* facts may come to mind. This is also due to *saddhā*. At this juncture, there is the possibility that the *yogi* would deceive himself. As a result, he may keep thinking about the Buddha, and come to discuss meditation and even to teach me. A skilled teacher must tell such a *yogi* that such talk is useless. My own teacher used to say so. I too used to say so, in the past. However, *yogis* today tend get offended when the teacher says so, and may even go away. Then I get concerned because I haven’t the opportunity to train these *yogis* correctly in meditation practice. So, whether the object that arises is about the virtues of the Buddha, or the *Dhamma*, or the *Sangha* (community of Buddhist monks), one needs to note all such phenomenon.

Having noted in this manner, one must return to his main object of meditation practice. When one trains in this manner, one’s *kāmacchanda* becomes weakened and *saddhā* grows. These two aspects occur in balance. This means that the *yogi* is noting correctly. The second *nīvaraṇa* is *vyāpāda*. As *kāmacchanda* and *saddhā* balance, the *yogis*’ tendency to conflict and *vyāpāda* will reduce. This is how one approaches

samādhi (concentration), and so his mind does not leave the primary object of his meditation practice. The reason for this is the increase in *virīya* (effort). *Virīya* refers to the nature of not letting go of the wholesome. It is not about sitting rigidly. Rather, it means that the *yogi* is well established in his primary object of meditation - whether it be awareness of the rising and falling of the abdomen, or in-and-out breathing, or any other.

In the past, I used to meditate a lot. I meditated till seven or eight in the evening. One day, two *yogis* were talking softly where I was meditating. I heard them talk. I knew that. I noted it. At that point, I was not with my primary object of meditation. After noting their talk I should have got back to my practice. Instead, I clung to their talk. I was attached to it. After a little while, I got the thought “I must go tell-off that man.” But I was a little lazy. Then I shouted very loudly “Will you shut up there!” This shattered the practice of other *yogis* who were seated there and who were well into their meditation. They all dispersed in about half an hour. This news reached my teacher and he said to me: “Pemasiri, your meditation is pointless.” I was so ashamed of what I did. Now this is what happens. It is the nature of the preliminary meditation practice. This occurs due to not recognizing arisen objects. I had to only note the arisen object and know it as a sound. Instead, I got entangled in it. I wasn’t here, I was there. This is where we go wrong. Such is the habit of our minds that it looks to placing the blame on someone else. That mind is what we need to note. But what we note instead are things like sounds. This is useless. It serves no purpose even if one noted like that for a hundred years without noting the mind that arises within. *Virīya* grows when one observes one’s mind. *Virīya* grows when one observes the *nīvaraṇa*

that arise within. *Viriya* means generating the wholesome that has not yet arisen.

It is good to see the *nīvaraṇa*. One cannot eradicate the *nīvaraṇa* without seeing them. Many stop their training in meditation when they start seeing the *nīvaraṇa*. Or, they get annoyed. Or else, they develop an aversion with the person/s in the adjoining *kuti* (shelter/hut). They do not see the *nīvaraṇa* growing within them. It is when one sees the *nīvaraṇa* that one is able to see one's shortcomings. But we do not see them. Instead we look for others' shortcomings. If a *yogi* understands this method correctly, he would not look for any more teachers nor run here-there to meditation centers and monasteries. His mind would be suitable for any meditation method. He can practice any method of meditation. Then there will be no talk as: "our meditation method is the right one, others are not."

***Sati* (mindfulness)**

Sati arises in one who does the preliminary meditation practice well. When *sati* arises, one gradually sees objects with correct knowledge. Seeing with correct knowledge means that one has *manasikāra*. When one practices *manasikāra*, one can note without attachment or aversion. That means *sati* is getting developed. But *sati* does not arise all the time. It only arises on and off. When *sati* is present, one sees the true nature of objects. One understands that there is no fixed object or entity. This is when *sampajañña* is ready to arise in the *yogi*. It is not arisen yet. Not even *sati* has been well established. They arise methodically, little by little. With the arising of *sati* and *sampajañña*, *samādhi* occurs. When *samādhi* arises, one experiences a great

calmness. At this stage, *sati* arises for longer periods in a day. This means that if earlier one experienced *sati* for only a minute or two a day, now one experiences it for ten or fifteen minutes a day. To experience ten or fifteen minutes of *sati* is a considerable progress.

It is when one experiences such periods of *sati* that *saddhā* begins to grow. One begins to incline to meditation. One sees the value of the preliminary practice. This is because the earlier restless mind has faded away. With experiencing a little calm in this manner, one's preliminary meditation practice goes well. Let's say one was calm and mindful for two minutes. These two minutes will ensure about two hours of good preliminary meditation. This is the result of calmness. And, if one has about ten minutes of *sati*, one would have a longer time at his preliminary practice.

Sati is required for preliminary meditation practice. *Sampajañña* too is required. Though *sati* does not arise all the time, *manasikāra* can occur at all times. To know that one object has passed and to note the next arising object is *sampajañña*. It is here that the *yogi* can think "I am noting well" or "The way I have noted is good. This can give rise to the *nīvaraṇa* of *thina-middha*. Why? One has abandoned the primary object of his meditation practice. He has not noted that his primary object has passed. The common error that yogis do is letting go of the primary object. This stifles the growth of the wholesome quality of *virīya*. Hence, *Thina-middha* stifles *virīya*.

So, *thina-middha* is absent when *sati* and *sampajañña* are present - noting the object as it is, without changing it, and being with it with *sampajañña*. For instance, when one is engaged in walking meditation, one would note a second object that may come up, and then revert to noting the

primary walking process. One also must take care to note the second object without attachment or aversion, i.e., with *sati*. Then *saddhā*, *virīya* and *sati* arises in the *yogi*. This process should be done continuously in the preliminary meditation practice. If not, there can be no progress. Nothing can be done if *sati* does not arise, or if *sampajañña* does not arise. But what one constantly needs is *manasikāra*. This constant *manasikāra* paves the conditions for *sati* and *sampajañña* to arise. What is the reason for *sati* and *sampajañña* not to occur in us? It is because of unnecessary talking. While having one's meals a *yogi* may talk such frivolities like: "When did you come?" or "It is about four days since I came here". This is why *yogis* are advised: "Do not talk", "Do not talk", "Maintain *manasikāra*" "Maintain *manasikāra*". Talking is damaging in two ways: firstly, it robs one of one's attention to the present moment, *manasikāra*. Secondly, it lengthens the time and effort one has to exert to establish *manasikāra*. If one normally takes a week to establish *manasikāra*, due to talking, it would take longer than even three weeks. What one could have attained in a week is torpedoed because of one day of talking. Talking is an enemy. A big enemy. On the other hand, *saddhā*, *virīya* and *sati* develops easily in one who has *manasikāra* and notes well. And the hindrance of *kāmacchanda*, *vyāpāda*, and *thina-middha* diminishes. It is because of the fading of these *nīvaraṇa* that the *yogi* makes progress in his practice. Then one may entertain the thought that one's preliminary meditation is going well. When the mind thinks so, one's noting process can lower a little. This happens when one commends oneself and his noting process, failing to note the next mind state without attachment and aversion. He fails to note the thought that says he noted well. *Uddhacca* is the *nīvaraṇa* that arises here. If not, the *nīvaraṇa* of *vicikicchā* arises. Mostly, it is *uddhacca*. A little *māna*

(conceit) is the cause for this to happen. Then one notes objects intermingled with *māna*. With this deviance the *yogi* begins to compare himself with others. This comparison happens without his explicit knowledge. This changes the nature of his *sati*. As a consequence, *samādhi* eludes him. This always happens when *sati* and *sampajañña* are absent in the *yogi*'s noting process. Because of this absence of *sati* and *sampajañña* there is a rise in *uddhacca* and a lowering of *samādhi*. This process is a barrier to the occurrence of *samādhi*. When *samādhi* is absent, the next object is noted with *vitakka* (applied thought). But if one noted the object without *vitakka*, there will be no *uddhacca*. Then, *samādhi* can arise.

***Nīvaraṇa* (hindrances)**

One should not get angry at the *nīvaraṇa*. Nor should one be afraid of them. When *kāmacchanda* arises, it must be observed. It should not be repressed. When *vyāpāda* arises, it should not be repressed. When *thina-middha* arise, it should not be repressed. When *uddhacca* arises, it should not be repressed. Repression only denies one the opportunity to see the true nature of the object. It only results in creating a coarse pressure on oneself. *Samādhi* does not occur when this happens. No does *sampajañña* occur. But many think that there is a *Samādhi* in such a repression. It is not so. It is only a thought of clinging: “I will not let these thoughts in,” and an aversion to seeing the *nīvaraṇa*. If one sees the *nīvaraṇa* clearly, *sampajañña* will arise.

Manasikāra exposes a *nīvaraṇa*. The *nīvaraṇa* is seen and recognized by *sampajañña*. But many *yogis* do not let *sampajañña* arise because they repress the *nīvaraṇa*. There is an aversion to their arising. The reason for this aversion is

that they have been negatively influenced by society's way of thinking. We are used to judging people in our society as: "That one is bad", "This one is right", or "That one is good." We have always judged people, actions, and thoughts. This judging process is the reason why we fear the arising of our *nīvaraṇa*. But if a yogi pays thorough attention to his *nīvaraṇa*, he can lessen these habits and tendencies. The way he thinks about society will change. When the *nīvaraṇa* lessens, he would see the remaining *nīvaraṇa* better.

So, when one sees the *nīvaraṇa* a little, a few of one's habits come undone. Then more and more *nīvaraṇa* are seen. One begins to truly understand that he possess such and such *nīvaraṇa*. This understanding comes from the reduction of some of his earlier-said habits. With fewer habits, the mind states of *kāmacchanda*, *vyāpāda* etc., gets better exposed. More and more of his *nīvaraṇa* becomes apparent. However, the *yogi* becomes fearful when this happens. Due to this fear, the *yogi* engages in activities other than meditation practice. Even more than what they experience at home, they find that their minds scatter when they come for meditation practice - it seems as if *kāmacchanda* has increased, *vyāpāda* has increased. This reason the *yogi* feels so is not because the *nīvaraṇa* has increased but because he sees it better. As one makes progress in preliminary meditation one understands *nīvaraṇa* even better. This is not because of a fault in one's meditation practice, nor with oneself - it's the nature of preliminary meditation practice. But one does not see this when he is at home. Why? When we are in the lap of *kāmacchanda*, we fail to see what it is. When we are in the midst of a lifestyle that involves *vyāpāda*, we fail to know what *vyāpāda* is. In lay life, one spends nearly the entirety of the day in *uddhacca*. One does not see this. Let me illustrate: There is a huge pile of dirt. There are bits of paper

and a whole lot of other things in it. Take a portion of this pile out. Now any new dirt that is put in will be seen easily, more easily than before. But if one kept piling on, on top of the old lot, it would not be so apparent. In the same way, when one lives with *kāmacchanda* one fails to see it. When one is immersed in *vyāpāda*-based objects one does not think he is being aversive. However, when one practices meditation one sees the impurities that come in to the mind. Seeing is not wrong. One must know a serpent to be safe from it. However, these *nīvaraṇa* do not bite like a serpent. Similarly, when we recognize *kāmacchanda* we will cease to have a problem with it. If *vyāpāda* is recognized it will not pose a problem, etc. Since we have seen it for what it is, we see an object of *kāmacchanda* as just that. Therefore, just as in the example of the snake, an object of *vyāpāda* will be seen as an object of *vyāpāda*. *Thina-middha* will be known as *thina-middha*. *Uddhacca* will be known as *uddhacca*. By knowing in this way *samādhi* gets established. *Samādhi* is necessary to understand the real nature of these objects.

When the yogi sees the truth as it is, he can be said to be established in *samādhi*. Such seeing is due to *samādhi*. When there is *samādhi*, *paññā* (wisdom) to see the truth as it is, germinates. As *paññā* arises, the fifth *nīvaraṇa*, *vicikicchā*, has no hold. Else, questions and statements like: “Will this meditation work for me?”, “Is this method right?”, “Is it wrong?”, or “I am doing this because I am told to”, will come to one’s mind. When there is a preponderance of *vicikicchā*, *paññā* does not arise.

The equilibrium between the *nīvaraṇa* and the five indriya (spiritual faculties: *saddhā*, *virīya*, *sati*, *samādhi*, *paññā*) is the mind that operates in a *samatha* practice. This is not a *vipassanā* practice. It is how the mind establishes itself in a

samatha object. Then there is a calmness in the body. The mind scatters less. At times *sati* gets well established. *Sampajañña* too arises. This *sati* and *sampajañña* is not of *vipassanā*, but the *samatha* side of *satipaṭṭhāna*. This is how *sammā-samādhi* (right concentration) arises. Now a *yogi* takes a great liking to his preliminary meditation practice. At this stage, there is a lot of *saddhā*, but one's practice has not yet inclined towards *vipassanā*. Many think that a *vipassanā* practice is where one notes objects as "hearing," "seeing," "thinking", etc. This is a wrong understanding.

As *vicikicchā* reduces, *paññā* gradually grows. The mind systematically starts comprehending the *āyatana* (faculties), *khandha* (aggregates), and *dhātu* (elements). He is now a slightly changed person. Gradually, the distortions in his mind and body reduce. Then his earlier experience of *samādhi* becomes less strong. He may then think that this preliminary meditation practice is difficult. Parallel to this, he sees the *āyatana* and the *khandha*. As he sees the *āyatana* and *khandha*, he realizes the *dhātu*. His mind now operates on these objects. Such a *yogi* is very good. He has grasped the preliminary practice very well. *Paññā* is gradually sprouting and this is excellent. He becomes happy because of this. Because happiness arose, *sampajañña* does not grow further. It breaks there. At this stage the *yogi* feels urged to share experiences of his meditation practice with someone. He cannot resist sharing this and does so even in an indirect manner. This is because of a lack in *sampajañña*. However, when one progresses systematically, one can note these urges and let them go. At times one may even forget them. If one wants to share it, one has to make it up. The mind reaches this level slowly, little by little. By mind it is meant *paññā*. From here onwards, more than *samādhi*, it is *sati* and *sampajañña* that becomes prominent. However it is not to

say that *samādhi* is absent. When one reaches this level most *yogis* go back home, ninety percent do. The lack of time, the lack of a skilled teacher, the teacher wanting to keep the *yogi* at the former level, and inability to progress are the reasons for such a regression in practice.

Let's say that such a *yogi* returns to the meditation center after a month or two. He would often think that his preliminary meditation practice is below the level to what it was earlier. Why does he think so? Earlier he saw many of the *nīvaraṇa*. But in the first few days of coming back, he does not see them. But in a few days he will be again at the level he was before he left for home. But because he did not find this earlier experience pleasant, the return to that previous level, too, is found unpleasant. The *yogi* likes to be where he were earlier - the earlier level of mental calm. Therefore he says: “*Samādhi* is not as good as it was last year” or “*Sati* is not good”. What the *yogi* does not know is that the level he wishes for is a lower level to what he experiences now.

Many fear the *nīvaraṇa*. They think these give rise to kilesa. This fear prevents the development of *dhammānupassanā* (contemplation of mind objects), an integral part of the four establishments of *sati*. When they see the *nīvaraṇa*, they turn their attention away. Monks and nuns may leave for another center or monastery. They look for a better place. “This place is not good”, they say. A layperson may go home and come back. This is not because anything is wrong with the *nīvaraṇa*. In fact, they must be noted. If not, *sampajañña* does not get developed, as the opportunity for it to arise was not provided. He also has no *sati*. If he goes to another monastery he may feel that the *kuṭi* there is good. That the environs are good and the landscape,

say, replete with hills and waterways, are beautiful and calming. This is another instance of *kāmacchanda*. The liking to the new environment causes him to find calmness for a few days, without knowing that this new calmness is just conditioned by the environment. This is the nature of his new *kāmacchanda*. He finds this new *nīvaraṇa* of *kāmacchanda* a good one. He likes it, finds it pleasant. Say, for example, a *yogi* does preliminary meditation at this center. Then he experiences the *nīvaraṇa* in the way stated above, and goes home. Back home, he may think that his room is good, that his mind settles well there. He finds this change to his liking. He now has a new *kāmacchanda*, after fleeing the earlier *kāmacchanda* out of fear.

Nīvaraṇa arise very subtly. This happens when one meditates for a while. Let's say that a *yogi* returns to the meditation center, starts on his preliminary meditation practice and abides in his new object of *kāmacchanda*. He is very calm because of this. A week may pass in this manner. Then the mind that attached to the new object of *kāmacchanda* reduces in intensity. Again, the same *nīvaraṇa* that prompted him to leave, the previous time, returns. Here, if the *yogi* has *sampajañña*, he will proceed in the correct way. If one knows with *sampajañña* that wherever one goes, it is the same things that one experiences, then he is on the correct path. *Vipassanā* is where *sampajañña* or *paññā* is fully active. If the *yogi* does not understand fully that both here and there are the same, he will never progress. A skilled teacher will of course ask: "Have you finished wandering?", "Have you anymore places to go?"

The *nīvaraṇa* arises because of one's unknowing. It could arise from noting too. Let's say one noted an object of *kāmacchanda*. One notes to remove it. Noting the object

only, without noting the mind in which the *nīvaraṇa* arose may cause *kāmacchanda* to reappear. *Vyāpāda* operates more frequently than *kāmacchanda*. When one notes an object of *vyāpāda*, one recalls the cause for the aversion. But the *yogi* fails to note this cause. Then *vyāpāda* reappears. So, the failure to understand the *nīvaraṇa* is due to minimal *sampajañña* and noting objects incorrectly.

There is a difference in the way *nīvaraṇa* are managed in a *samatha* practice and in a *vipassanā* practice. In *vipassanā*, one can see the *nīvaraṇa* as a result of noting objects. In *samatha*, as objects are not noted, it suppresses the *nīvaraṇa*. Hence, one does not see the cause. On the other hand, in *vipassanā*, the cause is seen. If one fails to note this cause, his meditation practice becomes devoid of the aspect related to *nīvaraṇa*, which means that an aspect of *dhammānupassanā* is removed. Then *vipassanā* does not grow. His preliminary meditation practice halts there. As a result, one fails to understand such phenomenon as *khandas*. Without understanding the nature of the *khandas* and other such phenomenon, one's practice of the four foundations of *sati* is of no use. This understanding comes mostly with *paññā*. The understanding of the *khandas* is not for suppressing a *nīvaraṇa*. One understands the *khandas* because one has understood the *nīvaraṇa*. Understanding the *khandas* assists in eradicating the *nīvaraṇa*. They work to undo a *nīvaraṇa*. Not to suppress it. A great calm is needed for this to happen. A great amount of *samādhi* too is needed. And, the habit of noting objects thoroughly. *Sati* must also be established. Such an excellent *yogi* who is so well developed is indeed rare. There must also be a skilled teacher who knows to teach all this. Four or five such excellent *yogis* should practice on the path together. Such excellent *yogis* are

rare - one in a thousand - and can progress in a relatively short time. It wouldn't take months and years for his *vipassanā ñāṇa* (insight knowledges) to mature. On the other hand, if there is only one single excellent *yogi* he would always emulate others. It is not that the others are bad. Their conduct would be good. Their *manasikāra* would be good. However, what the others lack is *sati* and *sampajañña*. When this latter *yogis* mingle and talk with the former, it can cause a regression in the excellent *yogi*. Those he associates with often hinder such a *yogi's* progress. A skilled teacher would identify such a *yogi* and separate him from others, make him solitary. He will still be with the other *yogis*' but the contact with the others would be very little. The teacher does this separation without the *yogi* or the others knowing. No one is singled out. Such an excellent *yogi* would meditate separately from the others though he lives with them. Most of his time is spent in meditation. He would get results in ten, seven, five or four days. He would not take a month to make the progress. He may have spent years in the aforesaid preliminary meditation stages. But the crucial stage of accomplishment is less than ten days. At this stage, the association is between the teacher and *yogi*, only. This *yogi* would understand the *ti-lakkhaṇa* (three characteristics of existence) of objects thoroughly. He could always grasp every object with these three salient features.

These days, an unskilled teacher may, if a *yogi* sees an aged person in his preliminary meditation practice, explain it as an instance of *anicca* (impermanence). Or if an open gut and a swollen leg is seen it is considered as an instance of *anicca* and *dukkha* (unsatisfactory nature). Or if a *yogi* sees a dead body during his preliminary practice, an unskilled teacher would indicate this as having seen *anicca*. A severe

pain or intense feeling is taught as *dukkha*. Plenty of facts are taught in this incorrect way. But such experiences indicate only a preliminary level in meditation practice.

Incorrect claims of path-fruit

With time, the objects that the *yogi* notes fade away. If one was noting a painful feeling, the place of noting may cease to be felt. The cessation of feeling actually means that one cannot perceive that spot. So, what has actually happened is not that the feeling was lost, but the perception that noted the object has faded out. This means there is no object to note. When this happens there is nothing the *yogi* can do. Not only with feeling, this could happen with other objects too.

This way, one reaches a level where there is no object to note. Here the unskilled would say that the *yogi* has reached the *udayabbaya* (the knowledge of arising and passing away) state. Actually, this *yogi* is not an advanced practitioner. Let's say that he continues to meditate, he continues to note objects. His mind again gets fatigued. With the mind fatigued, he again perceives feelings well. Many, these days, teach these experiences as *vipassanā ñāṇa*. They are not. Once more, there will be no object to note and the mind goes to sleep. A very comfortable sleep. But the body is erect. One may wake up after an hour or so. Both the unskilled teacher and the student become happy at the thought that this is a path-fruit. But it is not. This phenomenon, which is like sleep, can happen due to *saddhā*. A skilled teacher on the other hand knows what has actually happened. This is actually a sleep. One can dream before this sleep. They are not ordinary dreams. At times these dreams may appear to be like things related to previous births. But they are not

about previous births. Some *yogis* sleep due to *virīya*. Sleep can happen with *manasikāra* too. When one is noting strong pain too one can go off to sleep. One can sleep due to *samādhi* as well. However one does not dream if the sleep came through *samādhi*. But sleep does not happen with *sati*. These are phenomenon that happens in meditation and there is nothing wrong with it.

Aberrations of mind

If one has trained the mind well, one can do any type of meditation, with any teacher. There will be no problem. For instance, the meditation he learns from me will be there but he can do other types of meditation too. These days, not many can do this. They cling very hard to one particular method. They cannot apply their minds to another method. This is wrong. What is the reason for this rigidity? It is because one has not learnt his initial method of meditation correctly. At the onset itself, the teacher must guide the student to thoroughly understand the meditation method. Why is that? The first meditation method one learns must be the one which trains one thoroughly in the art of *manasikāra*, the art of noting. Being taught noting one must be sure to practice it consistently. While training to note, one may experience *sati* - little by little. When *sati* arises, one becomes calm. Of course this calm doesn't happen all at once. If one does get calm all at once, the teacher must pay careful attention to that student. It means either he has got a mental illness or a *saṃsāric* habit of meditation. It is important that the teacher know the reason for the quick calming. A good *yogī* notes the object well. The one with a mental illness goes the wrong way in a day or two. These two types of persons differ in this way. The teacher must observe this and deal with it within days.

The one who reaches mental calm easily, as a *samsāric* habit, is good and rare. They have to be keenly observed. Such a person could be an aspirant to Buddhahood, a *bodhisattva*. It takes time to know this, even two or three weeks. However, it becomes clear that he is a special person. On the other hand, the one who calms because of a mental illness, notes little, and calms a lot. He cannot master either a *samatha* or *vipassanā* practice. However, such a person could be taught slowly. But not at the level of the regular *yogi*. Such a person needs to be instructed separately where he learns to practice the path at a slower rate.

Two types of *upakkilesa*

There are two types of *upakkilesa*: those of *samatha*, and of *vipassanā*. The *samatha upakkilesa* are very difficult to overcome. On the other hand, the *vipassanā upakkilesa* may be removed once it is discussed with the *yogi*. The *vipassanā upakkilesa* may be removed even after one stops meditating where they reduce gradually and go away. This is not so in the case of *samatha upakkilesa*. These can be clung on to, long term. One does not let go of them. So, of these two, *samatha upakkilesa* are the more dangerous. The preposition ‘*upa-*’ in *upa(k)kilesa* means “close”, “near. It therefore means that these *upakkilesa* occur in a developed mind that is close to a *jhāna*. It is a deception sprung from a developed state of the mind.

Upakkilesa do not occur in an ordinary person or in a *yogi* with an ordinary meditation practice. They occur only in *yogis* who practice meditation well. What occurs in an ordinary person or in one who has an ordinary meditation practice are *kāmacchanda*, *vyāpāda* and other *nīvaraṇa*. *Upakkilesa* is not like that. These *upakkilesa* are considered

dangerous because they occur with the suppression of *kāmacchanda*, *vyāpāda* and other *nīvaraṇa*. *Upakkilesa* are a desire that grows with the concentrated mind that arises from the suppression of *kāmacchanda*, *vyāpāda*, and other *nīvaraṇa*. But the *yogi* does not see this desire. He does not see it as a craving. He considers it as a good thing. This is in the nature of *upakkilesa*. *Upakkilesa* do not occur in the early stages of *vipassanā*. They arise when the *vipassanā* *ñāṇa* occur and one gets closer and closer to *nibbāna*. So, it's good to know what these *upakkilesa* are.

Samatha* (tranquility practice) *upakkilesa

Often the *upakkilesa* of *samatha* meditation occur in the *upacāra* stage (access concentration thoughts). *Upacāra* are thoughts that occur when one is close to a *jhāna*. *Samatha upakkilesa* occur in association with these thoughts. They do not occur in one who has an ordinary meditation practice. The first *jhāna* has the following factors: *vitakka*, *vicāra* (discursive thought), *pīti* (rapture), *sukha* (happiness), and *cittassekaggatā* (one-pointedness of mind). It is when these five factors are present that these *upakkilesa* occur. Then the *yogi* gets fully deceived that he has entered a *jhāna*. There is nothing one can do then. The *yogi* does not get released from this deception. It is from this deceived state that objects are experienced.

Nimitta* (image) and *samatha upakkilesa

People train in what is referred to as *āloka-nimitta* (light images/light signs). They train to meditate with circular *kaṣiṇamaṇḍala* (discs) of blue, yellow, white, red, and so on, with the intention of getting an image from it. Alternatively, some wish to contemplate the *paṭhavī-dhātu* (earth element),

and make a suitable *kaṣiṇamaṇḍala* with earth, mud-clay, or a piece of paper. This *kaṣiṇamaṇḍala* can be about three inches high with a circumference of about a foot. It has to be smooth with no blemishes. It is by concentrating one's attention on such an object that the *yogi* tries to obtain the *nimitta* (image). The image that results from attentively looking at the disc for a while is referred to as the *uggaha-nimitta* (acquired image). This is an ancient practice.

The *nimitta* could be produced through one's eye lens or in one's mind. If a *yogi* keeps looking at the *kaṣiṇamaṇḍala* and the *nimitta* is still visible when he blinks, that it is a *nimitta* that is made by the lens. Then the *yogi* thinks that a *nimitta* has occurred in him. At times, the *nimitta* may change color when one keeps looking at it. Looking at a blue *kaṣiṇamaṇḍala*, one may see a yellow rim forming around it and after that the yellow rim may remain and the blue center may disappear. Various such things can happen. One may see these *nimitti* even when he goes for meals, or to bathe, or to the toilet. He may see it when he brushes his teeth or wash his face. It becomes very difficult. It is a mental abnormality that has come about with the *upakkilesa*. But the *yogi* may say that it occurred due to a *jhāna*. But there is no *jhāna*. In fact, he is miles away from one. A monk whom I knew used to carry a *kaṣiṇamaṇḍala* in his bag for years and do his preliminary meditation practice with it. Eventually he developed a mental illness though he did not know so. The *nimitta* that develops through the lens must be removed. It is this *nimitta* that comes through the lens that causes mental illnesses. What one must practice with is the *nimitta* that occurs in the mind.

There are three types of *nimitti*: *parikamma-nimitta* (preparatory image), *patibhāga-nimitta* (counter-image), and

uggaha-nimitta (acquired image). The *parikamma-nimitta* occurs at the beginning. It is where one looks at a *kasiṇamaṇḍala*. The *nimitta* that arises by looking at a *kasiṇamaṇḍala* is called the *uggaha-nimitta*. It is not necessary to discuss the *patibhāga-nimitta* at this point.

A vast knowledge on *nimitti* is not necessary to attain a *jhāna*. This is where some *yogis* get it wrong. Such knowledge is only necessary for training for *abhiññā* (higher powers or supernormal knowledges). A *jhāna* is a different thing. Let's say a *yogi* is engaged in the preliminary meditation practice with *mettā* (loving kindness) or *ānāpānasati* (mindfulness on the in-and-out breathing) as his primary meditation practice. He establishes his mind without letting it stray from his object of meditation practice. Flitting to other objects would be minimal. Having focused, the mind doesn't stray and reaches *cittassekaggatā* (one-pointedness). With *cittassekaggatā*, the five factors of *jhāna* - *vitakka*, *vicāra*, *pīti*, *sukha*, and *cittassekaggatā* - will occur little by little. It is because of these factors that *cittassekaggatā* arise at increasing levels. These five factors will be there in greater force when one is close to a *jhāna*. They appear and pass away quickly. With time, *cittassekaggatā* will grow - little by little. With the slow increase in *cittassekaggatā* *upakkilesa* arise. The fierce nature of these *upakkilesa* is such, for instance, that one could predict what is to happen tomorrow. He will be able to say that such a person would be coming tomorrow and such things would happen. When the *upakkilesa* grow further, one will be able to say what will happen in a week, and then what will happen in a month. This is a stronger position. One is able to say what will happen far off in the future, now. To be able to say what will happen tomorrow is easier. To say what will happen in a

month is a dangerously strong level of the *upakkilesa*. Let's consider a simile. I have a bottle with me. I know that it will fall. That's an average level of an *upakkilesa*. If I know that the bottle will fall on a certain date and at a certain time, and occurs exactly on that day, then the intensity of the *upakkilesa* is greater. Some people who make such predictions are deceived by *upakkilesa*. They are not *abhiññā*, although they think they are.

I had many such *upakkilesa* when I was fifteen or sixteen. I did not meditate then. I used to practice something like hypnotism. It wasn't a *samatha* technique but something like it. It was then that I had this ability. I used to see clearly what would happen in the future. For instance, if I got a thought that a certain boy would fall down near the water well, it would happen then and there. After a while, I used to get scared when I got such thoughts. I was able to say who was on the other side of a wall, for instance. It used to come to mind even before I thought about it. Let's say I got a thought that there is someone in a yellow shirt on the other side of a wall. Others would confirm this. Others thought that I had started to tell lies at an early age and I got into trouble. My mind reached such a level. It was later that I knew these were *upakkilesa*. I came to understand these as such only when I started to practice proper *samatha* meditation. This means that this sort of *upakkilesa* could also arise from methods other than from *samatha* meditation. As the mind calms and quietsen from such methods, these *upakkilesa* could arise. Later I realized that these were unproductive. It took some time to realize this. A person is able to do certain things due to these abilities. When one dabbles in these, there is no possibility for proper practice of preliminary meditation. *Sila* (morality) is also unnecessary for this.

When in the throes of the *upakkilesa* one fails to appreciate the need for sila. One does not value the five precepts. However, some sort of sila was initially necessary for this ability to occur. But later, the *upakkilesa* just arise as if they are an aspect of the mind. A good person has got deceived by *upakkilesa* and go into spiritual decline. His ability may persist for some time. Even for many years. There after it may disappear. Most fortunetellers do something like this. “Healing powers” are also something like this. It does not require meditation. The person with such an ability thinks that he has got “a power”. But actually this isn’t so. It’s just an *upakkilesa*. The ability to heal illnesses or the ability to predict the future are all such *upakkilesa*. The ability to predict the future is greater than that to heal. When the intensity of the *upakkilesa* increases, a lot can be done with it. Let’s consider a group of people engaged in a preliminary meditation practice. Due to *upakkilesa* in their teacher, they would be able to maintain their practice for a seemingly long time. Let’s say there are ten such student *yogis*. These ten maybe able to sit for about an hour. But with the teacher’s *upakkilesa* they can be made to sit for about two hours. They then become deceived by their teacher. Even the teacher is not aware that it is his *upakkilesa* at work. The teacher and the students are both deceived. They sit for hours. I came to understand this *upakkilesa* when I was about seventeen. At the time, a monk taught meditation with the method of noting the rising and falling of the abdomen. It was taught in a way to solely see the rising and falling, without noting any other object that arose. It was a *samatha* practice, not a *vipassanā* practice. Later on it could be directed into *vipassanā* meditation. Thousands practiced this method. They were deceived by their *upakkilesa*. They all looked beautiful and would sit for hours like statues. I

became interested because of this. I had learned about hypnotism at that time. I realized that this monk's method was a technique of "mesmerizing" (hypnotism). It was an *upakkilesa*, but I didn't know the term *upakkilesa* at that time. Experiencing things like *pīti* and *passaddhi* (tranquility) these people sit for hours. These experiences appear like factors of *jhāna*, but it's not so. A *jhāna* does not arise. They are like drugged. They may think they have entered a *jhāna*. A skilled teacher can discern if it is a *jhāna* or an *upakkilesa*. The person who has a *jhāna* or the factors of a *jhāna* does not have *māna*. Nor do they have craving, or hatred. The one with the *upakkilesa* is attached to his belongings. He has *māna* too. He also can get angry. That's why it is called an *upakkilesa*. This is how one could find out the level of the *yogi*.

Upakkilesa can be made use of to get a lot of worldly things done. For instance, say there's an ordinary person who has a head full of lice. Not liking to do anything unwholesome, this person would not kill the lice. The person with the *upakkilesa* can make the lice on the other's head go away. He may touch the entire head and say that there are no lice. It then becomes a fact. The person who had the lice then considers the one with the *upakkilesa* to have miraculous abilities, and develops faith in the latter. But it is not an *abhiññā*. It is only an *upakkilesa*. This way, those that are deceived by their *upakkilesa* practice "healing". But the healing happens not due to the *upakkilesa*, but due to the mental power of the recipient. The one who had lice on the head, for instance, was totally convinced that what he wanted would happen. He also had faith in the person with the *upakkilesa*. It is because of this faith that what he wants to happen, happens. Actually the one with the *upakkilesa* has no ability. He is an ordinary person, but dabbles in these

practices. He can cure diseases too, but these are temporary things. What works here is faith. If there is an actual disease, that would not get cured. But what is caused by the mind gets removed. A lot of diseases are psychosomatic. These are removed. Anybody can do this. What must be known is that these are *upakkilesa*.

Varied *samatha upakkilesa*

Upakkilesa assist a lot in worldly matters. Some *yogis* with *upakkilesa* can easily hypnotize others and can take them to previous lives, extending up to even ten lives. With practice, one can make such use of the *upakkilesa*. Some do it as a vocation. But they act as a barrier to enlightenment. There is no *jhāna* there. Even the opportunity to get close to a *jhāna* has been lost. These “powers” last a while and then go away. If one wishes, one may start on them again.

One can train an *upakkilesa* to certain parts of one’s body. Hands and eyes are two such parts they are trained on. Some train the *upakkilesa* on their words. The eyes are the most common. When they are trained on the eye, it is through the eye that one hypnotizes. Some *upakkilesa* assist one to find lost items. It works at the spot where the item went missing. If the person with the *upakkilesa* has trained *upakkilesa* on to his finger, then the finger starts moving at the spot where the item went missing. They call these “mind power” or higher powers. But these are not *abhiññā*. They are only *upakkilesa*. Some call them *adhicitta* (higher mentalities). But, *adhicitta* refers to something entirely different and significantly more important. Society considers *upakkilesa* as significant. However the person with the *upakkilesa* is not being dishonest. They benefit others, and others do make use of them. That is why these are called *tiracchānavijjā* (lower

sciences), meaning they do not incline one to enlightenment. They block the path to enlightenment. They do not lead to a *jhāna* either. Most people are calm by what arises from these *upakkilesa* rather than *jhāna*.

Some yogis get deceived by small *upakkilesa*. By being deceived by such small things they deny themselves something significant in life. They continue to be deceived, going round and round in the same spot. There is some comfort in their deception. They may conflict with others too. Some start talking a lot, be it meditation, the mind, or mental states, they will talk from morning till evening. This happens in *vipassanā upakkilesa* as well. It would not be easy to escape such yogis who talk a lot.

Another feature of the *samatha upakkilesa* is that the *yogi* trains the mind on the *nimitta* obtained in his *samatha* practice. It may be something like a yellow *aloka* that he trains on. Once trained, he could project this *aloka* onto places. This *aloka* can come from the eye lens or the mind. The one that can be used to project is the one originating in the mind. The one obtained through the lens cannot be so used, and could lead to mental illnesses. When we look at another and look away, don't we see the image of someone like the person we just saw? This is because of the shadow formed on the lens. It's like an echo. When we talk, the sound waves are reflected, causing the echo. A similar phenomenon occurs with the eye and one erroneously considers this occurrence to be a *nimitta*. Trying to see it, people get headaches, blocked noses, pain above the eye, and then mental illnesses. When one experiences tightness above the eyes, headaches, or a blocked nose he must immediately stop the meditation practice. If he continues, he will not be able

to do any meditation practice in the future. Then some say that the *nimitta* has been demonized, or that some lower spirit beings took it away. Or even that a lower spirit-being has occupied the mind. One gets into much confusion. There are no lower-beings residing in the mind or spirits that took it away. It cannot be.

Some *yogis* hear sounds, over and over again. Let's say a bell rang. One hears it again. It's the same thing that happens with the ear, as with the eye. The yogi thinks that he heard the sound again. Some are deceived like this. Some try to train on this, referring to it as the *Abhiññā* of divine ear. This is not the divine ear. In the early days, there was a bungalow here near the pagoda. I was about nineteen or twenty years of age. I wasn't ordained yet. The clock in there used to chime every quarter of an hour, half an hour and the hour. This was a disturbance to my meditation practice. One room of the bungalow was the *vihāra* (the dwelling place), and I used to meditate there. The clock was in the front sitting area. To avoid being disturbed by the clock, I went to another place. But I could still hear the chime in this second place, at every quarter of an hour, half an hour and the hour. I thought: "I came here to avoid hearing the chime. I shouldn't be hearing this anymore." That was when it dawned on me. This is the nature of how the mind considers objects - the manner in which it considers dead objects. It recalls an experience of the past. But the person may think he is close to getting the divine ear. What has happened here is that his mind being calm, he starts hearing the slightest of sounds. Because of this the *yogi* then intends to note even more soft sounds. With this intention, he tries to note sounds that are not usually heard - sounds of birds, squirrels and the like. He thinks this is the way to cultivate the divine ear.

This leads to an increased heartbeat. The brain feels taut. A pressure builds. One must stop the preliminary meditation practice as soon as the heartbeat increases. What actually occurred was only the arising and passing away of thoughts. A *yogi* always looks for something that is not there in the present. It is from that the disease comes about - it can occur in the eye, in the ear, in the nose. *Yogis* are advised about the necessity of being clean. One reason for this is that when there is some foreign matter rubbed on the robes or clothes, it can be smelt intensely. Even a slight odor is felt intensely. Let's say a tree has flowered a little distance away. Then one may think there is a divine presence there. It is not that a *deva* (celestial being) or a spirit-being has visited. It is just that as one's sensitivity increases with the increasing calm and one-pointedness of the mind, he senses and knows phenomena better. He starts hearing very faint sounds. It's not even possible to discern what those sounds are. It could be a caterpillar chewing a leaf. One starts hearing so finely. We may have seen ants rolling little stones. One does not normally hear those sounds. They're drowned by bigger noises. But the calmed mind can hear these. What is happening here is that when the mind calms it begins to understand common yet subtle phenomena. But the *yogi* takes it differently, thinking he has made significant progress. He doesn't even consider that he has been deceived.

Some hear the sounds of serpents when doing their preliminary meditation practice in forests. However they may think it is a spirit-being. But if one knows that it was only a serpent that he heard because his mind was calm, then he is alright. What is described as demon or ghost sounds are only sounds of animals such as bats, rats or geckoes. Nothing else. These sounds are usually inaudible. When our minds are in their normal state, we would not hear these. So these

are the obstacles one faces at the level of the *upakkilesa*. Then one says: “I hear a noise in my *kuṭi*”, “I heard *pirith* (parittas: chanting) last night”, “It is from inside that rock that I hear *pirith*.” What may actually be there would be a nest of wasps, or bees, or other insects. But that person will not believe when told so. Therefore he must be advised to move to another place. In the new place he will hear different sounds. One must have constant *manasikāra* in order to break the hold of the *upakkilesa*.

Some people “create” or “manifest” various things. Actually there is nothing that they create though it is thought so. It’s a total deception. They can’t “create” things if told to do so suddenly. They need to prepare themselves. They train this ability to “create” very meticulously through their *upakkilesa*. When one does these kind of things he cannot go further with his preliminary meditation practice. Now do you see how dangerous the *samatha upakkilesa* can be? They are very intense. If one has a skilled teacher and has good *manasikāra* he may realize somewhat that he is deceived by an *upakkilesa*. These *upakkilesa* cause many difficulties. Their very origin is due to *samādhi*. They are an occurrence due to meditation and that which masks the very realization sought by meditation. It’s a mind-made phenomenon. *Samatha upakkilesa* occur in those of other religions too. Not only Buddhists. *Samatha* meditation is practiced by non-Buddhists as well. Some people claim to have seen God - whatever form they saw during a meditation practice, they call that God. In my meditation practice, long ago, I have seen large Buddha forms and deva forms. One day I saw a large form of Jesus Christ, as if he is in the sky. Later someone told me that it was true. What I saw had been the big statue of Jesus Christ in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. I could have got deceived by that. Those days I used to see many

large churches: the angels in them, Jesus Christ and Christ on the cross. They were huge. I saw large temples, too. These images are based on various stories we have heard. These are just mental states that arise in *upakkilesa*. These do not occur without *upakkilesa*. People claim they saw God, *Brahmā*, Mother Mary, or Jesus Christ, it is because of his *upakkilesa*.

Sometimes things we had not paid attention to, or what we had not put into words also operate at the level of *upakkilesa*. There was a young person in Canada, of about sixteen years of age, who had seen a Buddha statue, which had fallen and broken. He had seen this in his mind. This was in the 1960s or 1970s. After some time, he came to Sri Lanka. Then he was in his thirties. He came to our abbot at the Kanduboda Vipassana Meditation Center to learn meditation. He related this story. He sees this picture when he meditates, but not when he stops his preliminary meditation practice. Apparently he used to meditate on his own when he was about sixteen. Nobody knew about it, and that was when he first saw the Buddha statue. Later, on a visit to the Kelaniya temple in Sri Lanka, he said that the image he had seen was the statue there. The mind had received this image, somehow. It had come with the *upakkilesa*. It was not due to the *abhiññā* of divine eye. If it was the result of the divine eye, he should get it again when he is in deep *samādhi*. That is how one can distinguish between *abhiññā* and *upakkilesa*. It is the *upakkilesa* that deceives the *yogi*. It's not a fault of a meditation practice or the society-at-large. The *yogis* gives an erroneous value to these occurrences and moves no further.

There is another *samatha upakkilesa*: With the support of a glass or betel leaf (piper betle leaf), the person with the

upakkilesa places a pen on the finger of a person. The person doing this may say he is “getting” the recipients’ dead father to write answers to questions the recipient has. These activities are found in many parts of the world. They think it is a big achievement but it has done only a big damage. Those who engage a lot in these *samatha upakkilesa*-based activities cannot do *vipassanā*. This *samatha* phenomenon will come up in a significant way and he won’t be able to incline to a *vipassanā* practice. When they do try, it is these phenomenon that come up. There used to be monk who used to have such phenomenon coming up whenever he tried to meditate. He used to say that he saw spirit-beings. He described their forms, the way they were. He said their face was like a lion with a long tail and two legs. He used to close the doors to keep the so-called spirit-beings away. Similarly, he used to describe the hell realm. He was a good and virtuous monk. But he found the preliminary meditation hard to do. He was like that until he passed away. However, such people don’t have a woeful destiny at rebirth.

There was another monk. He told me that there was a spirit-being on the top of his rock cave and asked me not to go there. He said some sort of *pūjā* (offerings) was needed before one could use the cave again. This was a mental experience that he had got when he was doing his preliminary meditation practice there. He had taken it to be true. I did my meditation practice there and I found nothing. There was a wall sketch of the *Bahirava* deity on the cave. This picture affected his mind to think that such a being was actually there. When one does preliminary meditation after thinking such things, one will “see” these things. I said earlier on that the eye lens takes in pictures. It is through the lens that this happens. The *upakkilesa* does not understand

the truth. It will remain for years and even last until the person's death.

Because of these *upakkilesa*, many think their meditation has progressed and that their meditation is on the right track, but they are only deceived.

The *samatha upakkilesa* occur with the afore-said *jhānic* factors. It occurs through *samādhi* and prevents the *yogi* from continuing preliminary meditation practice. It is not a *nīvaraṇa*. It is a mental state that arises to prevent one's preliminary meditation practice from progressing. Let's say that one is destined to accomplish a high attainment from one's preliminary meditation practice. An *upakkilesa* is an ordinary level before that high attainment. As an analogy: People mine gems. There are beautiful blue and yellow stones along with the gems. Some think these are gems, but they are not, and they have no value. *Upakkilesa* arising from meditation practice are also like that.

Knowledge is necessary to overcome an *upakkilesa*. Or else, the *yogi's* teacher must be one who knows about them well, and help him to overcome it. I said he needs knowledge to overcome these *upakkilesa*. It is very difficult to gain that knowledge. The *yogi* needs to be made to understand that these are only *upakkilesa*, but he just won't accept that. He may think that the teacher and others are jealous of his advanced state, or that those trying to advise him are not in the know.

Recently a gentleman claimed that he could change others' minds. This too is a *samatha upakkilesa*. This also affected me once. By being very strict with me, my teacher succeeded in helping me remove it. I had another such *upakkilesa* at that time. If I thought that the right ear lobe

should keep moving, say, for ten minutes, it would. If I wanted my left leg to rotate rapidly for ten minutes, it would happen too. I could do the same with the lips, nose and eyes - while keeping one eye perfectly straight I could move the other. With the lips too I could keep half of a lip or one lip still and move the other half, or other lip, respectively. I could also make the entire body taut like a rock. Absolutely like a granite rock. Or steel iron. Two or three people could get on me then. In actuality, such a person could be quite weak in body, but he would not be able to be moved or lifted. These are done through the mind. These things are then seen as wonderful or miraculous. So, one is deceived, thinking it is some progress. It's not. The yogi indulges in these, not knowing that they are not the path.

These happens all of a sudden in one's preliminary meditation practice. One takes some time to recognize these as *upakkilesa*. I was in my twenties when a monk friend and I started to train in meditation. My friend, who came from a wealthy temple, spent a lot and made kuti and facilities to teach preliminary meditation to *yogis*. A chief monk from the area also came to learn from us. During his practice, this monk started seeing a blue *kaṣiṇamandala* type of object. I advised the monk not to pay attention to this. I kept it away for a number of months. But this monk had a liking for this *Upakkilesa*. He had read about them in books, he said. He thought it was good. I told him that even though they may be written about in books, one needed a teacher who knew how to instruct in that method. So I taught *satipaṭṭhāna* (the establishment of mindfulness) instead. After learning *satipaṭṭhāna*, his mind inclined to *vipassanā*. After some time our teaching program came to an end and we returned to our own center. That chief monk would not heed my advice, and he returned to contemplating the *kaṣiṇamandala*. He reached

an intense level of *upakkilesa*. Hundreds of thousands of people flocked to meet this monk. He used to tell them of their past lives, predict futures etc. My teacher heard about this, and told my monk friend and me that as we were responsible for teaching him meditation, we should go and help him overcome the *upakkilesa*. So, we both went to see him. When we met him, he told us all about our journey - how we came, what time we left, how it rained on us, and why we had come. When one has the ability to say such things, who will not be deceived? He thought that he had *abhiññā*. We knew that he would not accept our advice if we told him the truth of his condition. Yet we did give him a little advice that his was an *upakkilesa*, which should be overcome. He thought that we did not know. We repeated ourselves about three times, and when he would not agree, we left him. Later he got into great difficulty before he passed away. He had said that he would ascend to the sky and perform *pāṭihāriya* (miracles). He had predicted his time of death, and that his dead body would lower itself from the sky. Many came to watch this prediction happening and the police also were present. Yet, he was found hiding under his bed on the predicted day. Finally, he had to be protected from an angry mob. He died later, sick and being unable to consume any food or drink. He had said that he would be healed by his *abhiññā*. But he died vomiting blood. Even now I feel concerned thinking about him.

Latent phenomena in *samatha upakkilesa*

There are a few latent phenomena in *samatha upakkilesa*. For instance, there is something like *saddhā* in *samatha upakkilesa*, but it's actually not. There is something like *virīya*, but it is not so. One lives like a very pious person. He at times may teach the *Dhamma* to others or may even teach

meditation. Teachers ask us not to talk about our meditation practice with others, don't they? There is a reason they say this. Let's say I am deceived by an *upakkilesa*. When I talk to someone in this state, I relate my experiences to the other. That person then starts thinking as to why he had not had those experiences. One with an *upakkilesa* talks a lot. It is the nature of *upakkilesa*. Sometimes they can keep talking for hours. All related to the *Dhamma*. Nothing outside of it. This is a very dangerous phenomenon. If one was deceived thinking he has an *abhiññā*, he can let go of that deception after they lose that "ability". But one cannot let go of the *upakkilesa* of talking on the *Dhamma*. This lasts for almost one's lifetime. The one with the *upakkilesa* that mimics *saddhā* does not perform any *vath piliweth* (service). They would not come for *Buddha puja*, and may even take offence if called to join a *puja*.

Underlying an *upakkilesa* is the person's need for fame and publicity. These are not present in one without *upakkilesa*. That need is not there. These *upakkilesa* make some travel the globe, seemingly to teach meditation. They would not go beyond this level in their meditation practice. Nor would they admit that they wouldn't go beyond this level. This is why *samatha upakkilesa* are dangerous.

Some think about everything logically. They do not easily get deceived. Yet, if their minds get calm, they too can fall prey to *upakkilesa*. But if one recognizes *samādhi* correctly, one does not get deceived. *Upakkilesa* occurs at the *samādhi* level and can arise if one fails to recognize *samādhi* correctly. *Samādhi* precedes *jhāna* and *upakkilesa* do not occur at the level of a *jhāna*. Before *samādhi*, there is a state of *cittassekaggatā* followed by a *samatha* moment. These latter two states do not pose a difficulty. In these two states the

yogi practices well and can be corrected. The problem arises if he gets to the *samādhi* level. Actually, it is a simple problem to undo. But the person does not admit the problem. They are completely enveloped by the *upakkilesa*. They are in darkness. They are in the same spot. But, because they dislike *kilesa*, they are not destined to a woeful state a rebirth.

They are capable of enduring this path. Provided they let go of their ideas. The problem is they don't. Let me illustrate: Let's say that there is a whirlpool in a watercourse that runs through a garden. A leaf that comes into it keeps twirling round and round, until it descends to the bottom - it will not move on. Ideally, it should move on as the water keeps coming in. An *upakkilesa* is also like a whirlpool. A whirlpool can be noisy, but it's hollow inside. One keeps going round and round. Similarly the affected person does not know he is just going round and round. He thinks his condition is good. But, in reality, he is headed towards a precipice. But because he doesn't do anything unwholesome, he will not be headed to a woeful state at rebirth. A happy rebirth will be his destiny. But he missed an opportunity to turn his life to a more wholesome state. However, if one has *manasikāra*, *sati*, and *paññā*, he can know if he is living such a deception. But many do not think like that. Instead they imagine themselves as advanced and as having *abhiññā*.

A skilled teacher is needed to overcome *upakkilesa*

The *samatha upakkilesa* are fiercely tenacious, more than those of *vipassanā*. Once deceived by *upakkilesa*, one can be that way for months, or years, or even for life. The teacher must know how to break it as soon as a student gets an *upakkilesa*. A good teacher must be firm and strict at these times. Soft approaches or niceties will not do.

A teacher must tell a yogi who is affected by an *upakkilesa* right at the start of it, absolutely honestly, and not in a roundabout way. One must directly say: “You have an *upakkilesa*”, “Do not do this.” If the yogi chooses not to change his ways, there’s nothing the teacher can do. If the student wants to be famous, they can pursue that, but they will not go far with the *upakkilesa*. The student generally disbelieves the teacher when he advises so, thinking the latter is jealous. That is in keeping with his psychological level. When the teacher points this out, the student must ideally be in a receptive position to listen. If not, he will be overcome by the *upakkilesa*. This is why it is important to have a teacher when engaging in preliminary meditation. One can neither do *samatha* or *vipassanā* without a teacher. One may go a short way with *satipaṭṭhāna* without a teacher. But to go onward substantially in *samatha* and *vipassanā*, a teacher is essential. If one has sufficient merit one can attain *nibbāna* by oneself, such as in the time of a Buddha. Without that sort of merit, it’s not possible to practice alone. Some who meditate by themselves have more mental distortions. They think whatever they think is right. They think that others are wrong.

Superficial teachers won’t do. Skilled teachers are essential. The teacher must be endowed with sincerity, the intention to instruct well, compassion and empathy. He should not expect anything from the students, nor seek publicity and fame. Giving should be his only intention. If one does not find someone like that, it’ll be impossible to progress.

Talking is an obstacle to preliminary meditation practice

Nowadays, many yogis deny themselves the opportunity to develop *sati*, because they talk with others. Talking and discussing reduce *sati*. Then one does not progress. Where there is no *manasikāra*, *sati* cannot grow. With no *sati*, *samādhi* cannot arise. This problem abounds in group classes of preliminary meditation practice. But *yogis* in these group classes continue to frequent it because they feel fulfilled by the discussions at these classes.

Problems arise when one discusses one's preliminary meditation practice with another. A yogi says things like: "Hāmuduruwo (monk) told me like this", "That Hāmuduruwo has an astounding knowledge", "That Hāmuduruwo taught me meditation like this", and "I have a wonderful quietening of my mind due to my practice." This type of talk is damaging. These conversations spread "germs". The one hearing this thinks "Why don't I have such calm?" It's like breaking every new shoot of a plant. The plant has no chance of sprouting. Hence, because it creates unnecessary thoughts or ideas, talking must be avoided.

Let's say one is doing his preliminary meditation. Then, another asks, "Where are you from?", "What did you come for?" This type of talk can also be damaging, though less so than talk about meditation. There is no use in such talk. There is no purpose in discussing one's meditation practice, progress, or about one's teacher, with another. Unnecessary. Unwanted. The listener of this type of talk could get completely dejected. It's like uprooting all of the other's grass. And then one just shovels it all away and some new crop is planted. If such a talkative person comes near a *yogi*

who is practicing well, the latter can get very disoriented. And then it becomes impossible to help build that *yogi* again.

If there is a *yogi* who is untroubled by these influences, he will systematically gain *visuddhi* (purity). The mind settles. The *nīvaraṇa* gradually lessen. This lessening means that one is able to be completely with his object of meditation. Sati will be established and *sampajañña* will flourish. During the time that one is with an object completely, he may experience small lights in his mind. But these are not the lights of *upakkilesa*. There are two types of light - there are lights of *upakkilesa*, and those that are not. These latter type of lights appear in some yogis and not in others. This happens when the *nīvaraṇa* are lowered and suppressed. A teacher does not need to enquire from the *yogi* if he does or does not experience lights. Those who do and those who do not are varied but they are at the same level. The nature of the mind when the *nīvaraṇa* are suppressed can manifest differently, due to differences in individual personalities. To emphasize the *yogi* that experiences lights and not the one who doesn't would undermine the latter. This is why it is so important for the teacher to speak to *yogis* individually, rather than in a group. When preliminary meditation experiences are discussed in a group setting, it can really disturb the other *yogis*, even irretrievably.

That is why it is important not to teach preliminary meditation in groups. The teacher and student must meet in private. Another issue is that a student may not be forthcoming with his experiences when another person is present. When training to be a meditation teacher, I used to be positioned behind the wall when a student used to speak to the abbot of the monastery. His student did not know of

my presence. In order to learn, the trainee teacher must remain hidden. I used to listen to their conversation, and later ask the abbot why the student said what he said, etc.

The teacher would not say anything to the student of the reason that lights appeared - that it is due to the suppression of the *nīvaraṇa* and subsequent purity of the mind. When the teacher does not focus on it, the student too will not pay attention to it. However, the teacher has noted this occurrence but does not show it. This is to prevent the yogi from facing difficulties later on because of these lights. Because of these experiences it becomes evident that the yogi is somewhat calm and collected due to the lessening of the *nīvaraṇa*. The teacher would then need to advise the yogi to maximize *manasikāra*, if he is to progress further. If the yogi wishes to maximize his *manasikāra*, he must avoid talking. By doing so, he will gradually incline to meditation, to *satipaṭṭhāna* meditation. He would be able to sustain *virīya* well and his *saddhā* would be well established. And, a satisfaction about his preliminary meditation practice too would be present in his mind.

Vipassanā (insight practice) upakkilesa

There are ten vipassanā upakkilesa:

1. *Aloka* (light) and *obhāsa* (effulgence of light)
2. *Pīti* (rapture)
3. *Passaddhi* (tranquility)
4. *Adhimokkha* (determination)
5. *Paggāha* (exertion)
6. *Sukha* (happiness)

7. *Ñāṇa* (knowledge)
8. *Mupatthāna* (awareness of objects of attention)
9. *Upekkhā* (equanimity)
10. *Nikkhanti* (delight in an *upakkilesa*)

It is when one starts to realize what the path is and what the path is not that these ten *vipassanā upakkilesa* start occurring.

Aloka* (light) and *obhāsa* (effulgence of light) as an *upakkilesa* in *vipassanā

The *yogi* may see blue, purple, green, and red colored *aloka*. Very few yogis see the *aloka* in green. If one sees green *aloka*, he may have a mental illness or may get one in the near future. Usually it is yellow, purple, blue, red, and white *aloka*. The mind stays with these *aloka*, it resides there. It just stays like that for days. Some *yogis* spend an entire hour in these *aloka* and this means that he has been in great happiness. After that he may reflect that he saw them. Some *aloka* appear at a great distance, while others appear close.

Some *aloka* change as they appear. When one observes a blue *aloka*, it turns yellow. When noting the yellow, it turns red. The red turns white. Some misrepresent these as *nimitti*, as an advanced stage in meditation. This is wrong. This is only a significant intensity of *upakkilesa* which have arisen due to one's *samādhi*. Some cause a feeling of heat in the body. Some *yogis* experience a sensation of heat, as felt on their body. Some *aloka* emanates a burning smell from the body - like that of burning body hairs. These experiences depend on the mental level of the *yogi*. Such *yogis* are rare. Some feel a burning on the face when the light they see

flashes on it. They feel like opening their eyes to see. Some even touch their face. It really feels like it is going to burn. In fact, this too can happen.

If the *yogi* gets deceived by these experiences he would not progress further. He may remain thinking erroneously that he has experienced a *nimitta* and hence advanced in his presence. Some say that the *aloka* burned all their *kilesa*. One must recognize what an *upakkilesa* is and what an *upakkilesa* is not. When noting what isn't an *upakkilesa*, it goes away. Hence, a good *yogi* will find that as he notes, the *aloka* or the form passes away. The teacher must somehow show the way to remove these *aloka*.

Obhāsa (effulgence of light) refers to light that emanates from the body. The body radiates these *obhāsa*. They can be blue, yellow, red or white in color. Mostly, they are blue. Red and white are less. *Obhāsa* radiating from the forehead is very rare. It can radiate from the forehead like an arrow, and light up miles ahead, making all that is along its way, and the sides, visible. Buildings, houses, and people within them for four or five miles can be seen. *Obhāsa* is a fierce one and it can be deceiving. But the teacher can help to undo and remove it. If a light that emanates, comes into the body, one must immediately stop the preliminary meditation practice. That *yogi* is easily and quickly susceptible to a mental illness.

Aloka and the *obhāsa* are two. It is *obhāsa* that commonly deceives many *yogis*. One sees more with *obhāsa* than with *aloka*. One does not see with *aloka*. It is rarely that *obhāsa* is experienced by a *yogi*, less than one in a thousand. Many *yogis* see *aloka*. Some get these, a little, even without a preliminary meditation practice.

The teacher shows little regard for the student at this stage. The teacher is then seen as a jealous one, or an enemy. The teacher appears very stern: “If you are meditating, do your meditation. I am not interested in these,” the teacher would say. This is said with kindness and compassion, to help remove the student’s deception. Some persons, these days, misrepresent the student’s experience of *aloka/obhāsa* as a significant occurrence. That cripples the student’s progress. Instead, the teacher must simply dismiss them as irrelevant.

Even the *yogis* who have the potential for mental illnesses can see *aloka*. He attaches to small bright lights. It is a feature of the illness and not a characteristic of preliminary meditation practice. Then the *yogi* starts seeing whatever he thinks about. For instance, he may see a flower bloom in the heart. He absolutely needs treatment. The teacher must know that this *yogi* is mentally ill. We discussed mental illnesses earlier too. This *yogi* is different. He did not get the illness at that point, but only now. The *yogi* does not reach the exact level of an *upakkilesa* and instead exists prior to it. But we don’t reject this *yogi* as a patient. He must be taught very slowly. The Buddha considered all of us as potentially mentally ill: “*Sabbe puthujjanā ummatthakā viya dissanti.*” This is now misinterpreted as “*sabbe puthujjanā ummatthakā.*” He didn’t say that we are mentally sick. We, as much as, they are mentally sick. We see their illness because it is more intense than ours. We do not see ours. So we can’t reject them saying they are mentally sick. Very gently and slowly, they must be shown the facts as one would with a child, and not be rejected.

Some say that they can see a *pabhāva* (aura) of another. However much a *yogi* meditates, a specific determination

must be made to do see a *pabhāva*. It does not come about automatically. I have seen the *pabhāva* of a person. He was a long-term meditator, who practiced without talking. He was also ordained for a while. His *pabhāva* was blue in color. The *pabhāva* of a person who is heavily clad cannot be seen as it cannot penetrate through layers of clothing. However, it may be visible just around the face.

What the Buddha had was not a *pabhāva*. As his mind became purified, all his dhatu were also *purified*. With purification, a blue hue radiated from his hair, yellow from the skin, red from the blood, white from the bones, and orange from the bone marrow. For others to see this, the Buddha had to make a determination. When he performed the *yamaka-pāṭihāriya* (Twin Miracle) he made such a determination. The Buddha performed this to diminish the *māna* of the *Sākyans*, to diminish the doubt of the devas, and to tame those with other religious beliefs. When without such determination, he was like an ordinary person. After attaining Buddhahood, when the Buddha visited the five ascetics to preach the Dhamma, they said amongst them: “Look, he is coming, looking nice and plump after rich food. Let’s not get up for him,” etc. As the Buddha came closer, they could not keep to their plan. One brought out water. A seat was prepared. All was done to receive the Buddha. On another occasion, the King *Ajātasatta* accompanied physician *Jīvaka* to see the Buddha. As there was a large assembly of monks, *Ajātasatta* asked *Jīvaka* which one the Buddha was. These instances shows that there was no ostentation. The Buddha lived as an ordinary person. He was like any other human of that time, in form and body. There were others who looked like him, though a little different. From afar, Venerable *Ānanda* and Venerable *Anuruddha* looked like him. They were, after all, relatives. When the Buddha wanted to subdue

someone, he could send an *obhāsa* there or bring it back. He could create forms within the *obhāsa*. That is what he with *Maṭṭakuṇḍali* and Queen Khema. Through the *obhāsa*, He demonstrated to Queen Khema a beautiful girl growing old, wrinkled, changed, and falling dead. The Buddha did these deliberately.

Pīti* (rapture) as an *upakkilesa* in *vipassanā

Pīti is a state of mind that arises when the mind gets well established with the object of preliminary meditation practice. This does not come together with *aloka*. It is not something that arises because of *aloka*. At times, during meditation, the mind notes objects with great clarity. It's a nature of the mind. This *pīti* can cause the eyes to tear, the lips to quiver, the eyelids to shake. A *yogi* engaged in preliminary meditation practice has a heightened level of *pīti*. He could easily be deceived by this. He may be deceived thinking: "I am now advanced" or "I have *samādhi*." The various *upakkilesa* do not occur in a given order. At times *aloka* can be less, and *pīti*, high. Some yogis can have more of *aloka*, and others only *pīti*. In any case, *pīti* during preliminary meditation practice is commonly experienced.

Pīti is not experienced only when at sitting meditation practice. It can occur during walking meditation too. If it occurs during walking, then the mind wishes to keep walking and not sit. If it occurs while seated, one doesn't wish to stand. The *pīti* that occurs when one listens to *Dhamma* talks, recites parittas, performing *puja*, or transferring merit lasts but a short while. It passes momentarily. With *pīti* as an *upakkilesa*, it is different - for instance, *pīti* that occurs when walking may last the entire duration one does walking meditation. It lasts long, hours at a time.

When *pīti* increases one may lose feeling of contact. One may think that this heightened rapture is a *jhāna*. It's not. Some have a slight smile on their faces when in preliminary meditation. This is not *pīti*. It's put on, as a fashion statement. This type of smiling does not happen in *pīti*. *Pīti* has a mellow, soft nature. It does not come on as soon as one sits down to meditation. Because of *pīti* the *rūpa-kalāpa* (corporeal units) of the body changes. He becomes a charming person. Even the sight of this *yogi* is pleasant to others. *Pīti* it is, but not a *jhāna*. One inclines to sit often when *pīti* is present, or, to do walking meditation. With *pīti*, one does not feel inclined to conflict with others. However, when one has *cittassekaggatā* one could get in conflict with others. It is commonly seen that yogis clash with one another. In meditation centers, even a *yogi* dropping a meditation cushion on the ground could cause anger in some others. When one is with *pīti*, one does not get into such conflict. This gives him the thought that things are going well. But when *pīti* is no more, one can get in to conflict, and say: "My meditation was disrupted by that person." It is not that anyone disrupted his meditation. The nature of *pīti* is that it is not permanent.

Pīti is not something that is constantly present during preliminary meditation. That is the nature of *upakkilesa*. The fault lies in thinking that one wants to be with it, that it is good, and thinking it will remain constantly. Apart from that, nothing wrong with *pīti* itself. Aloka, or *obhāsa*, or *pīti* occurred because one maintained *manasikāra* and *sampajañña*. They did not just arise. Their arising cannot be found fault with. One's positive evaluation of it is the problem. A craving for it arises in the *yogi*. He create an expectation that: "I wish I have this state for the whole of the day." He returns to his preliminary meditation practice in

anticipation of this. Such thinking means that one is under the deception of the *upakkilesa*. And the bigger problem is when the *yogi* thinks that he is advanced because of these experiences.

Ordinary people do not experience *pīti* that is at the level of an *upakkilesa*. The *pīti* one may feel when listening to a *Dhamma* talk is temporary. It is not strong. It arises and passes. It is a normal phenomenon in the world. One does not need a religion for such an occurrence. It can occur when one observes trees and nature, or at the seaside, or beside a river. This experience of *pīti* is of the *kāmāvacara* nature (sensuous sphere) - *pīti* that arises with sensuous pleasure. The experience of *pīti* arising from an *upakkilesa* is greater. Let's say that everything at our home is in order. Even the pet is healthy and fine. The children are stress-free and well. Therefore the parents are happy. This is a *lokiya* (worldly) matter. The *upakkilesa* of *pīti* is also worldly. But the first *lokiya* type arose with the *kilesa*, while the second type - *upakkilesa* of *pīti* - arose during one's search to be free of *kilesa*. These *upakkilesa* arises because the *nīvaraṇa* are well concealed, but they are still rife. The *kilesa* in this context is the attachment one has to the *upakkilesa*. Attachment to *pīti*, thinking it is good: "This is *nibbāna*", "This is right", or "This is what I looked for", is the problem.

An *upakkilesa* is a mental state that arises in the course of one's search to be free of *kilesa*. But since the *yogi* still has *kilesa* they can get attached to these *upakkilesa*. With *pīti*, they can think they have attained path-fruit. Some tell their students just so. When one experiences strong *pīti*, one may feel the lips tremble. Tears flow. Body hairs stand on edge and quiver. Some even feel the anal area quivering. This is strong *pīti*. One begins to have great confidence in

his meditation method after experiencing this *pīti* and develops great confidence in the Triple Gem. The unskilled thinks that the yogi has attained a *jhāna*. Some call it a *vipassanā-jhāna*. Various such ideas are expressed. Then the teacher and the student both come to a standstill.

Passaddhi (tranquility) as an upakkilesa in vipassanā

Let's consider a simile. One is greatly thirsty. He is travelling in the hot sun and is looking for a shady place. There's no umbrella either. What happens when such a person sees a shade? *Pāmojja* (gladness) arises. *Pīti* will follow as he enters the shade. The body cools down. A pleasant feeling and *sukha* (happiness) arises. *Sukha* occurs at the end of an experience. Intense *pīti* is referred to as *passaddhi* (tranquility). There is a sense of brightness in *pīti*. *Passaddhi* is greater than *pīti*.

Passaddhi causes a softening or lightness of many of the *cetasikā* (mental factors). It influences both the *kāya* (physical body) and the mind. *Kāya-passaddhi* (tranquility of mental or physical properties) does not mean levity of the physical body. This softening of the physical body comes about due to a softening of the *gati* (mind's qualities). The *gati* and the mind are two. What are *gati*? *Saddhā*, *chanda* (zeal), *virīya*, *khanthi* (patience), *mettā*, *upekkhā* (equanimity), etc. The combination of *gati* forms the mind. Let's say a cup of tea is made. It requires tea leaves, sugar, hot water, and brewing. A jug is needed to make it, and then it is poured into a cup. If the cup was the mind, then the ingredients are like the *cetasikā*. The cup is one thing and the *cetasikā* is a different thing. Let's take another simile. There's a clean glass. It has been completely filled with water. You don't see the water, do you? Clean water in a clean glass is

not visible. If the mind is the clean glass, the water is like the gati. If the gati are to be identified and seen, they must be colored. If we mix a yellow pigment, the water appears yellow, and a blue pigment will make it blue. In this way, we see our mind when its gati comes out. If not, there's nothing visible called mind. Let's say anger comes. Anger does not simply occur. There must be an object for it to occur. An object that brings about aversion needs be present. That is the coloring. This object brought out the mind. *Passaddhi* is a mental factor of brightness caused by *pīti*. It is more intense than *pīti*.

If *pīti* is present as an *upakkileśa*, *passaddhi* does not occur as an *upakkileśa*. If one remains undeceived by *pīti*, then *passaddhi* may occur as an *upakkileśa*. If the yogi is not deceived thus far, then some other *upakkileśa* may deceive him. Due to *passaddhi* there is a lightness of the body and its nature is like that of cotton wool. As a result of *passaddhi*, one does not feel the contact with the ground, though there is contact. This contact is very light and soft. It brings about lightness in the *rūpa-kalāpa*. It is the *kāya-passaddhi* that causes the *rūpa-passaddhi* (tranquility of form). The form's most sensitive units - *rūpa-kalāpa* - are the ones that are most activated by the *cetasikā*. The presence of *passaddhi* makes most yogis say that they have attained a *jhāna* or path-fruit. Some say: "How wonderful must path-fruit be if this is like this, *hāmoduruwo*."

Some *yogis* say they got a good understanding of mind and matter. Right then a skilled teacher must chide the student and help break up such an idea. Instead, these days, some teachers help nurture these thoughts and validate the wrong impression of the *yogi*. In some group meditation classes such *yogis* are held up as exemplary. A teacher must

be very firm when *yogis* are at the level of *upakkilesa*. An unskilled teacher is useless. For those trying to build fame as a meditation teachers, these practices are alright, but a skilled teacher is one who will firmly help *yogis* overcome these *upakkilesa*. *Pīti*, and *passaddhi* are fierce. The *upakkilesa* to follow are even more dangerous. Some books present these as *vipassanā-jhānas*. These are wrong and misleading writings. People do not understand that this is not the path until the *upakkilesa* is broken. But they do not admit that their *upakkilesa* was broken because of their *māna*.

At times, the *upakkilesa* of *passaddhi* makes one feel like he is in the sky. Then too, they say it is a *jhāna* or path-fruit. There is no such experience in *jhāna* or path-fruit. *Jhāna* or path-fruit are very different. With such experiences a *yogi* is completely led astray. But these happened because one did the preliminary meditation practice, because *satipaṭṭhāna* developed, and because *vipassanā* developed. The teacher must help the student out of these *upakkilesa*. However, most, nowadays, confirm these *upakkilesa* as achievements. This is prompted by the *upakkilesa* of *nikkhanti* (delight in a *upakkilesa*). It's not possible to advise such a *yogi* either, because he has been erroneously confirmed as having achieved a spiritual development. After this he may start teaching preliminary meditation to others.

Adhimokka (decision) as an upakkilesa in vipassanā

Decision (*adhimokkha*) means great or forceful belief, which is impossible to break. “My *vipassanā* is absolutely right”, “My teacher is absolutely right”, “I am right”, “There’s nothing other than this” - this is the *upakkilesa*. *Adhimokkha* makes one decide that one’s *Dhamma*

knowledge and one's teacher is absolutely right. They would belittle other teachers and other meditation methods. As an *upakkilesa*, it is very difficult to remove. It is only after having caused some difficulties that it may be overcome.

A *yogi* with this *upakkilesa* thinks: "I note (objects) absolutely correctly", "I travel the path absolutely correctly", "I see mind and matter absolutely correctly." He clings to his teacher and his meditation method. If anything is said against his teacher or method, the *yogi* would hit out in anger like a cat - a cat stays quietly and whacks with its claws, without warning. *Yogis* with *adhimokkha* act similarly, on a very short fuse. They believe so passionately about the exclusive validity of their method. When one has this *upakkilesa* acutely, some claim they have reached the stage of *maggāmagga-ñāṇadassana-visuddhi* (purification by knowledge and vision of what is path and not path). Then one gets further deceived. This *yogi* does not even know what *maggāmagga-ñāṇadassana-visuddhi* entails.

The one with the *upakkilesa* of *adhimokkha* has no *saddhā*. Those in *adhimokkha* do not like reciting stanzas or chanting. It's when *adhimokkha* is reduced that they go for *vandanā* (venerations). Unlike the *upakkilesa* of *pīti* and *passaddhi*, *adhimokkha* is difficult to break. They live with it for years, or even die with it. With *adhimokkha* one knows that there is goodness in the path. The critical wrong-turn in this is when one obsesses: "I know this to be absolutely true." A sense of 'I' or 'self' is included, which cannot be broken. His method of meditation is not wrong. But to claim that one's method of meditation is exclusively right, is what is wrong. Every method of meditation involves *kāyānupassanā* (contemplation of the body), *vedanānupassanā*

(contemplation of the feelings), *cittānupassanā* (contemplation of the mind), and *dhammānupassanā* (contemplation of mind objects). Therefore it's not a fault of the meditation method. The fault lies in how the *yogi* considers his experiences in meditation. One may do the Goenka method, another the Mahāsi method, or the Webu Sayadaw method, or the Ajahn Chah method, or any other method. There is nothing wrong with that. Let one do his preliminary meditation with any method, and progress. However, the teacher must know at what point the student has got deceived, whether it is by *pīti*, *passaddhi*, *adhimokkha* or any other. The student must be advised about his *upakkilesa*, if he's receptive to such advice.

Paggaha* (exertion) as an *upakkilesa* in *vipassanā

When viriya occurs as an *upakkilesa* it is called *paggāha*. With it, the *yogi* does more walking and sitting meditation practice. By so doing, he pressurizes himself. *Paggaha* is a *cetasika*. These are all *cetasika gati*. When I used to learn meditation, I used to practice sitting meditation for exactly an hour, and do walking meditation for a little more than half an hour. On some days I used to sit for two hours, or three hours, or sit from morning till the noon mealtime. There was a *yogi* at that time who used to sit to compete with other *yogis*. If someone sat for an hour, this *yogi* sat for one and a half hours, and so on. An interesting thing. I thought of teaching him a good lesson and sat down for meditation after the morning meal until six in the evening. The competing *yogi* could not match this and even left the center. This is not *paggāha* but simply where the body is trained to sit for two, three or four hours. Here one sits with *māna* and *uddhacca*, and spends hours in this way.

In Myanmar I have seen *yogis* who sat continuously for two days or so. I even mistook one for a statue. At times one could be that way with a *diṭṭhi* (view) or *māna*. Some do walking meditation, continuously for long hours. I have done ten hour walking meditation sessions those days. A monk I knew spent the entire night in walking meditation. That was *sammā vāyāma* (right effort), not *paggāha*. *Paggāha* is wholly different. *Paggāha* is a *cetasika* of exertion with which one continues a wholesome action without letting go. For instance, one would sit and meditate whether it rains, is chilly, even if one is sick, sleepy, or tired. That is *paggāha*. At one's chosen time for walking meditation, one does it at whatever cost. That is *paggāha*.

Paggāha is a good thing because *virīya* is a good thing. But to be deceived by it is what misleads the *yogi*. To think one is advanced because of it is what is wrong. If not, *paggāha* is a good thing. The *yogi* affected by *paggāha* does not compare himself to others thinking: "I do walking meditation, others don't", and such like. There is no *vitakka*. It is wholesome. It becomes an *upakkilesa* when one thinks: "I now have great effort."

Sukha (happiness) as an upakkilesa in vipassanā

The happiness found in meditation cannot be experienced from the world of the five senses. There are so many luxurious items - bedspreads, clothing, houses, vehicles - but none of these can match the comfort that arises from meditation. The latter is more than hundred-fold greater. It is both physical comfort and mental comfort. The *yogi* gets deceived by this comfort and happiness. He does not want to go beyond this, wanting to experience it again and again. He places the "I" or self in it, thinking: "I have so much

happiness”, they submerge themselves in it. They start singing its praises.

The worst and intense types of *upakkilesa* are *sukha*, *paggāha*, *adhimokkha* and *ñāṇa* (knowledge). Retrieving the person experiencing the *upakkilesa* of *suka* is harder than those experiencing *paggāha*, *adhimokkha* or *ñāṇa*. Thinking this is like the happiness of *jhāna* he dwells in it for years, or even until death. He gets conceited about his meditation. But at death a happy rebirth awaits him. *Sukha* is at a higher level than *paggāha* and cannot be expressed in words. Here there is no pressure from the *nīvaraṇa*. Therefore, it is confused with the happiness of *jhāna*. It is what many refer to as *vipassanā-jhāna*, or *vipassanā-sukha*. Thereafter it is impossible to pull this person out from this happiness. An *upakkilesa* must be broken in a day or two. When it is attempted, he may think that the teacher is jealous of his happiness and progress. But if broken, he realizes that his path has fared better.

If the *yogi* does not cooperate to break the *upakkilesa*, the teacher must take a stern approach, and say: “Do not come to me again (for instructions or advice).” This is done order to impress on the *yogi* the critical importance of breaking his *upakkilesa*. The student may think that the teacher is nasty, but it is not so. The teacher takes such an approach to show that what we seek or should seek is a significantly more important goal. After all, all other experiences would be achieved in time.

Ñāṇa* (knowledge) as an *upakkilesa* in *vipassanā

With the *upakkilesa* of *ñāṇa*, the *yogi* speaks only of *vipassanā*. There’s no end to it. It’s become a nuisance to those forced to listen. They speak with vast knowledge,

giving excellent sermons. And they speak the truth. But the *yogi* is stuck in one place. They are able to explain the absence of self or analyze mind and matter, even better than any book. They speak based on their own realizations. The problem is the insertion of “self” in this whole process. It’ll be good if they can say it without the “I” in it. When the *upakkilesa* becomes less intense, they think their realization has receded and make an attempt to regain it. *Upādāna* (clinging) arises. It’s difficult to help remove it. I was also this way. I thought I had better knowledge and better *sati* than my teacher. Such a *yogi* is prone to think like this, as they, in fact, have tremendous understanding by this stage.

With *nāṇa*, one understands mind and matter or cause and effect, thoroughly. They speak of *samudaya* (cause) or *ajjhatthabāhiddā* (internal and external) so well and in detail, that anyone gets won over. They can explain the *pañcupādānakkhandā* (five aggregates of clinging), *saḷāyatana* (six sense bases), and *dhātu* beautifully. Although they have not experienced the *vipassanā nāṇa*, they speak ably about them. They can write comprehensively on the *Dhamma*. Their knowledge can be mesmerizing. This is no ordinary person. But it’s of no value. It will be excellent if he can let go of the *upakkilesa* and still have this “ability”. The *upakkilesa* of *nikkhamti* is the cause for this problem. He thinks that what he says is right. But he will always be stuck in this place. He will be able to teach others up to this level he is at.

This *yogi* thinks: “I had good realization before, but not now,” “I started understanding mind and matter, but now I don’t” and “Why don’t I understand now?” The reason he thinks so is that he has not truly realized *anicca*. He has not truly realized *anattā* (non-self). As a result, he seeks that

realization over and over again. As with other *upakkilesa*, if one does not get rid of this meditative defilement, he stalls his progress on the path. But within this process there is *saddhā*, and, because of that, he does not abandon his preliminary meditation practice. He starts seeking here and there - from meditation centers to monasteries, to Thailand, Myanmar, or India. Actually, all what he needs is his teacher to progress on the path. Instead, the seeking goes on. But his rebirth is destined to a good place, though not to *nibbāna*. *Sukha* and *ñāṇa* can occur together, giving them the further illusion of path-fruit, and thinking that those who say otherwise know nothing about meditation.

Even when he is able to remove the *upakkilesa*, he does not think he was deceived. This makes it difficult for him to progress with his preliminary meditation practice, as they expect and yearn for the previous level of *upakkilesa*. Let's consider the simile where one constructs a barrier against a flood of water, whereby it stops it taking its natural course. The water will be stuck in one place, moving no further. An *upakkilesa* is like that barrier, preventing one from flowing in the path. The *upakkilesa* of *ñāṇa* is so fierce. Once it is broken, he starts seeking the former level of *samādhi*, and does walking and sitting meditation as if in a frenzy. And then comes right back to the previous lower level.

Mupatthana* (awareness of objects of attention) as an *upakkilesa* in *vipassanā

Mupatthāna is noting, or awareness of (sense) objects. It is not sati. Noting objects and sati are two different things: "I didn't note objects very well yesterday", "I must note objects well today", "I can note well now", "I note better than I did before", "The others cannot note as well as I can."

Then they get attached and think that it'll be good if they can continuously note in this fashion. It is the *upakkilesa* of *nikkhanti* that has deceived this correct way of practice. This type of thinking creates *upādāna*.

With *mupatthāna*, he notes objects without missing any. Let's say that one is going for meals. He notes without missing a single object. One notes even the batting of the eyelids. It is well developed. Then what is amiss? - it is thinking that his current level is good, to stall and cling to that level, and to not think of the remainder of the *Dhamma* path. When *sukha*, *ñāṇa*, and *mupatthāna* occur together, the *yogi* may think of it as path-fruit. Then, objects are not experienced clearly, feelings are not experienced clearly. The incoming objects also reduce. When that happens some teach this as a reduction of *sankhāra* (formations). He is told to observe whatever objects that arise, and to keep on noting them. To keep noting the same objects in this manner promotes clinging to those objects. The *yogi* is also taught about *vipassanā-ñāṇa*. Because of all this, the *yogi* experiences a reduction of feelings and perceptions of the objects. Then he is told to observe whatever small objects that arise. The external *sankhāra* stop flowing. Feelings and perceptions reduce. The flow of thoughts gets stopped. When the *yogi* relates this to the teacher, he is "awarded" a path-fruit. He is finished. The *yogi* will have no further advancement on the path.

Upekkha* (equanimity) as an *upakkilesa* in *vipassanā

Upekkhā occurs in a preliminary meditation practice. It could also grow with the development of virtuous and wholesome qualities. It can also arise with increasing

knowledge. But it could also occur due to little knowledge. The *upekkhā* as indicated here is what accompanies an increase in knowledge. It developed with an increase in knowledge because one saw objects clearly. There is nothing wrong with that. But the *yogi* with *upekkha* as an *upakkilesa* compares himself with others, and think: “That person does not have the equanimity. I have.” He develops a liking for equanimity. One who truly has equanimity has no liking for it. When knowledge is complete, there is no liking or disliking to equanimity. But the one with *upekkha* as an *upakkilesa* has a liking for it. The one who has real equanimity simply has it, and that’s all. He doesn’t think that he must have it. Where a *yogi* removes the *upakkilesa* of *upekkha* with a teacher’s guidance, it does not occur again.

Though the *upakkilesa* of *upekkha* is removed, *aloka*, *pīti*, *obhāsa*, and *sukha*, may occur. But the *yogi* now knows that they come, and also pass away. They are aspects of meditation. They are necessary. *Pīti*, *passaddhi*, *samādhi*, *upekkhā*, *manasikāra*, and *virīya* are all necessary. The *yogi* experiences these at the appropriate times. The *yogi* progresses on the path because of these aspects. But it is not good to remain in them. At times the *yogi* may experience *sukha*, but if he is remaining in it, he must be cautioned, and not encouraged. That is the way to help *yogis* keep moving on the path and not get stuck. The kindness of the teacher must manifest through his sternness. Some contemporary teachers, knowingly or unknowingly, praise students who are at these levels. But they should be cautioning their students instead.

Nikkhanti* (delight in an *upakkilesa*) as an *upakkilesa* in *vipassanā

The worst of all the *upakkilesa* is *nikkhanti* (delight in an *upakkilesa*). *Nikkhanti* is where a *yogi* has a great liking towards the nine aforesaid *upakkilesa*. *Nikkhanti* is where the *yogi* keeps yearning for a repetition of the experience of the afore-mentioned nine *upakkilesa*, keeps liking them, and thinking that they are good. *Nikkhanti* is a significant problem if it occurs in a *yogi*.

Upakkilesa occur due to one's preliminary meditation practice. One must remove them also through one's preliminary meditation practice. There's no other way. The preliminary meditation practice must be done under the guidance of a teacher. Simply associating a teacher without doing one's practice is useless.

I had experienced all the *upakkilesa* in great intensity. Depending on the person, the *upakkilesa* act with different intensities. Some *yogis* can easily develop their preliminary meditation practice. They may not be affected so much by the *upakkilesa*. That would be a highly developed person. He would know how to progress without being deceived, even without the teacher telling him how to avoid *upakkilesa*. Some present-day teachers may not even know how to guide a *yogi* who's at such a level.

A *yogi* is susceptible to at least one *upakkilesa*

There are only a very few persons who have progressed in their preliminary meditation practice without experiencing *upakkilesa*. In the time of the *Buddha*, people like *Santhathi*, *Bāhiya*, and the Venerable *Sāriputta* realized the *Dhamma* as they were being instructed in it. But these were people who

had engaged in preliminary meditation in previous lives. Their first contact with the *Dhamma* was not in the lifetime they met the *Buddha*. They had had much prior practice. The moment the *Buddha* instructed *Paṭācāra* in the *Dhamma*, she immediately realized it. *Pīti* pervaded her. It was later that she attained path-fruit. There is no mention of her *upakkilesa* or being deceived by them. To *Āṅgulimāla*: “I have stopped. You stop,” drove the point home. No *upakkilesa*. The *pīti* made him throw his bow and arrows down the precipice. As the Buddha spoke to *Rajjumāla*, when she was trying to commit suicide, she was suffused with *pīti*. That was not an *upakkilesa*.

Some yogis remain at an *upakkilesa* and become meditation teachers

The *upakkilesa* need not occur in order. Neither would all ten occur together. They may occur at random. For instance, let’s say one did not get stuck at *passaddhi*. Then there is no *upakkilesa* there for he has successfully broken it at that point. But he may get deceived by *adhimokkha*. It’s common for one to get stuck at least at one of the *upakkilesa*, if not two or three. There is no way to prevent this happening. With a skilled teacher, and timely and stern cautioning, one can move on and progress on the path. If not, he may become a meditation teacher himself. He would be able to guide others through preliminary meditation practice until others reach his level of *upakkilesa*. Such a teacher cannot help the students move beyond. Let’s say one develops in preliminary meditation until *passaddhi*, with no *upakkilesa*. At *passaddhi*, he would experience the *upakkilesa*. Such a *yogi* would be able to teach preliminary meditation up to this level.

Let's say I am learning meditation from a teacher who had progressed up to the level of *passaddhi*. He was not deceived up to that level. It was with *sukha* that he experienced an *upakkilesa*. He would be able to teach me very well, until I come up to his level. But he would not be able to teach me beyond that level, because he himself is stalled at the *upakkilesa*. Because of this, I too will stall at this point. But if I have sufficient merit, I will be able to breakthrough and go beyond my teacher's limitations.

Upādāna (clinging) to an upakkilesa

An *upakkilesa* occurs when one is deceived by the experiences that occur in a preliminary meditation practice. There are some who encourage yogis to cling to *pīti* or *passaddhi*. If there is no such encouragement, there would be no *upādāna*. It becomes an *upādāna* when others say things like: "You have a *jhāna*. Protect it well." As they say this, there arises an *upādāna* to it. The yogi then thinks of seeking it again. This is *upādāna*. An *upakkilesa* occurs because of a preliminary meditation practice. Then, with *nikkhanti*, one evaluates oneself as: "I am advanced through my meditation." Then one repeatedly does his preliminary meditation practice seeking to find this experience. This is *upādāna*.

The *yogi* with *upakkilesa* is a nuisance to others, because he would be talking about his *upakkilesa* with others. This troubles others. But there is nothing coarse or gross in his talk. The coarse aspects occur at the initial stages of the preliminary meditation practice. They occur with the *nīvaraṇa*, before the *yogi* reaches the level of the *upakkilesa*. The *upakkilesa* occurs with the suppression of the *nīvaraṇa*. It is difficult to suppress the *nīvaraṇa*.

***Pāramitā* (perfections)**

Pāra means the other bank, the other side or the other shore. What one needs to get to the other side, one must prepare on this side. One cannot go across to the other shore and prepare once there. So, if the other side is *nibbāna* one must develop the required virtues and wholesomeness on this side. This is what *pāramitā* or perfections mean. One must perfect all that is needed. If the required virtues and wholesomeness has not developed, one thing or the other has deceived the person. One who has well developed virtues and wholesomeness has a greater ability to break through the *upakkilesa* and move forward. Such a one is receptive to the advice of the teacher. He understands well. It is the one with *pāramitā* who goes on the path of the *Dhamma*. One simply cannot progress on the path without *pāramitā*.

The teacher need not speak much with the one who does the preliminary meditation practice well. The teacher has to only listen. Nothing needs to be said anew, as the object of meditation is already given. Once the object is given, the teacher needs to only listen to the *yogi's* experiences and to speak only if the *yogi* wavers. This is the nature of the *pāramitā*. The *yogi* may be affected by some old *kamma* (advantageous or disadvantageous action). He may need a little help there. If not, the teacher needs to assist only if other people speak to the *yogi* and his sati and *sampajañña* gets affected.

Sleep and preliminary meditation practice

What many refer to as path-knowledge and *jhāna* is actually deep sleep - it is the *bhavaṅga* (subconscious mind stream). In my early days, I too referred so. It was only until later that I came to understand that it is not so. There is a

mind that is asleep. The *bhavaṅga* means a deep sleep where there is no awareness of objects. There is no happiness or sadness in the *bhavaṅga*. There will be comfort when one wakes up from the *bhavaṅga*. If happiness was associated with the object experienced just prior to its occurrence, if that object was a sad one, then sadness will ensue when one comes out of the *bhavaṅga*. Some refer to this *bhavaṅga* state - of being free from happiness and sadness - as *nibbāna*, or *jhāna*. The *yogi* stays long in that, even hours. His body would be upright and after a good, long sleep he would wake up. When the *yogi* is informed of the true nature of this experience of his, he can break through being in the *bhavaṅga*.

Nibbāna arises from three reasons: the reduction of the *nīvaraṇa*, the absence of *upādāna*, and the arising of *paññā*. That is not sleep. One can attain *nibbāna* while eating, bathing, preaching *Dhamma*, listening to *Dhamma*, etc. It is called path-knowledge. The term “knowledge” indicates that there is no sleep. *Nibbāna* is a mind that arises spontaneously and which has never before been experienced in one’s journey in *Samsāra*. It is not a sleep.

One can go to a deep sleep when *manasikāra* is very strong. As if one is intoxicated. Sleep can come on due to intense viriya too. Intense *passaddhi* too, leads to sleep. And, so does physical fatigue. The teacher should know the cause of the *yogi*’s sleep. In some types of sleep the body is perfectly erect, without the slightest bending, and can be this way for an hour or so - after such a sitting the *yogi* may say that he understood cause and effect. Such type of sleep happens with deep *samādhi*. Let’s say one went to sleep with *manasikāra*. Then he wakes up with the object that they were noting last - whatever object that they slept with, they wake

up with it. But this happening is not bad. Some mistakenly call this state the *jāgariyānu yoga* (devotion to wakefulness). But this is not so. The quality of *jāgariyānu yoga* is only present in a *Buddha*. Some call this type of sleep and subsequent awakening, a path-knowledge. This is also wrong.

The one who wakes up in *samādhi* finds the sleep very pleasant. The one who wakes up with *manasikāra* feels very happy. The one who goes on to sleep with *virīya* wakes up with difficulty. Another who does *ānāpānasati* (or any other technique), while noting the breath, may “see” many things. Watching all of this like a movie, he may fall asleep. This type of *yogi* is one who just goes to sleep. The other three are advanced and they do not dream. Those who go to sleep without any of these would wake up with their necks collapsed, and that is the majority.

Yogis sleep due to bodily fatigue too. At times they may wake up to some external object. Two types of *yogis* wake up to an external object: the one who sleeps after seeing many things (as if watching a movie), and those with bodily tiredness. These two *yogis* do not have awakened minds. They are in the *bhavaṅga*. Yet they experience a pleasantness which occurs due to the pleasantness of clinging to objects. When waking, it is this pleasantness that is noted. They return to where they were. Similarly, if one went to sleep confused, they wake up so.

Vipassanā* practice and *upakkilesa

For meditation to begin, one must overcome the *upakkilesa*, and, go much further. Meditation happens when the *upakkilesa* are completely removed and absent. The *upakkilesa* occur when one has *manasikāra*. If one has *sati*,

the *upakkilesa* cannot get a hold. It is sati that helps remove *upakkilesa*. In a preliminary meditation practice, the periods with *manasikāra* is what is referred to as *vipassanā*.

The *yogi* notes objects as hearing, seeing, thinking, listening, quivering, and so on. That is the *satipaṭṭhāna* practice. From a *satipaṭṭhāna* practice, with time, the *yogi* inclines to *vipassanā*. In *vipassanā*, the *yogi* understands phenomenon such as the *khandha*, *dhātu*, and *āyatana*. It is together with the *upakkilesa* that one understands these phenomenon. *Upakkilesa* does not have to be removed to understand these. But by this understanding, one is able to be free of the *upakkilesa*. It is in *vipassanā* that the *upakkilesa* occur. However, the most refined *vipassanā ñāṇa* occurs when the *upakkilesa* are removed. These occur when *sati* arises. If *sati* does not occur properly, the *yogi* remains with the *upakkilesa*. The *upakkilesa* occur because one starts understanding phenomenon such as *khandha*, *dhātu*, and *āyatana*, and the *samādhi* that ensues from this understanding. Therefore, this means that when one's practice has inclined to *vipassanā* and remains in *vipassanā*, the ten *upakkilesa* is active. If one has good *sati* within a *vipassanā* practice, one can free oneself from the *upakkilesa* with the help of a good teacher.

The *upakkilesa* occur after the stage of *diṭṭhi-visuddhi* (purification of view). But many claim, happily, that they have reached path-fruit or *jhāna* when experiencing *upakkilesa*. *Vipassanā* means the stage when one sees the *ti-lakkhana*, however slightly, in phenomena such as *khandha*, *dhātu*, and *āyatana*. The *yogi* may not see the *ti-lakkhana* completely. But, when he does see, that means he is in a *vipassanā* practice, which then leads to the occurrence of *upakkilesa*. So, both *vipassanā* and *upakkilesa* is present.

And it is here that sati helps remove the *upakkilesa*. Having a teacher is not enough. The *yogi* has to have sati too. When someone asks me to teach preliminary meditation, I talk with him a little to see if he has *upakkilesa*, and if they can be removed. If they can be removed, I teach him. They say that some indigenous people use a net to catch birds. When they are so netted in, it is but one intelligent bird that manages to escape from the net. Otherwise all are caught. In like manner, almost all are caught in these *upakkilesa*. Similarly, it is rarely that one escapes from *saṃsāra*. Not everyone.

An *upakkilesa*, once broken, can occur again. Or another *upakkilesa* can occur. The *upakkilesa* is overcome by the *vipassanā-ñāṇa*. There are eight *vipassanā-ñāṇa*, and they arise after the removal of the *upakkilesa*. While the *upakkilesa* are present, none of them can arise. *Upakkilesa* can be easily removed in a new *yogi*, and such *yogis* are rare these days. Most present day *yogis* have been to so many different meditation centers and done so many practices that they are so entangled, making it very difficult to teach them.

Vipassanā-ñāṇa* (insight knowledges) and *upakkilesa

One completes the path when one experiences and develops the *vipassanā-ñāṇa*. In order to complete the path, he also needs a *kalyāṇamitta* (noble friend), a skilled teacher, too. The *vipassanā-ñāṇa* develop when the *yogi* is free of the *upakkilesa*. There are eight such *vipassanā-ñāṇa*. When the *vipassanā-ñāṇa* develop, it is referred to as *bhojjhaṅga*. The *bhojjhaṅga* are: *sati*, *dhammavicaya* (investigation of phenomena), *virīya*, *pīti*, *passaddhi*, *saṃādhi* and *upekkhā*. The *bhojjhaṅga* are experienced when one has passed at least the *vipassanā-ñāṇa* of *nibbidā* (knowledge of disenchantment).

It is after *nibbidā* that *sati* is best. The *bojjhaṅga* are a part of realization. The three factors that occur closest to realization is *sati*, *dharmavicaya*, and *virīya*. These three factors give rise to four effects: *pīti*, *passaddhi*, *samādhi* and *upekkhā*. It is these seven factors - causes plus effects - that constitute the *bojjhaṅga*. Earlier, I indicated that in *upakkilesa*, too, that there is *pīti*, *nāṇa*, *virīya* (*paggāha*), *passaddhi*, and *upekkhā*. It was only *samādhi* that was not mentioned. Here, too, we have the same, except one, i.e., *samādhi*, but importantly, without the *upakkilesa*. What a *yogi* does after overcoming these five *upakkilesa*, is what is called meditation. Until then it is not meditation. The *vipassanā-nāṇa* of *sankhārupekkhā* (equanimity regarding all formations) is referred to as meditation.

Meditation is associated with *viveka* (seclusion) and *virāga* (dispassion). It is here that *sati* starts to grow distinctly towards *nibbāna*. There are the three types of *viveka*: tranquility of the mental factors (*kāya-viveka*), tranquility of mind (*citta-viveka*), and freedom from the defilements (*upadhi-viveka*). The *bojjhaṅga* are the supportive factors for *upadhi-viveka*. *Virāga* is detachment from objects. *Nirodha* (cessation) is the knowing that what has passed is gone for good, and that it will not recur - it is not that things disappeared. Nor that something which was, is no longer there. *Nirodha* means that the conditions needed for something to arise is non-existent. At this point, the mind automatically inclines to *viveka* and *virāga*. It's not something that can be established by force. Before one comes to this level, the factors essential for meditation starts developing in the mind. From here onwards, the person keeps going the entire distance of the path. It's not a journey that will stall. If it does stall, it's only in the case of a *mahābodhisattva*. All others would complete the path. At this

point too the teacher must be firm, to ensure the journey is completed. He must take special note of this stage, even more than the beginning.

The *yogi* will face more trying and difficult times at this stage. Easy phases are less. There is no *pīti* and *passaddhi* here to give the *yogi* some support. Lethargy can step in, and he may feel like giving up. That is why the *yogi* needs the gentle support of the teacher, without which he can't complete the path. At this stage the *yogi* knows the path is correct, but he faces difficulties. The difficulties peculiar to this stage emphasize the need for a skilled, knowledgeable and experienced teacher. If not, the teacher may regress the *yogi*. The meditator does not need a friend, nor a supporter for his requisites. He only needs a skilled teacher, like a child with its mother. Family and friends are alright, as long as there are at some distance, with little connection. Friendships and practicing on the path are two different things.

The method of meditation and *upakkilesa*

Changing one's meditation method can't rid one of *upakkilesa*. Somehow the *upakkilesa* itself must be removed. One has to remove the desire for it. The teacher being firm is the way to rid one of *upakkilesa*, firmly making the *yogi* realize that the pursuit of the *upakkilesa* is useless. Today, it is difficult to help people realize this. Instead, they have been told that these are path-fruitions and *jhāna*. This difficulty is compounded by the pleasure one derives from the *upakkilesa*. They do not thus want to be rid of the *upakkilesa*, nor do they like these to be pointed out, nor to be questioned about these. Some may not even like this talk. Or they think that these topics are relevant not to them but to others. The truth hurts them sorely.

The skilled teacher of preliminary meditation

Let's consider that someone doing a preliminary meditation practice reaches a good level. Because of this he may be told that he has reached a *jhāna*, or a *vipassanā ñāṇa*, or else a path-fruit. But it's actually not so. A skilled teacher who knows the *vipassanā ñāṇa* would know if the *yogi* has actually attained to these. Let's take the *vipassanā ñāṇa* of *udayabbaya*. A skilled teacher would know the *yogi*'s mental state prior to it, how the mind should manifest when he has this knowledge, and the mental state after it. Always, the skilled teacher knows what precedes, what happens when the knowledge arises, and what follows. This is how the teacher assesses the *yogi*'s level. Thus the teacher would know when a particular *yogi*, would reach, for instance, the *vipassanā ñāṇa* of *udayabbaya*. If it does not happen on that day, the teacher knows that the *yogi* must have talked to someone or something else has happened which disturbed the *yogi*. When it does not happen on that particular day, it would be difficult for the *yogi* to reach that point later. Because one has to build up to that level all over again. This is why *yogis* are asked not to talk with others. When a *yogi* is misled by being told that he has a path-fruit or a *jhāna*, he realize that it is not so, only when he gets to meet a skilled teacher with the correct knowledge. In preliminary meditation practice, talking about ones' practice with others should never be done. Frivolous talk is damaging, but only to some degree. But what is most damaging is talking about one's and the other's meditation practice. It is absolutely unnecessary to talk about one's practice or sila. "Do you have a *jhāna*?" "How do you get a *jhāna*?", "Is it *vipassanā* that you do?", "My meditation is like this ..." - this sort of talk can finish a *yogi*, making it very difficult to reverse the harm done. This is why solitude is encouraged. When a *yogi* fails

to progress - either through talking carelessly or for some other reason - the teacher would advise him on what to do to rectify matters. But this advice may not be as targeted, nor with the same level of concern, as before. This is because the teacher cannot repeatedly put in so much effort when the student is not reciprocating by making the right effort. The *yogi* must remember what he has been told to do and not do, particularly, not talk, and then correct himself.

In *jhāna* too, there is a similar phenomenon happening. *Jhāna* also has a *bhavaṅga*. It is this *bhavaṅga* that is thought of as a *jhānic* attainment, incorrectly. The *jhāna* itself lasts but a short time. A *jhāna* is recognized by the *upacāra samādhi* (neighborhood or access concentration). The *upacāra samādhi* is stronger after a *jhānic* experience. It is through this *upacāra samādhi* that a *jhāna*'s initial stage is recognized, and through which the *upacāra samādhi* is developed. One cannot explain what a *jhāna* is like. It is not an aloka, not a sleep, not *pīti*. *Pīti* arises before the *jhāna*. If it's an aloka that the *yogi* has experienced, it could be a *nimitta*. A *jhāna* is a mundane state with a maximum suppression of kilesa, which lasts but a few moments. The mind reverts to the *upacāra samādhi* soon after. Being of a *kāmāvacara* nature, the *upacāra samādhi* following the *jhāna* is much stronger than the *upacāra samādhi* (also of a *kāmāvacara* nature) before the *jhāna*. It is because of this stronger *upacāra samādhi* that a skilled teacher knows that a *yogi* has experienced was a *jhāna*. Although a *jhānic* experience lasts only a brief time, one can remain in the *upacāra samādhi* for a long time after. This *upacāra* is not *jhāna*. It is before *upacāra* that one may experience the *samatha upakkilesa* spoken of earlier.

Changes that occur in a *yogi's* life because of a preliminary meditation practice

Some *yogis* who practice meditation at a center and then return home do not show much progress. This regression occurs when there is *upakkilesa*. But if one can overcome the *upakkilesa*, this problem goes away. Such a person could live well at his home and be better than most other householders. Where one with *upakkilesa* lives is where the disagreements, scolding, and shouting happen. The other family members are blamed: “You are all enemies of my meditation.”

A preliminary meditation practice can change some people’s mental state and way of life. Let’s say it’s for the better, though there is no path-fruit. This is the result of *manasikāra*. If sati develops at some point, followed by *sampajañña*, one will change methodically. His coarse habits would go away. Though these coarse present-life habits go away, the older habits remain. These older habits are the *āsava* (taints) and they can only be removed by sati. The *āsava* gets eradicated with the path-knowledges, not with the *jhānas*.

We have habits that are learnt from this life. These maybe learnt at home, in school, from monastics or clergy, from overseas, from *yogis*, etc. All these present habits must be removed. They could be removed by *manasikāra*. Once they are removed, *samādhi* will improve. The condition that results from this improved *samādhi* can remain even till one’s death. Even with an *upakkilesa*, it can remain. He would be very restrained. But there is no path-fruit. He is deceived, but he won’t admit it.

When one lives with another and observes his lifestyle, he can know if that person has or hasn't a path-fruit or a *jhāna*. If he conflicts with another he cannot have a path-fruit or a *jhāna*. After a path-knowledge there comes the path-fruit. After the path-fruit, any thoughts on whether one has or hasn't any *diṭṭhi* would not occur. One does not even think about such things anymore. Further, he wouldn't think if his *sila* is correct or not. This does not mean that he has no *sila*. In fact, after a path-knowledge, he becomes well established in *sila*. Now he is a different person altogether, a new life. There will be no more questions such as: "What was the Buddha like?", "What was his nature?", "What body size was he?", "Does he possess the thirty two marks of a highly blessed person?", "Are these true or false?", "Did he really preach all this *Dhamma*?" It is like the person who can walk and does not think if he can walk or not. He just walks.

If one has developed virtuous and wholesome qualities, it is somewhat of an easy task to attain a path-knowledge. Similarly, the practice of preliminary meditation is a very difficult task. But, at the same time, it's easy too. It's difficult for the reason that it's a journey where one cannot afford to be deceived by anything. Then it becomes an easy journey. Then the *yogi* just is, and easily and simply does what needs to be done. As one progresses, one becomes increasingly humble. But what we see in *yogis* these days is that they aren't humble. They become coarser and coarser but they think they are advanced. They do not smile and cannot be associated with because of their rigidity. The Buddha was the most gentle and mild person. An aspect in the discourse on loving-kindness, which refers to the qualities of a person who is on the path is: "... *mudu anātimānī*" (gentle and humble). We must develop this quality in us, though many

do not possess it. The reason that many *yogis* aren't gentle and humble is that they have incorrectly understood the *Dhamma* and preliminary meditation practice. Instead of reducing their *kilesa* with the preliminary meditation practice, they cling to objects of *kilesa*. Others may even think that if he hadn't started meditation, he would have been a better person - because he is so coarse and rigid. The one who does preliminary meditation correctly is a pleasant person whom others can associate with and talk to. If those who practice preliminary meditation becomes very coarse and explosive, they could be corrected with stern advice. However, some may not be amenable to such advice.

Generally, one has to see one's own faults or that of others. Most people do not see their faults, though they see that of others very well. This is because of a lack of *sati*. Almost all of do not have *sati*. If we do, it may be very slight, for a few seconds in day. If there is *sati*, on the other hand, one would be well aware of the deficits in one's own thoughts, words and deeds. It is because one has no insight into one's own shortcomings that he conflicts with others. The Buddha has advised us to look within ourselves, rather than at others.

In the early days, I used to always look for faults in others. It took me a long time to get over this. If *sati* is well established one should have completed his journey on the path. If *sati* is well established, something would happen without delay. It doesn't because *sati* doesn't get established in a given object the *yogi* associates with. It is the absence of *sati* that makes us think that we are doing the right thing. However, *sati* is present in one in a small way, as he keeps noting objects. So its absence is not the only reason for one's lack of progress. The presence of *upakkilesa* is what halts us.

This is when one develops an attitude that one is spiritually developed, and where one thinks he knows best. He thinks that he has an abundance of *paññā*. He also thinks that his effort is greater than that of others. These attitude are what hinders a *yogi's* progress.

Sati has no object. When there is an object, it gives rise to something else: either attachment or aversion. It is because a *yogi* has *manasikāra* that he develops attachment or aversion. Let's take the analogy of a dewdrop at the edge of a blade of grass in the morning. It glistens when the sun is up. This happens because of the sun and because it's not obstructed by dust. A second dewdrop will not glisten if it's laden with dust. Just like this dust, we have mixed our habitual tendencies with our preliminary meditation practice. As a result, there is no brilliance. The brilliance is comparable to the detachment and absence of aversion. On the other hand what we have is like that dust-laden dewdrop. Being at rest and being detached, and observing *sīla*, by themselves, cannot rectify this lack of brilliance.

Most people think: "There is an arahant there", "I must go and see him", "There is one with *jhāna*", "I must go see him" This serves no purpose. I too went in search of *arahants* those days. Later, I realized this was useless. If one has attained *arahantship*, it is good for him. But not for another, as he is not an *arahant*. Why do I say so? In one's practice on the path one is only required to know that *sati* is yet not established in him. He must admit that the four foundations of *sati* is not yet developed in him. Therefore he must direct *virīya*. *Virīya* is not only about practicing preliminary meditation in a sitting posture. It's also not about seeking path-fruit and *jhāna*. It is purely about establishing *sati* in one self.

With this attitude one doesn't need to evaluate others. Such a *yogi* will attend on others in times of their problems or sickness. But he wouldn't look at others' deficiencies. Let's say there's just you and me - the only two people in a monastery, or a *kuti* close-by, somewhere. You become sick. If I am a person with well-established *sati*, I will look after you. There are some people who may not bother to even offer a glass of water to the sick, because they mistakenly think that this would "break" their *sati*. That's where they are wrong. I have observed this whilst living in monasteries and meditation centers. Once, a scorpion stung the person in my neighboring *kuti*. I could hear him groaning. But I remained in my *kuti*, not wanting to break my "sati" or my preliminary meditation practice. Later my teacher asked me: "Pemasiri, weren't you near his *kuti*?" I answered that I was, and that I was meditating. He asked me if I had *sati* then. I answered yes. He then *said* that I actually hadn't *sati*. He asked if I heard the noise, and if I remained conflicting with it. I answered in the affirmative. The way I was noting objects at that time was wrong. My teacher managed to educate me on this. There was nothing to attach to nor avert there. Hence, recognizing and understanding what *sati* is, is of critical importance to those practicing preliminary meditation.

The lack of *sati* is our biggest shortcoming. If it is well established, it can be just seven seconds, seven days, or seven years to *nibbāna*. It is because of our shortcoming and not that of the *Dhamma* that we are yet unawakened.

Sampajañña occurs when *sati* is very well developed. This happens essentially through *vipassanā*. Most of today's teachers explain as *sati* what *manasikāra* is. But *sati* as in the *satipaṭṭhāna* is a completely different thing to what these teachers say it is. *Manasikāra* is absolutely essential for us.

Without it we cannot develop sati. Let's say a yogi notes the processes of eating, drinking, bathing, dressing, combing one's hair, etc. It is when the *yogi* keeps doing this *manasikāra* continuously that sati arises. *Sati* is the fruit of *manasikāra*. Once *sati* is established, he is then able to note objects with it.

When one has good *manasikāra*, the *yogi* gets trained to be without attachment or aversion when a given object arises. It is because we are not yet there that we get effected and conflicted when objects arise. We discussed *upakkilesa* earlier-on. One cannot be with these *upakkilesa* all the time. One will be out of them as well. It is when one is out that them that the afore-mentioned conflicts happen. On the other hand, those who do not meditate are not like that. If someone does something to an ordinary person, nothing happens. That is because they know they have *kilesa*. Therefore, if someone scolds them, they think: "This person could scold me and even hit me." The *yogi* with an *upakkilesa* is not like that. He erupts instantaneously. On the surface, the ordinary person seems more advanced.

Let's say we think of giving a *dāna* (an act of generosity). There is sati in that thought because craving, aversion, and delusion did not arise there. There are no expectations either. Believing in *kamma-phala* (*kamma-vipāka*: action and results), one gives the *dāna*. At that moment the *cetasika* of sati has occurred. It occurred and passes away. Similarly, we may think of observing *sīla*. Here, too, there is an absence of craving, aversion, and delusion. In every wholesomeness - big or small - there is *sati*. If it is an act of generosity, it must be given without any expectation of an outcome. Similarly, one must observe *sīla* without any expectation. *Sīla* isn't there to receive any external benefit. Let's say we

are doing preliminary meditation. We mustn't do this with the expectation of experiencing *jhāna*. *Sati* occurs where there is no expectation. It is where *sati* is established that *jhāna* occur. Let's say we engage in a *vipassanā* practice. When this is done without any expectation, it is of the highest level.

Where there is an expectation, there arises an object. If there is an object, *sati* does not arise. If the object is the thought that: "I must attain a *jhāna*", *sati* will not occur. If the intention is that: "I must attain path-fruit", there is an expectation there. Then *sati* isn't present. *Sati* is the pure wholesome mind that always occurs when there is no object or expectation. That is why the *Buddha* said that in every wholesomeness there is *sati*. If an object or expectation is present there will be an *upādāna*. If an expectation arises, *sati* recedes and *upādāna* arises. One must allow *sati* to develop. It is then that *sampajañña* starts to occur.

It is after *samādhi* develops from *sati* that *sampajañña* will occur. When *samādhi* starts to grow, many thoughts devoid of expectations start to come into one's life. When these thoughts develop further, one would either experience the *jhāna*, or attain path-knowledges, depending on his type of practice. If one noted with an object, it is the *jhāna* that one will experience. If one let go of objects and noted, it is a path-knowledge that he will experience. Let's say that one engages in preliminary meditation practice for a long time. *Manasikāra* is present. But he practices with an expectation. And the wholesomeness that comes from its practice is there. But the wholesomeness that is *sati* does not arise much because there is expectation. Now, let's say one practices without any expectation. He notes every object. Then *sati* keeps on developing and *samādhi* arises. It is this *samādhi*

that lets one see how objects break up and pass. This seeing is referred to as *sampajañña*. This is *paññā* and one sees the *ti-lakkhaṇa*.

Let's say there is a needle. There is also thread. The eye of the needle is very small. Then the thread should be even finer, or it wouldn't go through the eye of the needle. What is happening with preliminary meditation practice is like passing a very fine thread through the fine eye of a needle. The thread is comparable to *paññā*, and the eye of the needle is like *sati*, *virīya* and *saddhā*. *Paññā* doesn't work if there is an object. So one must use *sati* to create a place where there is no object. If the thread is much bigger, it will always go outside the eye of the needle. If *sati* is insufficient, it will regularly go outside of the object. There will be just *manasikāra* but no opportunity for *paññā* to arise.

May the blessings of the Triple Gem be with you all.

Pali and Sinhala terms in English, as used in this book

Abhiññā - higher powers/psychic powers/super normal powers

Adhicitta - higher mentalities

Adhimokkha - decision

Ajjhatthabahiddā - internal and external

Aloka - light

āloka-nimitta - light images/light signs

Ānāpānasati - mindfulness on the in-and-out-breathing

Anattā - non-self

Anicca - impermanence

Arahants - noble individuals who has eradicated all defilements

Āsava - taints

Āyatana - faculties

Bhavaṅga - subconscious mind stream

Bhojjhaṅga - factors of awakening

Bodhisattva - aspirant to Buddhahood

Cetasikā - mental factors

Chanda - zeal

Cittānupassanā - contemplation of the mind

Cittassekaggatā - one-pointedness of mind

Dāna - an act of generosity

Deva - celestial being

Dhamma - the Buddha's teachings

Dhammānupassanā - contemplation of mind objects

Dhammavicaya - investigation of phenomena

Dhātu - elements

Diṭṭhi - view

Diṭṭhi-visuddhi - purification of view

Dukkha - unsatisfactory nature

Gati - mind's ways

Hānuduruwo - monk
Indriya - spiritual faculties
Jāgariyānuyoga - devotion to wakefulness
Jhāna - absorption
Jhāna-nimitti - images of absorptions
Kalyāṇamitta - noble friend
Kāmacchanda - sense desire
Kāmāvacara - sensuous sphere
Kamma - advantageous or disadvantageous action
Kamma-phala/kamma-vipāka - action and results
Kasiṇamandala - disc
Kāya - physical body
Kāyānupassanā - contemplation of the body
Kāya-passaddhi - tranquillity of mental properties
Khanthi - patience
Khandha - aggregates
Kilesa - defilements
Kuti - shelter/hut
Maggāmagga-ñāṇadassana-visuddhi - purification by knowledge
and vision of what is path and not path
Mahābodhisattva - great Buddha aspirant
Māna - conceit
Manasikāra - attention to the present moment/noting the present
moment
Mettā - loving kindness
Mudu anantimāni - gentle and humble
Mupatthāna - awareness of objects of attention
Pāṭihāriya - miracles
Ñāṇa - knowledge
Nibbāna - enlightenment
Nibbidā - knowledge of disenchantment
Nikkhanti - delight in an upakkilesa
Nimitta - image

Nīvaraṇa - hindrances
Obhāsa - effulgence of light
Pabhāva - aura
Paggāha - effort
Pāmojja - gladness
Pañcupādānakkhanda - five aggregates of clinging
Paññā - wisdom
Pāramitā - perfections
Parikamma-nimitta - preparatory image
Passaddhi - tranquillity
Paṭhavī-dhātu - earth element
Paṭibhāga-nimitta - counter-image
Pāṭihāriya - miracles
Piṛith/parittas - protective recitations of stanzas or discourses
Pīti - rapture
Pūjā - offerings
Rūpa-kalāpa - corporeal units; material group
Rūpa-passaddhi - tranquillity of form
Saddhā - confidence in the Triple Gem
Saḷāyatana - six sense bases
Samsāra - round of rebirth
Samādhi - concentration
Samatha - tranquillity practice/meditation
Sammā samādhi - right concentration
Sammā vāyāma - right effort
Sampajañña - clear comprehension
Samudaya - cause
Sangha - community of Buddhist monks
Sankhāra - formations
Sankhārupekkhā - equanimity regarding all formations
Sati - mindfulness
Satipaṭṭhāna - the establishment of mindfulness

Sila - morality
Sukha - happiness
Thina-middha - sloth and torpor
Ti-lakkhana - three characteristics of existence
Tiracchānavijjā - lower sciences
Udayabbaya - the knowledge of arising and passing away
Uddhacca - restlessness
Uggaha-nimitta - acquired image
Upacāra - access concentration thoughts
Upacāra samādhī - neighbourhood/access concentration
Upādāna - clinging
Upakkilesa - meditative defilement
Upekkhā - equanimity
Vandanā - veneration
Vatta - service/duty
Vedanānupassanā - contemplation of the feelings
Vicāra - discursive thought
Vicikicchā - doubt
Vihāra - monks' dwelling place
Vipassanā - insight meditation
Vipassanā ñāṇa - insight knowledges
Virāga - dispassionateness
Viriya - effort
Visuddhi - purity
Vitakka - applied thought
Viveka - seclusion
Vyāpāda - aversion
Yamaka-pāṭihāriya - twin miracle
Yogi - one who practices meditation



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