
2nd DRAFT

[Translation]



The Path to Enlightenment II (Revised Edition)

Phra Pramote Pramotecho

From My Mind

I wrote this book "The Path to Enlightenment II" on July 30, 2002. As time passes by, I deem it fit to improve it to make it more complete for the benefits of general *Dhamma* practitioners.

Phra Pramote Pramotecho

July 30, 2006

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ESSENCE

- 1. What is the goal of Buddhism?** – The Extinction of Suffering.
- 2. What is Suffering (*dukkha*¹)?** (1) physical pain and mental suffering, (2) unsatisfactoriness² of all conditioned states, (3) frustration, dissent, distress and mental struggle under the power of craving for sensation and clinging to the Aggregates (*khandha*), and (4) the Aggregates (as objects) of clinging/birth/Matter and Mind³/body and mind that with or without craving and clinging constitute a mass of suffering themselves.
- 3. What is the Cause of Suffering?** – Suffering arises from (1) nonfulfillment of wishes, (2) craving or *taṇhā*, and (3) ignorance of the Noble Truths.
- 4. The Path to the Extinction of Suffering** – The only Path to the Extinction of Suffering is the Noble Eightfold Path⁴ or morality, concentration and wisdom⁵. In brief, it is mindfulness⁶ practice or constant observation of one’s body and mind until the mind gets insight into the truth that body and mind are a mass of suffering. Then, the mind will cease craving, clinging (intensified craving), the mental process of becoming⁷ (mental karma) and rebirth (acquisition of Matter and Mind/sense-organs), and will automatically abandon suffering (Matter and Mind).
- 5. What is mindfulness practice?** – It is mindfulness [Clause 6] of the present [Clause 8] condition⁸ [Clause 7] as it really is [Clause 9].
- 6. How to be mindful of a condition?** – One must diligently practice mindfulness of Matter and Mind/body and mind, again and again, until the mind has perception of the condition of Matter and Mind. Then, mindfulness will automatically arise when the Matter and Mind that it has perceived before appear. Enemies to the right mindfulness are the two extremes, i.e.

¹ No single English word adequately captures the full depth, range, and subtlety of the Pali term *dukkha*. Thus, different words such as suffering, unsatisfactoriness and misery are used in this translation, as required by the context.

² unsatisfactoriness by virtue of transience

³ *upādāna-kkhandha/jāti/rūpa* and *nāma*

⁴ *ariya atthangika magga*

⁵ *sīla, samādhi* and *paññā*

⁶ *sati* or recollection

⁷ *bhava*

⁸ *sabhāvadhamma*

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ignorantly following defilements to seek objects of consciousness⁹ through the six sense-organs and self-mortification.

7. What is a “condition”? – Matter and Mind¹⁰ that form this body and mind, this whole mass of suffering, not a thought or an imagination.

8. What does “present” mean? - It means the condition that appears to be an object of consciousness at the present consciousness-moment. A practitioner must not hold back a natural condition in the past and must not worry about a condition in the future.

9. What is meant by “as it really is”? – It means knowing the true nature of a condition [that it is subject to the Three Characteristics of Existence (*tilakkhaṇa*)] and without interference because of a craving (*taṇhā*) and a wrong view (*diṭṭhi*).

10. What is the benefit of mindfulness? (1) peaceful living in the present of a mindful, awoken and cheerful mind, (2) moral shame and dread of an evil, (3) perfection of morality, (4) firmness of mind or the Right Concentration¹¹, (5) the Right View¹², understanding of oneself, others and *Dhamma*, (6) Relief and release from clinging to all, and (7) Extinction of Suffering, and (8) insight into the Extinction of Suffering.

CLARIFICATION

1. The Goal of Buddhism

1.1 Buddhism is a science that aims to answer the question **“How can we attain the Extinction of Suffering¹³?”**

1.2 **People usually overlook the Extinction of Suffering, but focus their attention on seeking pleasure** because they do not realize the truth that this body and mind are really a mass of suffering. There is really no way to be permanently happy. The more one strives to seek happiness or to escape suffering, the greater are the burdens to mind and suffering. No matter how hard one strives, happiness that one gets can never be fulfilled. Otherwise, it always fades away very fast. Happiness is like something that

⁹ *ārammaṇa*

¹⁰ *rūpa-dhamma* and *nāma-dhamma*

¹¹ *sammāsamādhi*

¹² *sammādiṭṭhi*

¹³ *nirodha*

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lies ahead, waiting for a winner to grab it. It is like almost winning it, but letting it slip out of one's hand and lie ahead again. It tempts and urges the mind to struggle all the time in the hope that one will finally possess everlasting happiness.

1.3 As a matter of fact, happiness that we search for is only an illusion that is unrealizable. We often think if only we could get it, if only we could have it, if only we could avoid it, we would be happy. We ignorantly hold the belief that knowledge, wealth, a family, relatives and friends, reputation, power, joy, health and so on bring about happiness. **We strive painstakingly for happiness without realizing what happiness really is.**

1.4 Buddhism does not teach us to search for happiness that is an illusion like that, but teaches us to study Suffering (*dukkha*), which is a fact of life. It is only Buddhism that answers questions about Suffering directly. It also tells us the Cause of Suffering and the practices towards the Extinction of Suffering. **If we study Suffering until we can attain the Extinction of Suffering, then, we will immediately penetrate happiness that is overwhelming, perfect and present right before our very eyes.**

1.5 Some people may even take the view that Buddhism is too pessimistic because it has an attitude that there is only suffering in life. This issue will not be addressed here because if explained now, it will become a topic for philosophical debates instead. Simply read this book to the end and start learning about suffering according to the guidelines provided by the Buddha. Then, one will realize the truth without having to waste time debating about it at all.

2. What is Suffering?

2.1 Buddhism views Suffering in depth and in many more aspects than we know in common. Suffering is:

2.1.1 **Painful feeling (*dukkha-vedanā*):** It is general suffering that we all know, namely, bodily pain and mental suffering. Those who have never practiced mindfulness may feel that this kind of suffering seldom appears, but mindfulness practitioners find that pain arises very often. For example, if we are mindful of body, we will find that pain is just like a wild beast that is always chasing after us to hurt us all the time. It forces us to change bodily postures, to eat, to drink, to excrete, to wipe and wash, to scratch, to inhale, to exhale and so on such that we are almost restless. Sometimes we fall sick, which seriously oppresses us, and finally when we are too exhausted to run to escape suffering, suffering will hurt us to death.

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Whenever a painful feeling is relieved, we feel happy, but not long after that, suffering will catch us once again.

If we are mindful of consciousness, we will realize that our mind is almost always tense. When it is less intense, the mind is happy. When it is more intense, the mind is distressed.

2.1.2 Suffering in terms of unsatisfactoriness because it is an inherent characteristic of nature (*dukkha-lakkhaṇa*): This kind of suffering is not suffering in the sense that everyone knows. It refers to a general characteristic of conditioned states (namely, body and mind and all conditioned things (*sarikhāra*)) – unsatisfactoriness by virtue of impermanence. Thus, by this definition, even happiness is unsatisfactory because it is impermanent. This inherent nature of suffering will be more obvious after one has started mindfulness practice. Knowledge of its characteristic should be enough at this stage.

2.1.3 Suffering from craving: This kind of suffering happens to human beings and all animals almost all the time, but is perceived only by a few. Practitioners may be able to perceive this kind of suffering to some extent, particularly practitioners who contemplate Mind as an object of consciousness. They will perceive that **Samudaya is the Cause of Suffering**. If craving (*taṇhā*) for and clinging (*upadānā* or intensified craving) to Matter and Mind and objects arise, Suffering, i.e. frustration and distress will arise at once. If the mind is free from craving and clinging to an object of consciousness, it will not suffer, but will remain eminent, mindful, awaken, cheerful and peaceful in itself. Practitioners whose minds have fully developed insight to this level will have full concentration. Their consciousness will be firm without having to watch over it at all. This is insight at the level of Non-returners (*Anāgāmi*). Some noble persons who have developed insight to this stage may be so complacent that they do not persevere in mindfulness practice any more because the firm and eminent mind is their safe and pleasant refuge.

2.1.4 *Dukkha-sacca* or the Aggregates constitute Suffering: This kind of suffering is the deepest of all. Only those who have comprehended it thoroughly can be free from the cycle of rebirths. The reason is that comprehension of painful feeling is common to all whereas unsatisfactoriness is what insight practitioners are already aware of even at the time they are still worldings (*puṭhujjana*). Comprehension of suffering from craving is not yet the perfection of insight because the mind still believes that some states of consciousness are pleasant and others are unpleasant. At best, they can attain only insight of the Non-returners (*anāgāmi*) because they have comprehended that if craving and clinging arise, suffering will arise.

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Thus, they are so contented with the firmness of mind that they do not seek an external object, which is the origin of craving and clinging. On the contrary, they turn to cling to the mindful, awakened and cheerful mind itself.

Only after having developed insight to maturity will the mind really be able to clearly comprehend the Noble Truth of Suffering that **the Aggregates, Matter and Mind or body and mind themselves are Suffering. With or without craving and clinging, this body and mind are Suffering themselves. Nothing but Suffering arises, and nothing but Suffering vanishes.** It is not true that this body and this mind are sometimes unhappy, sometimes happy. They are pure Suffering, only more or less. When insight is culminated such that the mind realizes that the Aggregates are Suffering, it will penetrate the Noble Truths. It will comprehend that **“*samudaya* causes *dukkha*, and ignorance of *dukkha* causes *Samudaya*. Thus, arises an endless cycle of rebirths. Only with penetration of the Truth of Suffering will the mind abandon Suffering. Then, the Cause of Suffering will automatically vanish, and *Nirodha* (the Extinction of Suffering) or *Nibbāna* will appear right before one’s eyes. In that very moment, the cycle of rebirths is also broken and ruined.**

Whoever penetrating the truth that the Aggregates or Matter and Mind are Suffering (with *vijjā* after abandonment of *avijjā*) will be able to give up clinging to the Aggregates or Matter and Mind absolutely and entirely. The remaining is a condition of suffering, but no sufferer is found. Thus, craving (*taṇhā-upadānā*) for making “our Matter and Mind” happy and free from suffering will automatically vanish. The struggle or mental formation process (*saikhāra/bhava/kammabhava*¹⁴) to seek happiness and escape suffering will come to an end. The mind will let go and not gasp at any Matter and Mind (*jāti*) to form a self again. It will penetrate *Nibbāna*, namely, the Extinction of Suffering, because it has relinquished or detached itself from defilements and the Aggregates.

Development of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*) is the only path to penetration of these Noble Truths; and after penetration of these Truths, the mind will gradually become dispassionate and disenchanted with craving for clinging to other things that are objects of consciousness until it reaches the final stage of detachment from suffering or body and mind.

2.2 The suffering from which the Buddha teaches us to aim for liberation through practice is **the Aggregates** themselves. Once the mind abandons *avijjā* or ignorance of the Truth of Suffering because it has realized that Matter and Mind are impermanent, **unsatisfactory** or not-self, it will immediately

¹⁴ conditioned things/existence/the process of becoming

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relinquish suffering (the Aggregates/Matter and Mind/body and mind) to the world, and will never grasp at suffering or any Matter and Mind again. The bodily pain in this life is inevitable. Thus, it is necessary to cure and relieve pain from time to time depending on the situation. In that condition, “though the body suffers, the mind does not suffer.” Only after segregation of the Aggregates without the arising of new Aggregates will a holy one completely and perfectly attain the Extinction of Suffering.

3. What is the Cause of Suffering?

3.1 Generally, human beings and animals feel that **nonfulfillment of wishes causes suffering**. For example, when one gets old but desires to be young, suffering arises. When one would like to be healthy, but is ill, it is painful. When one would like to be immortal, but is dying, it is miserable. When one wants it, but cannot get it, it is frustrating. On the contrary, if one gets what one wishes, one is happy.

3.2 Practitioners will comprehend it more deeply that **it is but, craving that causes suffering**. Craving causes the mind to struggle and work hard day and night to make “our selves” happy and free from all sufferings. Without craving, the mind will not have to struggle and fidget. It will only be tranquil in itself.

3.3 Those who have realized the Noble Truths will find that the Aggregates themselves are intrinsically the whole mass of suffering. With or without craving, the Aggregates are Suffering themselves. It is *avijjā* (or ignorance of the truth that the Aggregates constitute a mass of suffering) that makes us believe that this body and mind are sometimes miserable and sometimes happy. Thus, arises *samudaya*¹⁵, namely, a craving for making body and mind permanently happy or permanently free from suffering. Next, arises mental striving, which causes suffering to burn the mind almost all the times. Even at the time this body is segregated, ignorance will stimulate the mind to condition new Aggregates, which will burden the mind with suffering again. Thus, **ignorance of the Noble Truths, *avijjā* or ignorance of the truths of Matter and Mind is indeed the root of suffering**. It causes grasping at Matter and Mind, which is a mass of suffering. Then, the mind strives tremendously to eliminate suffering from Matter and Mind and to bring happiness to Matter and Mind. New Aggregates will arise continually and endlessly. Thus, arises recurring and never-ending suffering.

¹⁵ the Cause of Suffering

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4. The Path to the Extinction of Suffering

4.1 Now that one knows the Cause of Suffering, it is not hard to understand what leads to the Extinction of Suffering. It is nothing more than overcoming *avijjā* or ignorance of the Noble Truths, particularly ignorance of the Truth of Suffering or the truth of Matter and Mind/body and mind that they are not self. *Avijjā* is the origin of *taṇhā* or craving for seeking happiness and escaping suffering, which affects one's body and mind. Knowledge of the truth of Matter and Mind is very essential, as shown in the Buddha's words: **“Realizing the truth, the mind is revulsed. Revulsed, the mind is dispassionate (towards *lobha* and *taṇhā*). Through dispassion, the mind is fully liberated. With liberation, there is the knowledge, 'Fully liberated.' Rebirth has ceased. Fulfilled is the holy life¹⁶ (the study and practice of *Dhamma*).”**

4.2 The most direct method of seeing a condition as it really is, is to **be mindful of the present condition as it really is.** (In this Article, mindfulness means the Right Mindfulness (*sammāsati*), which must always arise with the Right Concentration (*sammāsamādhi*) and the Right View (*sammāditṭhi*) or wisdom (*paññā*). However, the differences between these terms will not be explained at this stage so that beginners who are interested in Buddhism will not find it too complex.) This direct method is most sensible. Analogously, when we want to really know someone, we have to keep an eye on his conduct without bias. Then we will be able to know and understand him as he really is. The Buddha has affirmed that practicing mindfulness of Matter and Mind/body and mind is the only path of purification because it can eradicate craving and wrong views (illusion of reality) as well as bias (pleasure and displeasure) in the world. The “world” here simply refers to Matter and Mind/body and mind.

4.3 Some of our fellow practitioners may be confused with the concept that practicing mindfulness of Matter and Mind/body and mind is the Path to the Extinction of Suffering because they have heard a teaching that the Path to the Extinction of Suffering is the Noble Eightfold Path, which is abbreviated to study and practice of morality, concentration, and wisdom. What they have heard before is also correct, but they should understand it more clearly which practice on the Noble Eightfold Path, i.e. morality, concentration and wisdom, is conducive to enlightenment and which practice is not.

4.4 As a matter of fact, good deeds were admired by the Buddha. The Buddha Himself had perfected *pāramī*,¹⁷ before He attained the Perfect

¹⁶ *brahma-cariya*

¹⁷ the ten spiritual perfections to be achieved by a bodhisatta on his path to Buddhahood

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Enlightenment (i.e. insight into the truth of nature all by Himself). For example, when born as *Prince Vessantara*, the *bodhisatta* remarkably perfected giving (*dāna-pāramī*)¹⁸. In some former lives, the *bodhisatta* perfected morality by sacrificing his own life for it. In a former life the *bodhisatta* practiced concentration until he attained the five *abhiññā*¹⁹, and thus was reborn in a Brahma world. In one life, e.g. when born as a scholar named *Mahosotha*, the *bodhisatta* developed perfection of wisdom (*paññā-pāramī*) greatly. However, it is questionable why he did not attain enlightenment in one of those lives, but finally attained the Supreme Perfect Enlightenment (*anuttara sammā-sambodhi*) in his last life through development of mindfulness on the foundation of mind-objects (*dhammānupassanā*) in the *Ariya Sacca Pubba?* Unquestionably, if he had not perfected all these *pāramī*, he would not have attained the Perfect Enlightenment by himself. Nevertheless, if he had perfected the *pāramī* without developing mindfulness, he would not have attained the Perfect Enlightenment, either. The perfection of *pāramī* balanced and prepared his mind for his pursuit of mindfulness practice. For example, since he had given away his son, daughter and wife for the sake of attaining enlightenment in his former life as *Prince Vessantara*, in his last life he had enough mental strength to sacrifice his beloved wife *Princess Bimba* (*Yasodhara*) and son *Prince Rahula* in his pursuit of enlightenment.

4.5 All good deeds—giving, observing the precepts, meditating and developing wisdom to certain levels—are not conducive to enlightenment. They only bring happiness as the result of such meritorious acts²⁰ or as fruition of virtues. In some cases, at the moment of doing a good deed, consciousness may turn immoral. Following are examples:

4.5.1 **Charity (*dāna*):** Without mindfulness and wisdom, giving may result in more and more defilements. For example, giving may be done with the wrong views that ‘I’ have given it away. When ‘I’ am born in the next life, ‘I’ will enjoy the fruition of this giving. ‘I’ will attain enlightenment because of this giving. Alternatively, giving may be done with greed: “For this giving, I **beg** for a lot of fruition.”

¹⁸ *Prince Vessantara* gave the auspicious, powerful royal elephant to the people of a rival kingdom upon request. As the result, he, his wife and two small children were banished to a remote mountain. One day a traveler chanced by and asked the *bodhisatta* to give him the children. *Vessantara* gave them away without any hesitation at all. Later he gave away his virtuous wife, too.

¹⁹ *abhiññā*: Intuitive powers attainable through concentration practice, the ability to display psychic powers, clairvoyance, clairaudience, the ability to know the thoughts of others, recollection of past lifetimes, and the knowledge which does away with mental effluents.

²⁰ *kusala vipakā*

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4.5.2 Morality (*sīla*) development: Without mindfulness and wisdom, it is easy for a moral one to cling to mere rules and ritual (*sīlabbata-parāmāsa*). For example, one may misunderstand that observance of the precepts that are very oppressive to mind will lessen defilement. Alternatively, the more one observes the precepts, the more are one's defilements. For example, conceit (*māna*) may intensify. One may build up a conception that "I am better than others because I observe the precepts. Others are worse than me because they are immoral."

4.5.3 Concentration (*Samādhi*) practice: Without mindfulness and wisdom, the more one meditates, the more likely it is that one will be so absorbed in peace or tranquility that one forgets oneself. In some cases, one may develop more and more wrong views (*micchā-ditthi*) under the power of delusion (*noha*) and lust (*rāga*). For example, when one practices meditation, one may be so enchanted that one forgets oneself. A lot of mental images may arise. Some practitioners even see "Nibbāna" as a city or a crystal ball in their minds. Some may gain certain knowledge and views and take pride of such knowledge. Others may feel that consciousness (*citta*) is a self (*attā*) because it is controllable.

4.5.4 Insight Development (*paññā*): In the lack of wisdom (*paññā*) and the Right View (*sammāditthi*), practitioners may make a lot of mistakes. For example, for one who does not know the difference between tranquility meditation (*samatha-kammaṭṭhāna*) and insight development (*vipassanā-kammaṭṭhāna*), it is easy to ignorantly practice meditation in the belief that it is a practice for insight development. For example, some intentionally reflect on animals, humans, egos, themselves, others, objects, things, people, as being subject to the Three Characteristics of Existence (*tilakkhana*). Such practice is simply concentration meditation for peace of mind. Sometimes, instead of tranquility, distraction with *Dhamma* may arise instead. To some practitioners, the more they reflect on the Three Characteristics of Existence (*tilakkhana*), the higher are their conceit and ego. It is so because **the Three Characteristics of Existence cannot be perceived by thinking, but must be realized through penetration of the true nature of Matter and Mind with mindfulness and firm consciousness (the Right Concentration). Only then will one be able to transcend it through insight.** In other cases, some practitioners may, instead of developing insight through mindfulness of Matter and Mind, attempt to build up or to contemplate emptiness or *mahā suññatā* instead of Matter and Mind. They do not know that in insight development practice, the objects of consciousness must be Matter and Mind. Adversely, they think that discarding Matter and Mind to contemplate emptiness is a shortcut in practicing *Dhamma*.

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4.6 The good deeds that are conducive to enlightenment must contribute to the right mindfulness practice or must be associated with mindfulness and wisdom at the moment of doing. Examples are provided below.

4.6.1 **Charity (*dāna*):** Consciousness should be associated with mindfulness and wisdom before, during, and after giving. If giving is done with faith, accompanied by wisdom, and not troublesome to oneself or others, then it should be done as appropriate. If giving makes one happy and joyful, mindfulness should recollect happiness and joy. Thus, giving can also be a tool for developing mindfulness. On the other hand, if one is crazy about giving because of greed (*lobha*) and delusion (*moha*), then, giving is not conducive to mindfulness practice.

4.6.2 **Morality (*sīla*) development:** The purity of morality can hardly be attained without mindfulness of mind. On the contrary, if one is mindful of one’s own mind, morality of the kind called “*indriyasamvara-sīla*” (morality of sense-restraints) will arise automatically. When anger (*dosa*) arises and mindfulness is aware of anger, the mind will not be dominated by anger. Thus, the first precept is perfectly observed because consciousness does not think of killing or hurting anyone. Likewise, when greed (*lobha*) arises and mindfulness recollects it, one will automatically refrain from breaking the second precept and the third precept.

4.6.3 **Concentration (*Samādhi*) development:** The Right Concentration (*Sammāsamādhi*) or firmness of mind is an element of the Noble Eightfold Path. Thus, concentration in Buddhism must be accompanied by other elements of the Noble Path. For example, it must always be accompanied by mindfulness and wisdom. Concentration without mindfulness and wisdom may really bring happiness and other playthings, but it is not useful to mindfulness practice because the mind is not really firm on mindfulness of body and mind. When the mind is not firm, morality and wisdom cannot be perfect.

4.6.4 **Insight (*paññā*) development:** The right and the most perfect insight development practice will be explained later in the clause about mindfulness practice. In this clause, only the primary stage of wisdom development, namely, the study of the Scriptures (*Pariyatti Dhamma*)—will be mentioned. Buddhists, even practitioners, should not neglect the Scriptures. At least, they should study the Scriptures to know the fundamental principles of Buddhism. Otherwise, they may worship other doctrines or religions in the belief that they are Buddhists.

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4.7 Development of morality, concentration and wisdom may seem to be several, but through development of the right mindfulness, morality, concentration and wisdom will arise automatically. For example, in *Dhammapada-Atthakatha*²¹, there was a story of a monk (*bhikkhu*) who went to see the Buddha and excused himself to disrobe. The reason given was that there were too many precepts to observe. Thus, Lord Buddha told the monk to practice mindfulness instead of observing a lot of precepts. The monk did so and was able to purify and perfect his morality. He even attained enlightenment. If we practice mindfulness such that we are mindful of the present condition as it really is, at that moment we will automatically have the Right Concentration (*sammāsamādhi*). Consciousness will be firm and mindful of the present condition without being deluded into interference. What will follow is insight into the nature of Matter and Mind, namely, insight into the Three Characteristics of Existence (*tilakkhana*) of Matter and Mind, and even into the Four Noble Truths. Such insight arises from practice of mindfulness with the Right Concentration of mind. Therefore, it is conclusive that the Path to the Extinction of Suffering is the Noble Eightfold Path or, in brief, the Threefold Training consisting of morality, concentration and wisdom or, in the shortest wording, mindfulness practice. **Development of mindfulness is virtually development of the Threefold Training and the Noble Eightfold Path.**

5. What is Mindfulness Practice?

5.1 As aforesaid, the root of suffering in the view of Buddhism is ignorance of the Truth of Suffering, namely, Matter and Mind/the Aggregates/body and mind. It causes craving (*taṇhā*), clinging (*upadānā*) and mental striving (*bhava*) for making this body and mind permanent, happy and controllable as one wishes. Such striving simply doubles mental suffering, in addition to the inherent suffering of Matter and Mind/the Aggregates/body and mind. If the mind can realize the truth of Matter and Mind/the Aggregates/body and mind --that they are impermanent, unsatisfactory, not-self and uncontrollable-- such that it relinquishes clinging to body and mind, craving, clinging and mental striving will cease automatically. The mind will be liberated and detached from the Aggregates, which constitute a mass of suffering, and will penetrate true peace or *Nibbāna*. Therefore, the uprooting of suffering can only be accomplished with **knowledge (*vijjā*) or wisdom (*paññā*)** to overcome ignorance of the truth of Matter and Mind/the Aggregates/body and mind, which is the Cause of Suffering.

²¹ *Atthakatha*: The commentaries offer meticulously detailed explanations and analyses phrase-by-phrase and word-by-word of the corresponding passages in the *Tipitaka*.

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5.2 With respect to development of wisdom or knowledge, we are accustomed to the conventional style of learning, such as (1) acceptance of a transfer of knowledge or experience of others by reading and listening, and (2) reflection on that subject matter. Both methods are applicable to other fields of study. To understand the core of Buddhism, however, one has to rely on another method of learning in addition to the first two methods, namely, (3) constant observation of phenomena of Matter and Mind as they truly are. This is because listening to others' knowledge gives us only memories, and thinking gives us only ideas. Both **memories** and **ideas** may not be **truths**. At the beginning, however, we have to study the doctrines and teachings of the Buddha by reading and listening, then contemplate and reflect on them so that we will have guidelines on the right observation of phenomena of Matter and Mind.

5.3 To gain knowledge by reading, listening and thinking is very common and we already know about it. Thus, only the truth-finding method of **mindfulness practice** will be mentioned. It is constant observation of phenomena of Matter and Mind by **being mindful** (Clause 6) **of the present** (Clause 8) **condition** (Clause 7) **as it really is** (Clause 9).

6. How to Be Mindful of a Condition?

6.1 Generally, a human can be naturally conscious of **the present object** (see Clause 8 for further details). For example, one is aware that one is standing, walking, sitting or lying at the moment. One is aware that one is happy, sad or indifferent at the moment. One is aware that one is in love, greedy, angry, deluded, suspicious, distracted, depressed, lazy, faithful, energetic or calm at the moment. However, a human has two weak points: (1) One often **fails to be mindful of the present object** because one is ignorantly absorbed in thinking about some stories or is so absorbed in what one knows and sees such that one forgets one's own body and mind in the present; and (2) One often **perceives such objects with delusion**. Instead of seeing **an ultimate object** (*paramattha āramana*), which is a real thing (see Clause 7), one sees only a conventional object (*paññatti āramana*), which is one's own thought/imagination. For example, one thinks one is standing, walking, sitting or lying. In reality, it is Matter or a mass of elements that is standing, walking, sitting or lying. One may think one is greedy, angry or deluded. In reality, it is Mind or consciousness that is greedy, angry or deluded. This is because one does not discern the ultimate truth or the true nature of Matter and Mind, but is accustomed to the feeling that this body/mind is oneself, which is a conventional truth or a thought with a wrong view.

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Oftentimes, even our fellow practitioners cannot imagine that **actually, mindfulness practice is simply the practice of using this natural and ordinary mind to perceive an ultimate object that exists at the present moment. Practitioners often misunderstand that mindfulness or recollection is a state of mind that is extraordinary. Therefore, instead of using a natural mind to perceive an object, our fellow practitioners try to develop an extraordinary state of “consciousness” instead and the objects of consciousness used are not quite right.**

This clause will describe the nature of consciousness that is good for insight development. It is mindful, rightly concentrated and insightful. Some practitioners refer to it as the **“knowing consciousness”**.

6.2. To identify what the right mindfulness or the right **consciousness** is, is very difficult. Simply adding our opinion that it is this and that, we will immediately go off track. On the contrary, if we begin to talk about incorrect consciousness (which arises from *taṇhā* or a craving and *ditṭhi* or a wrong view), it will not be too difficult for us to understand the right consciousness. The mistakes that are of significance are:

6.2.1 Knowing is not unknowing (abstractedness/mindlessness).

6.2.1.1 Knowing is opposite to unknowing, which means reverie, abstractedness, mindlessness, absent-mindedness or daydreaming. It is the state of mindlessly letting the mind indulge in sensual pleasure from objects through the eyes, ears, nose, tongue and body, or even indulge in reveries. For example, when the eyes see an object and the mind recognizes that it is a figure of a beautiful woman or a handsome man, it will abstractedly follow him/her with the eyes. When sitting alone, one is abstracted and distracted. Sometimes, one knows about the thoughts, but other times one may not know exactly what one was thinking about.

6.2.1.2 The state referred to as abstractedness or mindlessness is a state of mind in which one forgets one’s own body, including one’s own mind, as if it had disappeared from this world. At that moment, one is unaware whether one is happy or sad, good or bad. Thus, **at the moment we are abstracted or mindless, we are unaware of the body, feeling, mind and mind-object**²².

²² *kāya, vedanā, citta and dhamma*

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6.2.1.3 Whenever abstracted and the mind recollects that we were abstracted, at that moment abstractness will vanish and awareness will instantly arise instead. Thus, simply recollecting that we were abstracted is the right knowing.

6.2.2 Knowing is not thinking.

6.2.2.1 Knowing is not the same as thinking. We know well what we are thinking about, but we have forgotten ourselves, like abstraction. **Knowing is observing the happening as it really is whereas thinking is expecting what it should be.** (However, if there is a business that we need to think about, e.g. in studies or at work, we have to think in accordance with our duty.)

6.2.2.2 A lot of practitioners do not understand mindfulness practice. They misunderstand that thinking or contemplation of their own body and mind as “impure, impermanent (*anicca*), miserable (*dukkha*), and not self (*anattā*) or as Matter and Mind” is insight practice (*vipassanā*). In fact, in mindfulness or insight practice, one must be mindful of the present condition as it really is. It is not contemplation of the condition because ideas of worldings are always **biased** or are based on **wrong views or *Miccadiṭṭhi*** of various kinds. For example, one may think that “This body is impermanent, but this mind (*citta*) is permanent. When the body is dead, the mind will discard this body and will be reborn.” Alternatively, one may think that “A self exists, but disappears after death.”

Thinking is not *vipassanā*. As taught by *Luang Pu Thate Desarans*²³, one of the senior disciples of *Luang Pu Mun Bhuridatta*²⁴, **“Contemplation of the body as loathsome overcomes hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*), (which is a concentration practice (*samatha*)). Contemplation of death (*maranānussati*) and contemplation of the body as elements/the Aggregates counteract some mental reactions (which are also *samatha*). Only when practice brings forth insight into one’s own mind and heart will a practitioner penetrate the core of *Dhamma* practice.”** In addition, Luang Por Puth Thaniyo always emphasized that **“*Samatha* begins without intention; *vipassanā* begins without thinking.”** Luang Pu Dun also taught that **“No matter how hard you think, you cannot know. Stop thinking. Then, you know it.”** His

²³ *Luang Pu Thate Desaransi* was one of the most highly respected Buddhist monks of the *Theravada* school in Thailand and was an internationally recognized master of meditation.

²⁴ *Luang Pu Mun Bhuridatta Mahathera* (1870-1949) was by all accounts the most renowned and highly respected meditation master from the forest tradition in Thailand. He had many disciples who have been teachers in their own right, of whom *Ajahn Thate* is one.

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teaching is corresponding to the doctrine in the Scriptures that “*udayabbaya ñāṇa*, which is a primary stage of insight, is free from thoughts.”

6.2.2.3 Whenever we think and then recollect that we have focused our attention on thinking, at that moment the thought will disappear and the presence of mind will replace it instantly. Therefore, simply recollecting that we were thinking is the right knowing.

6.2.3 Knowing is not setting one’s mind for practice.

6.2.3.1 Knowing is not setting one’s mind for practice. However, when thinking of practice, almost 100% of practitioners quickly prepare themselves for practice because they misinterpret the meaning of “practice” as “doing”. As a matter of fact, practice is doing nothing more than being directly and naturally mindful of the present Matter and Mind. Just like looking at a picture in front of us, simply open our eyes and look at it. When bitten by a mosquito and it itches, just feel it. Inner knowing naturally exists within us. As we do not understand the principle of mindfulness practice, we set our minds for practice, like a 100-metre runner getting ready at the starting line, tensing up his body and mind, instead of being mindful of the present object comfortably and naturally.

6.2.3.2 Intending to practice *Dhamma*, practitioners often force their minds and begin some mental karma processes. For example, a practitioner may mindfully watch a screen within his mind and scan it to look for something to contemplate. One may send his mind out, hold it still in front, wait and see what will happen. These are serious blunders because one practices it with *taṇhā*, i.e. a craving for practicing *Dhamma*, and *diṭṭhi*, i.e. a wrong view that practicing *Dhamma* is doing it this way and that way so that “I” will realize *Dhamma*.

6.2.3.3 With the view to practice *Dhamma*, some practitioners who are fond of using Matter or the body as an object of contemplation usually begin to practice by interfering with natural actions of the body. For example, when they contemplate breathing, they will control the breathing cycle. When they contemplate their bodily movements, they will fix the timing for movements of the hand, foot and abdomen. These practices are not wrong if it is a practice for tranquility (*samatha*) or if they want to contemplate the body as the first stepping stone before developing their practice towards the right knowing. However, if they intentionally perform the bodily acts with a misunderstanding that they are practicing mindfulness, but are ignorant of the craving and the wrong view that have predominated their minds such that they are doing so, then it is another serious blunder.

6.2.3.4 In fact, if we would like to develop mindfulness or the most perfect knowing, we need not be poised for it at all, whether mentally or bodily. For example, when the eyes see Matter, just see the Matter

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(color). If in response, the mind is pleased or displeased, simply recollect again. What the bodily posture is at the moment, know it. When one is standing, one should know that this mass is standing. When one feels stiff and feels like changing the bodily posture, one should recollect the craving in one's own mind. After recollecting, one may change the bodily posture because it is necessary or may not do so with the view to see the truth of the bodily pain first. When one is sitting idly and a thought comes to mind, one should recollect the thinking. If after thinking, a moral consciousness or an immoral consciousness arises, simply recollect it.

6.2.3.5 However, if any practitioner cannot know the present condition naturally and ordinarily, there is no need to panic. At the beginning, one may be poised for practice first. For example, if the mind is so distracted, one may practice meditation first. However, one should carefully avoid getting so enchanted that one forgets oneself or getting tense. Simply perceive an object of consciousness comfortably, no matter what the object is, even a repeated word of exercise. When the mind is calm and comfortable, then one should take the next step of perceiving the natural changes of mind. One may alternatively begin to observe movements of the abdomen, the walking meditation, the steps of movement of the hand, etc. In conclusion, beginners may practice it by any method before developing it towards knowing without keeping alert or without intention.

6.2.3.6 Anytime we are poised for practice” and recollect it, at that moment that state of mind will vanish and the presence of mind will arise at once. Therefore, simply recollecting that we were poised for practice is the right knowing.

6.2.4 Knowing is not mental noting.

6.2.4.1 Knowing is not mental noting or contemplating of an object as Matter/Mind. It is paying attention (*Manasikāra*) to a present object in a natural and ordinary way. Many practitioners think that knowing is noting mentally because they often hear about mental noting of Matter and Mind or mental noting of a present object. Thus, they assume that knowing must include doing, i.e. mental noting or contemplating. Accordingly, after perceiving an object of consciousness, they quickly note it mentally right after knowing, “lifting”, “stepping”, “angry”, “sound”, etc. This is “mental noting”, not “knowing.” (However, a beginner might find it necessary to note it mentally first, but it should be noted that they cannot stall at this preparatory stage of noting because it is not yet insight development practice.) Some practitioners are fond of contemplating once more. That is, by no means, knowing. For example, when the eyes naturally see an object, a practitioner may deliberately contemplate that “This merely consists of colors. It is not an animal, a person, a self, I or he etc.” Otherwise, the practitioner may contemplate that “color is Matter (*rūpa*), knowing is Mind (*nāma*).” **All these**

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are done with an intention to note and are done after knowing of the present object. Thus, the knowing is not yet pure, natural and ordinary.

6.2.4.2 As a matter of fact, the word “mindfulness” in the *Tipitaka* means **recollection**. The *Abhidhamma* further explains that **mindfulness is characterized by the presence of mind**. It also indicates that **the proximate cause of mindfulness is a strong perception of the condition**. Young generations of practitioners often interpret the word “*sati* (mindfulness)” as “mental noting” even though mental noting is not recollecting, but willful doing beyond recollection. It is done at the command of greedy volition (*lobha-cetanā*) and is associated with a (wrong) view that mental noting is insight development practice, despite the fact that mental noting is accompanied by thinking and thus can never be *vipassanā* practice. Moreover, mental noting is not recollecting (*sati*). Nor is it a proximate cause of recollection. It is but, recollection of a condition, again and again, or mindfulness practice that causes the mind to have a strong perception of the condition, i.e. Matter and Mind. Strong perception is the proximate cause of mindfulness.

6.2.4.3 Whenever we note something mentally and then recollect that we noted it intently, at that very moment the willful noting will vanish and the presence of mind will arise at once. Thus, simply recollecting the mental noting is the right knowing.

6.2.5 Knowing” is not gazing.

6.2.5.1 Knowing is not gazing. However, a lot of practitioners, even those who do not like concentration practice because they want to develop only insight, are accustomed to gazing. They often gaze without knowing their own mind. Actually, gazing is a condition that arises when one intentionally and attentively sets one’s mind for practice. Whenever one thinks of practicing *Dhamma*, one will practice it intentionally. One will set one’s mind for practice, compose oneself firmly, then gaze or stare at all objects of consciousness seriously. Consequently, one simply forgets oneself. Some practitioners may become so unfeeling that they have no reaction to objects of consciousness as they should. Others may intentionally gaze at Matter such that they forget Mind. These practitioners will feel that all things move, appear and disappear, and show the Three Characteristics of Existence, except a certain condition that is still, empty and permanent. As Thus, they take the view that all are subject to the Three Characteristics of Existence, except consciousness (*citta*) that is permanent. Some may intentionally gaze at Mind or empty space, and ignorantly become so absorbed in that emptiness such that they cannot develop insight any more. Some may gaze at any defilement they recollected. When the defilement disappears (because its cause disappeared), they have a false belief that “I can overcome defilement every time.” In other cases, after recollection,

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some may gaze at the object of consciousness. Their mindfulness may chase after the object that flees inwards deeply. This is also gazing, but it is gazing at a conditioned state that is movable within one’s own mind.

Meanwhile, gazing, if not too intentional/serious, may calm down the mind and thus can be meditation practice or concentration practice. But more often than not, it is not the Right Concentration (*sammāsamādhi*), which is necessary for insight development (*vipassanā*).

6.2.5.2 To know gazing is not difficult at all. Raise up a thumb and gaze at it until the mind is firmly fixed to the thumb. Not long after that, one will feel that all one sees is the thumb. This is because the mind intentionally focuses all attention on only one point with greed. At that moment, one sees only the thumb. One is not aware of one’s body. One is not aware of one’s feeling, i.e. joy or suffering. Nor is one aware of one’s moral or immoral consciousness. At the moment consciousness slipped to the thumb, one was not aware of it. In conclusion, all that one knows is only the thumb, not the body, feeling, mind or mind-object. A practitioner should remember that state of gazing very well. When one practices mindfulness of an object that is Matter or Mind, one should observe it and be mindful of one’s own mind. Do not ignorantly gaze at Matter or Mind in the same way as one did when gazing at the thumb. Otherwise, one will ignorantly practice concentration meditation (*samatha*) although one thinks that one is practicing *vipassanā*, i.e. mindfulness of Matter and Mind.

6.2.5.3 Whenever one gazes and then recollects that one was gazing, gazing will vanish at that very moment and awareness will arise instantly. Therefore, simply recollecting that one gazed is the right knowing. In any event, for a person whose mind has been accustomed to concentration meditation, although he knows that he has been gazing, gazing may not loosen. However, if he becomes aware that his mind would like to quit gazing, then, his mind may be able to loosen the absorption in an object through gazing. If the mind cannot loosen up, then, he may have to use a tactic to remedy it. He may have to forget practice temporarily. When his mind is distracted by something else, say, a thought, gazing will automatically cease. Then, the practitioner should recollect that he was abstracted, and the right knowing will arise.

The tactic to remedy gazing is to be mentioned although the author does not favor a tactic, but prefers practice in accordance with the principles of *vipassanā*, that is, mindfulness of Matter and Mind as they truly are. The reason is that a lot of practitioners are so addicted to gazing that it is almost impossible for them to quit it. They may have been unable to loosen gazing for decades. Thus, it is necessary for them to use a tactic to

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solve the problem at hand. The key principle of the anti-gazing tactic is diversion from the old object of consciousness to which one has been addicted. That is enough for consciousness to loosen gazing.

6.2.6 Knowing is not inducing.

6.2.6.1 Knowing is not inducing. Inducing is another state that a lot of practitioners often develop. It is pretending when one thinks of practicing *Dhamma*, like gazing. The only difference is that **gazing focuses on only one object in order to see it clearly and attempts to fix it; whereas inducing is evading an object of consciousness and turning towards tranquility such that one gets absorbed in it and forgets oneself because one wants to calm the mind.** Thus, it is practice with greed such that the mind is enchanted with tranquility or becomes drowsy as *thīna-middha*²⁵ arise. If the mind is perfectly drowsy on any day, the practitioner will misunderstand that his exercise is good on that day. If he is not drowsy or absorbed on any day, he will be sorry that his exercise is not good on that day. Some practitioners even use an instrument to help induce their minds, i.e. turning on a taped *Dhamma* talk while practicing sitting meditation, so that it will quickly help induce the mind to the optimal state of drowsiness, i.e. half sleep.

6.2.6.2 Whenever we induce the mind towards tranquility and then recollect that we were inducing it, at that very moment inducing will disappear and awareness will replace it instantly. Thus, simply recollecting that one was inducing is the right knowing.

6.2.7 Knowing is not intending to know anything.

6.2.7.1 Knowing is not intending to know anything. Therefore, if any practitioner asks, “You have taught us to be mindful. What should I be mindful of? Should I be mindful of the whole body, from the hair end to the sole?”, these questions show that the person who doubts it has not learned what knowing truly is. Actually, knowing does not mean intentionally and selectively knowing something and ignoring something else because that intention is due to a craving and a wrong view.

6.2.7.2 Knowing is a state in which the mind is awakened from the world of imagination and dreams. Most people are awake only bodily; their minds are still dreamy, as is so-called daydreaming. The knowing state is the state in which the mind is awakened from dreaming. It is alert and ready to perceive all objects that come into contact with the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind. After perceiving an object, it is ready to respond to the objects naturally. Moreover, it can recollect the response very well. This kind of knowing is not intentional or selective of an object of consciousness. **When an object appears at any sense-door (*Dvāra*), it is rightly**

²⁵ sloth and torpor

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mindful of that present object, without being carried away by that object. This is full awareness. It is not an attempt to be aware of the whole body because that is intentional distribution of a sensation over the whole body.

6.2.7.3 Whenever we intend to be mindful and then recollect that we intended to do so, at that moment the intention will disappear and the state of awareness will replace it instantly. Therefore, simply recollecting that one intended to do so is the right knowing.

6.3 In summary, **whenever we try to know or seek the right knowing, or even attempt to know continuously** (see Clause 6.6), **at that moment we will immediately be mistaken under delusion.** Any action beyond ordinary knowing, which is done with a craving and a wrong view, completely blocks our ability to perceive an object, which already exists within us. **Therefore, do not try to know it correctly. Any moment one knows that one was wrong, the right knowing has arisen automatically.** Nevertheless, a lot of practitioners who have heard teachings about mindfulness or awareness practice still refuse to be mindful of the present condition naturally. They hold to their convictions that “My merits and blessings are minimal. I should give alms first.” or “That faculty (*indriya*) of mine is too weak or not balanced. I need to develop it first. I need to develop wisdom (*paññā*) to balance faith (*saddhā*). I need to develop concentration (*samādhi*) to balance effort (*virīya*).” These practitioners do not know it. If they practice mindfulness or awareness, the practice will strengthen and balance all the faculties.

6.4 The right knowing state will arise easily with the support from mindfulness (*sati*) and the Right Concentration (*sammāsamādhi*), as follows:

6.4.1 If the mind has a strong perception of the natural condition, e.g. the condition of love, greed, anger, abstraction, delight, happiness, etc., when the condition appears, mindfulness will arise very rapidly because it has known and perceived that condition before. Any condition that is unknown or unfamiliar may take some time for consciousness to learn it. When consciousness has a strong perception of that condition, mindfulness will arise easily.

6.4.2 **With the Right Concentration, the right knowing can arise more easily.** Consciousness with the Right Concentration is consciousness that is firm, stable, unshaken and not absorbed in the objects that appear at the six sense-doors (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind). It is calm and collected, i.e. not delighted or depressed with an object. It is light, at ease, but not as weightless as if it would flow away in the air. It is gentle, pliant, not stiff or tense. It is ready and proficient to perceive an

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object. It is neither repressed to a motionless or drowsy state nor absorbed in delight like a drug addict. It is also upright in conceiving an object, without interfering with the object, like a judge who performs his function without taking the side of a plaintiff or a defendant.

It is not difficult for consciousness with the Right Concentration to arise if one understands the law of nature that natural consciousness that is not dominated by an object of consciousness, or in other words, **moral consciousness (*citta with sīla*) is virtually consciousness with the Right Concentration.** Nevertheless, if consciousness of any practitioner does not have the Right Concentration, he can develop and train it. At first, he should make a resolution to develop external morality, i.e. by observing the five precepts and the eight precepts, etc. Then, he should **develop internal morality by practicing meditation. Meditation is continuous mindfulness of a single object. The object can be anything that does not arouse defilements**, e.g. contemplation of breathing, contemplation of the steps in walking meditation, contemplation of movements of a hand, contemplation of movements of the abdomen, and contemplation of a repeated word of exercise, etc. Contemplate an object intentionally and comfortably. Do not be too serious or attentive. At this point, there is a crossroad with two paths, as follows:

6.4.2.1 If delusion (*moha*) or greed (*lobha*) interferes, consciousness will be weak and induced to rest in tranquility. It may be drowsy or may build some mental images. This is the path of wrong concentration (*miccha samādhi*).

6.4.2.2 If at the moment of perceiving an object, a practitioner is constantly mindful, alert and attentive, when consciousness mindlessly abandons an object of consciousness to **daydream** about something else, mindfulness will be able to **recollect it**. If it **gazes** at an object, mindfulness will be able to **recollect it**. If the mind is **impassively** mindful of an object, mindfulness will be able to **recollect it as well**. By nature, ordinary people are often distracted and carried away by this and that object and without their knowledge. Thus, a beginner should practice mindfulness of a single object first. When consciousness slips from that object, they should be mindful of it. By this method, a practitioner will not take a long time to become mindful of consciousness that is wavering with an object. **When mindfulness recollects it, consciousness will cease wavering and become firm without being forced to. Then, when any object appears, consciousness will be impassively mindful of it. It will not intervene or will not be enchanted and carried out by that object.**

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It can be said that mental noting (with a craving and a wrong view) is a tool for meditation (*samatha*) practice, whereas “recollection” or “impassive mindfulness” is a tool for insight (*vipassanā*) practice.

6.5 To classify the knowing state clearly, one can say that **knowing is developing the Noble Eightfold Path (*ariya atthangika magga*)**.

6.5.1 Knowing consciousness is firm, independent, and not dominated by any biased feeling about an object. It has **the Right Concentration (*sammāsamādhi*)**.

6.5.2 Knowing consciousness is proficient and adaptable. When an object contacts any sense-door (*dvāra*), the **Right Mindfulness (*sammā sati*)** will immediately be mindful of the present condition as it really is.

6.5.3 Knowing consciousness that is firm and rightly concentrated is aware. Awareness is the Right View (***sammāditṭhi***) or clear comprehension (*sampajañña*) (of a type called, “*asammohasampajañña*”). If consciousness is not firm, it will slip away with an object, be dominated by an object and unaware. As it is unaware, it will not be able to perceive a condition truly and clearly. It cannot discern the arising and vanishing of Matter and Mind nor the Noble Truths (*ariya-sacca*). Thus, it can be said that the Right Concentration (*sammāsamādhi*) is a proximate cause of wisdom (*paññā*).

6.5.4 Consciousness with mindfulness (*sati*), concentration (*samadhi*) and wisdom (*paññā*) certainly has **the Right Thought or *sammā sankappa***, resulting in perfection of the **Right Speech (*sammā vācā*)**, **the Right Action (*sammā kammanta*)** and **the Right Livelihood (*sammā ājīva*)**.

6.5.5 Perseverance in mindfulness (*sati*) practice certainly protects the faculties (*indriya*). It hinders all sins and immoral states (*akusala*), and develops morals. This is **the Right Effort (*sammā vāyāma*)**.

6.6 Since knowing is development towards the Noble Path, we should know that **the function concerning mindfulness or development towards the Noble Path is to develop it or to cause mindfulness to arise frequently or as frequently as possible**. However, this does not mean that one should be mindful as long as possible, for minutes, for hours or for days, because **mindfulness itself is a mental concomitant (*cetasika-dhamma*) that arises and vanishes momentarily and simultaneously with consciousness (*citta*)**. Thus, **we cannot make an impermanent thing permanent for a long time, but we can make it happen frequently**. The proximate cause of mindfulness is a strong and precise perception of various conditions (It must be able to recognize the

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conditions, not their names and nature as described in the textbooks only). When any condition arises, mindfulness will be able to recollect the condition quickly and frequently until mindfulness recurs in rapid succession. Then, immoral states will have fewer chances to arise, and finally no chance to arise.

6.7 The strong and precise perception of a lot of conditions can be developed through mindfulness of an object that is related to the body or mind. Most of the meditation practices widely taught these days can form the bases for practicing mindfulness of conditions. Such practices are, for example, contemplation of breathing, contemplation of the rising and falling movements of the abdomen, contemplation of the steps in walking meditation, contemplation of the hand movement steps, contemplation of the four bodily postures (*iriyā-patha*), the repeating of the word “*Buddho*”, contemplation of feeling and contemplation of mind, etc. All we have to do is to improve the quality of mindfulness of these meditation objects a little because different qualities of mindfulness bring different results. Most fellow practitioners these days can only practice gazing at objects. They ignorantly induce consciousness to practice tranquility (*samatha*). The following examples show that different qualities of mindfulness practice bring different results:

6.7.1 Contemplation of breathing: If during contemplation of breathing one is absorbed and mindless, it is unacceptable. If one gazes at an object until consciousness is firmly fixed to the breath, it is concentration (*samatha*) practice. If it is mindful of the body and mind and consciousness is a knower that is separate from the known object, then it is insight (*vipassanā*) practice on the foundation of body. If during breathing consciousness is abstracted and mindfulness recollects it, if consciousness unknowingly gazes at breathing and mindfulness recollects it, if consciousness is happy, unhappy or indifferent and mindfulness recollects it, and if consciousness is moral or immoral and mindfulness recollects it, then these are exercises in mindfulness of the condition of Mind. They are stepping stones to mindfulness practice towards insight development on the foundation of Mind.

6.7.2 Contemplation of the rising and falling movements of the abdomen: If during contemplation of the rising and falling of the abdomen one is absorbed and mindless, it is unacceptable. If one gazes at an object until consciousness is firmly fixed to the abdomen, it is concentration (*samatha*) practice. If it is mindful of movements of the body and consciousness is a knower that is separate from the object, then it is insight (*vipassanā*) practice on the foundation of body. If during contemplation of the rising and falling of the abdomen, consciousness is abstracted and mindfulness recollects it, if it gazes at the abdomen and mindfulness recollects it, if it is happy, unhappy or indifferent and mindfulness recollects

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it, and if consciousness is moral or immoral, mindfulness recollects it, then these are exercises in mindfulness of the condition of Mind. They are stepping stones to mindfulness practice towards insight development on the foundation of Mind.

6.7.3 Contemplation of the steps in walking meditation: If in walking meditation, one is absorbed and mindless, then it is unacceptable. If one gazes so intently that consciousness is firmly fixed to the feet or the walking body, then it is concentration (*samatha*) practice. If mindfulness is aware of the walking body and consciousness is a knower that is separate from the body, that is insight (*vipassanā*) practice on the foundation of body. If during the walking meditation consciousness is abstracted and mindfulness recollects it, if it gazes at the walking steps and mindfulness recollects it, if it is happy, unhappy or indifferent and mindfulness recollects it, and if consciousness is moral or immoral, mindfulness recollects it, then these are exercises in mindfulness of the condition of Mind. They are stepping stones to mindfulness practice towards insight development on the foundation of Mind.

6.7.4 Contemplation of the hand movement steps: If during contemplation of the movements of a hand, one is absorbed and mindless, then it is unacceptable. If one gazes so intently that consciousness is firmly fixed to the hand, then it is concentration (*samatha*) practice. If mindfulness is aware of the moving body and consciousness is a knower that is separate from the body, it is insight (*vipassanā*) practice on the foundation of body. If during a hand movement exercise consciousness is abstracted and mindfulness recollects it, if it gazes at the hand and mindfulness recollects it, if it is happy, unhappy or indifferent and mindfulness recollects it, and if consciousness is moral or immoral, mindfulness recollects it, then they are exercises in mindfulness of the condition of Mind. They are stepping stones to mindfulness practice towards insight development on the foundation of Mind.

6.7.5 Repeating “Buddho” as the word of exercise: If during the repeating of the word of exercise, one is absorbed and mindless, it is unacceptable. If one repeats the word of exercise until consciousness is firmly fixed to the word of exercise, then it is concentration (*samatha*) practice. If during a repeating exercise mindfulness is aware of the standing, walking, sitting or lying body and consciousness is a knower that is separate from the body, it is insight (*vipassanā*) practice on the foundation of body. If during a moment of repeating the word, consciousness is abstracted and mindfulness recollects it, if consciousness ignorantly gazes and mindfulness recollects it, if consciousness is happy, unhappy or indifferent and mindfulness recollects it, and if the consciousness is moral or immoral and mindfulness recollects it, then they are exercises in mindfulness of the condition of Mind. They are stepping stones to mindfulness practice towards insight development on the foundation of Mind.

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Even if other objects of consciousness are applied in meditation practice, the quality of mindfulness and the results are comparable, as shown in the aforesaid examples.

6.8 Clause 6.2 has described various states that are not the knowing state. This Clause will explain **the factors of knowing consciousness**, which will help one identify once more whether the present knowing is the right knowing.. The factors of the right knowing are:

6.8.1 **Knowing consciousness is mahakusala-citta, ñānasampayuttam**, namely, moral consciousness associated with knowledge. It is natural, unprompted and unconditioned (*asankhārikam*)²⁶. Therefore:

6.8.1.1 At the moment consciousness is immoral (*akusala*), knowing consciousness has not arisen.

6.8.1.2 At the moment consciousness aims to use more power than wisdom, e.g. exerting energy in a struggle to find a way to abandon suffering or immoral consciousness, or striving to retain happiness or moral consciousness, at that very moment knowing consciousness has not arisen.

6.8.1.3 At the moment consciousness tries to do something to cause the arising of knowing consciousness, at that very moment knowing consciousness is missing because **the more one craves for knowing consciousness, the lesser is the chance of realizing it. The more one searches, the lesser is one’s chance of finding it.**

6.8.2 **Knowing consciousness is simply attentive (*manasikāra*)**. *Manasikāra* means attention or mental advertence of an object. It is not daydreaming, thinking, setting for practice, mental noting, gazing, etc. (see Clause 6.2). The state of *manasikāra* is weightless, thin, silent, unintentional or devoid of volition (*cetanā*) to know with a craving and a view.

6.8.3 Knowing consciousness is associated with beautiful mental factors that are common to moral consciousness (*sobhana-sādhāraṇa cetasika*). The factors that easily identify knowing consciousness are as follows:

6.8.3.1 **Non-greed (*alobha*)**: At that moment, consciousness is devoid of craving, greed or lust, even for *Dhamma*. If consciousness craves for practice, intentionally practices or is pleased with joy and a moral state, at that moment consciousness is greedy. It is not the right knowing consciousness.

6.8.3.2 **Non-hatred (*adosa*)**: At that moment, consciousness is not dissatisfied or angry with any object of consciousness. If consciousness hates suffering or an immoral state, e.g. distraction, and attempts to abandon

²⁶ *Somanassa-sahagatam ñānasampayuttam asankhārikam ekam*

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suffering or the immoral state, at that moment consciousness is hateful. It is not the right knowing consciousness.

6.8.3.3 Equanimity/mental balance (*tatramajjhataṭṭā*), namely, consciousness without satisfaction, dissatisfaction or a bias towards/against an object. It neither tries to maintain a certain object nor tries to abandon a certain object. If consciousness is biased or wavers with a bias, at that moment consciousness is not neutral. It is not the right knowing consciousness.

6.8.3.4 Tranquility (*passaddhi*): When consciousness is aware of an object, it is calm and collected. It does not waver or struggle with the object. Even though the object of consciousness is a feeling, consciousness remains tranquil after knowing because no fuel is added to distraction or struggle. If consciousness is mindful of an object and wavers, it is not the right knowing consciousness.

6.8.3.5 Lightness (*lahutā*): Knowing consciousness is light and at ease. No weight ever arises from mindfulness of an object. If during a moment of practice consciousness is heavy or bears weight, even a little (including minus weight, which means an extremely and unnaturally light feeling), it indicates that knowing consciousness is missing. It is not the right knowing consciousness.

6.8.3.6 Pliancy (*mudutā*): Knowing consciousness is pliant, gentle, not rigid and not stiff. If after practice, consciousness is rigid and stiff, it indicates that knowing consciousness is missing. It is not the right knowing consciousness.

6.8.3.7 Adaptability (*pammaññatā*): Knowing consciousness is ready for *vipassanā* practice. It is free from and not overcome by hindrances. (However, if a hindrance arises, consciousness will be clearly aware of it and will regard it as the Truth of Suffering (*ariya-sacca*) to be realized. If a hindrance is present and consciousness is aware of it, but is not overcome by it, the practice is also acceptable. In any event, if consciousness is overcome by a hindrance, it is not the right knowing consciousness.

6.8.3.8 Proficiency (*pāguññatā*): Knowing consciousness is mindful, swift and proficient. If the mind is inert, drowsy or lazy, it indicates that knowing consciousness is missing. It is not the right knowing consciousness.

6.8.3.9 Rectitude/Uprightness (*ujjukatā*): Consciousness is upright in performing the duty of awareness of an object. It does not do anything beyond that. If consciousness is not upright in performing its duty of awareness, but tries to absorb in or interfere with the object when overcome by defilement, then it is not the right knowing consciousness.

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6.8.4. **Knowing consciousness is associated with clear comprehension (*sampajañña*), insight (*paññā*), the faculty of wisdom (*paññāindriya*) and non-delusion (*amoha*).** It can develop insight with clear comprehension of what it is doing (mindfulness practice), what for (recollection of an object of consciousness as it really is) and how (to be mindful of the present object as it really is). It will develop mindfulness with awareness, without abstraction or without being carried away by any object because of delusion (*moha*). In addition, **it has wisdom to know and comprehend the characteristics of the present condition that is an object of consciousness in insight practice**--that it is impermanent, subject to suffering or not self. If consciousness is simply **mindful** of a condition, but lacks **wisdom** to comprehend the nature of the condition, then it is not the right knowing consciousness for insight practice.

7. What is a Condition (*sabhavadham*)?

7.1 Mindfulness development is mindfulness of Suffering or Matter and Mind/body and mind in order to eliminate the wrong view that Matter and Mind/body and mind constitute a self or belong to a self. Eventually, the mind will give up clinging to Matter and Mind/body and mind, which constitute a mass of suffering. Therefore, to develop the Right Mindfulness, one must be mindful of a condition of Matter and Mind. Mindfulness practice is not contemplation of *Nibbāna* or contemplation of a conventional (*paññatti*) object, which exists only in one's own thoughts or imagination. Even reflection on Matter and Mind that they are subject to the Three Characteristics of Existence is still contemplation of a conventional object because it is neither mindfulness of a condition of Matter and Mind nor comprehension of the characteristics of Matter and Mind.

7.2 This Matter and Mind/body and mind are the conditions that mindfulness must recollect; and wisdom must comprehend the characteristics of the condition. Other than mindfulness and wisdom, the instruments used for mindfulness of Matter and Mind are simply the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind. **Matter is perceived through the eyes, ears, nose, tongue and body; whereas Mind is perceived through the mind.**

7.3 Mindfulness of Matter is possible at every door (*dvāra*), as follows:

7.3.1 The Matter that one sees with the eyes is in innumerable forms. It may be in hundreds of thousands or millions of forms, e.g. a woman, a man, a child, an old person, a tiger, a monkey, a bird, a sea, a river, a mountain, a tree, a flower, a gem, etc. Nevertheless, in all these innumerable forms, the real Matter that consciousness really sees with the eyes is only color. Then, perception (*saññā*), i.e. recognition and interpretation arises to condition consciousness, causing consciousness to designate this group of

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colors as a woman, a man, or a gem. In reality, colors are the real Matter that one sees with the eyes.

7.3.2 The Matter perceived with the ears is sound. The Matter perceived with the nose is an odor. The Matter conceived with the tongue is a taste. The Matter perceived by the body is of three kinds: fire element (*tejo dhātu*) or coolness-heat; earth element (*paṭhavī dhātu*) or softness-hardness; and wind element (*vāyo-dhātu*) or rigidity-motion.

7.3.3 The Matter perceived by consciousness is much more than the Matter perceived with the eyes, ears, nose, tongue and body. They consist of the five *pasāda-rūpa* or sensitive corporeality/physical sense-organs responding to sense-stimuli through the eyes, ear, nose, tongue and body; and the sixteen subtle Matter or *sukhuma-rupa*, such as nutriment (*āhāra*), the masculine/feminine materiality (*bhāva-rūpa*), bodily movement and speech for communication.

7.4 Other than those lots of forms (21 forms) under Clause 7.3.3, there are several other forms of Matter that are perceived through consciousness, namely: (1) 52 mental factors (*cetasika*), such as, pleasure (*sukha*), suffering (*dukkha*), equanimity (*upekkhā*), perception (*saññā*), greed (*lobhā*), hatred (*dosā*), delusion (*moha*), delight (*pīti*), faith (*saddhā*), effort (*virīya*), wisdom (*paññā*); (2) Consciousness (*citta*) or nature of awareness of an object, which is classified into 89 or 121 states; (3) *Nibbāna*; and (4) *paññatti dhamma* or thoughts and dreams, which do not exist in reality (for reference, see *Abhidhammattha-vibhavinī*²⁷). Thus, consciousness is an organ (*āyatana*) that perceives the most extensive and diverse objects of consciousness.

7.5 To simplify the concept, **in mindfulness practice, consciousness must be mindful of an absolute object (*paramattha ārammana*), which is the ultimate truth or reality of nature, not a thought or an imagination (*paññati dhamma*)**. For example, when one gets close to a bonfire, the heat sensed through the body is an ultimate object (*paramattha ārammana*); whereas the nominal “hot” is a conventional object (*samutti paññati*). A practitioner has the duty to be mindful of the heat that affects the body. He should not contemplate that the fire is hot like the fires of defilement or fire in a hell, etc. In addition, a practitioner needs to know which kind of object of consciousness is perceived at which door (*dvāra*). For example, to be mindful of the four bodily postures, i.e. standing, walking, sitting and lying, one must perceive it with consciousness, not with the eyes or the body.

²⁷ also called, “*Abhidhammattha-sanghatika*”

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7.6 If a practitioner can be mindful of Matter and Mind that are ultimate objects, then insight will disillusion the wrong view that there is an animal, a person, a self, I or they. The reason is that the ultimate objects perceived in insight practice consist of only Matter and Mind, not an animal, a person, a self, I or they. All animals, persons, selves, I or they arise from thinking or designation of certain groups of Matter and Mind as animals, persons, selves, we or they.

7.7 In practice, there are some noteworthy points about conditions, as follows:

7.7.1 Consciousness perceives objects that are both ultimate (*paramattha ārammana*) and conventional (*paññatti ārammana*). It cannot choose to perceive only one kind of object as it wishes. Therefore, at the moment consciousness is mindful of an ultimate object, mindfulness should be aware of it. At the moment consciousness perceives a conventional object, mindfulness should also be aware of it. Even the worthy ones (*arahant*) perceives both kinds of objects, not only the ultimate.

7.7.2 In insight practice, a practitioner may begin to practice mindfulness of only Matter or only Mind as he likes. He may choose to practice mindfulness on any foundation first, and need not practice mindfulness on all foundations. If he tries to practice mindfulness on every foundation/in every section (*pabba*), not only will the practice be ineffective, consciousness may also be distracted because it is desultory in practice. The Buddha teaches us to be mindful of “*kāya* in *kāya*”²⁸, “*vedanā* in *vedanā*”²⁹, “*citta* in *citta*”³⁰ and “*dhamma* in *dhamma*”³¹. That is to say, practitioners dwell perceiving only certain kinds of Matter and Mind, certain kinds of sensation, certain kinds of moral and immoral consciousness, and certain kinds of conditions. Once consciousness comprehends those ‘certain

²⁸ to be mindful of the characteristics of Matter, such as breath, major and minor postures, motion and elements in, of or through the body, and perceiving it as it really is -- as Matter, not as my body.

²⁹ the characteristics of a pleasant/unpleasant/indifferent feeling or sensation, physical or mental, internal or external, that arises when consciousness contacts an object, and perceiving it as it really is -- a feeling, not my feeling.

³⁰ the characteristics of consciousness as greedy/angry/deluded/distracted/concentrated or otherwise, and perceiving it as it really is -- as mind, not mine.

³¹ the characteristics of any *dhamma* other than *kāya*, *vedanā* and *citta* by practicing mindfulness of the hindrances, aggregates, sense-bases, etc. and perceiving the *dhamma* as it really is -- as a phenomenon, not as a self or belonging to a self.

For more information, see *Dhammanupassana on Mahasatipatthana Sutta* in English on <http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/mahasati.htm>

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kinds of Matter and Mind’, it will be able to comprehend all other kinds of Matter and Mind as well. Thus, it is a study and a research of Matter and Mind (*dhammavicaya*) by random sampling, which is a very advanced learning process.

For example, if consciousness realizes that the Matter that is standing, walking, sitting or lying is not a self, then it will also realize that all forms of Matter are not a self. If it views that both mindless consciousness and mindful consciousness are impermanent and not self, then, it will realize that all states of consciousness are impermanent and not self.

7.7.3 Preliminarily, a practitioner may have to be mindful of a certain condition as an abode of consciousness (*vihāra-dhamma*). However, when mindfulness is developed to the stage that it becomes automatic, the practitioner cannot choose an object of consciousness. If an object of consciousness appears at any door and mindfulness is clearly conscious of the object at the door, consciousness will be mindful of a sight, a sound, an odor, a taste or an object of consciousness naturally and momentarily. Furthermore, the practitioner will also realize that he cannot force consciousness to be mindful of only one object because consciousness itself is also *anattā* or not-self.

8. What is meant by “present”?

8.1 For mindfulness of conditions, there is an important principle: **One must be mindful of the present condition, i.e. Matter and Mind. One should not reflect on the past or expect something in the future.** Buddhism emphasizes on use of the present, as described in the Buddha’s teaching in *Bhaddekaratta Sutta* (*Ti-pitaka 14/527*), as follows:

*Do not recollect the past, nor desire the future,
The past is over, the future has not come.
These things of the present,
see them with insight as they arise.
Not faltering and not moved, think about them.
Today itself the dispelling should be done.
Tomorrow death might come.
We will not have any associations with Death and his great army.
You should abide dispelling thus, day and night zealously,
This is the single auspicious attachment, the appeased sage tells.*

8.2 ‘The present Matter and Mind’ means the following:

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8.2.1 Matter must be one that really exists in the present moment. For example, one may be mindful of Matter that is standing still or Matter that is in motion.

8.2.1 Mind must be recollected immediately after it disappeared and in the continuing present (*santati-paccuppanna*). It is not the Mind that is really present at the moment because by nature, consciousness can be aware of only one object at a time. At the moment consciousness is mindful of an object of consciousness, it cannot perceive itself. For example, when Matter is sitting and Mind is daydreaming about something, at that very moment Mind has already forgotten the sitting Matter. *Moha-mūlacitta* or consciousness rooted in delusion [distraction] has arisen. Consciousness may be abstracted for five minutes, then recollects that it was abstracted just now. At that moment, abstraction vanishes. In other cases, after getting angry with a friend for five minutes, one may recollect that one has been angry. This is acceptable. It is not like getting angry with a friend yesterday and recalling and repenting it today. All these acts are not up to the present. Yesterday, when one was angry, one was unaware of it. Even now that one is sorry about it, one is not aware of one's own feeling at all because one has been so absorbed in thinking about yesterday. Otherwise, when one recalls that one lost one's temper with a friend yesterday and thinks that one should make up to that friend, one may worry about her reaction--whether she will reconcile. Thus, worry is the present feeling that one is not mindful of because one is thinking about the future.

8.3 By nature, consciousness is aware of only one object at a time; and it is the duty of a practitioner to be mindful of the present object (for Matter) or in the continuing present (for Mind). One should not try to hold a past object back for long, for fear that one has not discerned the Three Characteristics of Existence (*tilakkhana*). For example, when the eyes see a group of colors, consciousness should be mindful of the colors as they truly are because that group of colors is the present object of consciousness called, *'rūpārammaṇā* (a visual object). Then, perception (*saññā*) arises to recognize that the group of colors is the sight of one's beloved. Consciousness is pleased with the sight as passion (*rāga*) arises. Thus, passion is a new object of consciousness (*dhammārammaṇa*). It is the duty of the practitioner to be mindful of the present condition – passion, which exists at the moment. He should not contemplate the Matter of his beloved as loathsome or whatever in order to restrain his passion. The sight of his beloved was a past object whereas passion is the present object, which is manifesting existence and fading away.

8.4 Speaking about mindfulness of a present object, some may be confused that if it is so, Buddhists cannot make any future plans. This idea is incorrect. Whenever one has the duty to make a plan, one has to do so. Even the Buddha Himself made a plan every morning to whom he would give

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a sermon on that day, on what topic and for what outcome. The Buddha was a great planner because (1) He fixed a target; (2) He determined the method; (3) He outlined the *Dhamma* which He would convey to that person; and (4) He took into consideration the benefits that person would gain. A practitioner should know how to practice *Dhamma* in a timely manner. When he has the duty to make a plan, he should make a plan. When he has the duty to study, he should study. When he has the duty to work, he must work. Where it requires concentration on work, he should concentrate. Where it requires contemplation and consideration, he must do so. He should not practice mindfulness continuously without tranquilizing his mind or without thinking or considering matters in accordance with his duty.

8.5 Another remark on mindfulness practice is that the term “present” does not mean today, this hour, this minute, or even this second. It means mindfulness of the Matter that is right before one’s eyes at this consciousness-moment or recollection of the Mind that disappeared just a moment before. Mindfulness is knowing within the shortest time, so short that one cannot do anything more than “being mindful of it.”

9. What is meant by "as it really is"?

9.1 Clause 6 of this Article aims to explain the nature of the Right Mindfulness. Clause 7 describes the conditions that are objects of consciousness. Clause 8 points out that one must be mindful of the present condition. This Clause will now focus on the point that when one can be mindful of a condition that is the present object of consciousness, **consciousness must be mindful of that condition as it actually is at that very moment (1) without adapting it and interfering with it** (the essential points of which are described in Clauses 9.2 and 9.3), (2) without conditioning the consciousness that is mindful of the object (the essential points of which are described in Clause 9.4), **and (3) with clear comprehension of the characteristics of the object or Matter/Mind in accordance with the teachings of Lord Buddha** (the essential points of which are described in Clause 9.5).

9.2. **Adapting an object:** A lot of practitioners tend to adapt Matter and Mind that are objects of mindfulness such that the objects differ from what they normally are. There are two important methods: (1) Attempting to hold back or delay an object of consciousness; and (2) Splitting into several stages or adding certain stages and details to an object.

9.2.1 A lot of practitioners try to delay objects of consciousness. For example, they try to move slowly in the hope that mindfulness will be able to catch the slow motion. In reality, no matter how slow the motion is,

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defilement does not slow down like the motion at all. Some may spend five minutes with only one step of walking. Although gazing makes them clearly conscious of the motion, they do not realize the fact that at that very moment their minds are predominated by greed, i.e. desire to practice *Dhamma*. They do not even know that during that five-minute period consciousness was mindless because it slipped from knowing to thinking for tens of times. Even if consciousness is mindful and not diverted from the objects, it is gazing at the objects such that it is firmly fixed to the objects, e.g. the hand, the foot and the abdomen. Such practice is called, '*ārammaṇupanijjhāna*³², which is a concentration practice, not an insight practice that they want to practice.

9.2.2 Some practitioners split or add more steps and details to an object of consciousness for increased frequency of mindfulness. For example, when they practice contemplation of breathing, they will be mindful of a touch of the breath on the philtrum³³ or the tip of the nose. Then, they will follow the breath through the body to the abdomen, and will be mindful of it at several predetermined bases. Some may split a walking step into several stages. All these exercises are good in that they firmly fix consciousness to the objects of consciousness, which is a method of concentration practice so that consciousness will be calm and fixed to the object of consciousness. Through practice by these methods, consciousness often experience joy (*pīti*) or mental images (*nimitta*) as the results of concentration practice, but practitioners often misunderstand that they have gained insight or *ñāṇa* because they believe that they are practicing insight development.

9.3 Interference with a condition: *Vipassanā* is a practice for development of insight into the truth of a condition, i.e. Matter/Mind, not for happiness, tranquility or virtues. However, most practitioners do not want to see realities. Therefore, when they are mindful of a condition, they often try to intervene or to improve the condition that is the present object of consciousness for the sake of happiness or virtues by various methods, as follows:

9.3.1. When consciousness is mindful of an immoral state (*akusala dhamma*), these practitioners will try to abandon it. For example, when they find that consciousness is distracted, they will try to repeat the word "*Buddhd*" or to make a mental note, "distracted" to overcome distraction. When they find that consciousness is lustful, they will try to contemplate loathsomeness (*asubha*). When they find that consciousness is hateful (*dosa*), they will try to extend loving-kindness (*mettā*). When they find that consciousness is suffering, they will try to abandon

³² object-scrutinizing *jhāna*

³³ the vertical groove on the surface of the upper lip

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suffering by various means. These acts are attributable to various causes. Following are examples:

9.3.1.1 They have a wrong view (*micchadit̄thi*) because they have heard a teaching that one should abandon all immoral. Accordingly, when they become aware of an immoral state, they will try to abandon it. These practitioners never realize that **the stage of insight development (*vipassanā*) goes beyond the stages of abandoning sins and developing morals**; it is the stage of purification, which is beyond good or evil. Thus, consciousness must perceive a condition and the nature of both moral and immoral objects of consciousness neutrally, without love for one and hatred for the other. Some may misinterpret teachings of the Buddha. For example, when they read *Nīvarana Pubba under dhammanupassana-satipaṭṭhāna in Maha-satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, they may misunderstand that the Buddha teaches us to be mindful of hindrances (*nīvarana*) and to overcome hindrances. Consequently, they misunderstand that the true mindfulness development includes both mindfulness and abandonment of a natural condition because knowing alone is not enough.

9.3.1.2 In the lack of knowledge that the task regarding the Truth of Suffering (*dukkhasacca*) is “knowing”, not “abandoning”, when suffering arises, one tries to abandon suffering. That act satisfies consciousness, which loves happiness and hates suffering.

9.3.1.3 One may not understand the principle of *vipassanā* that one must be mindful of a condition as it really is until one realizes that all existences (*dhamma*) are not animals, selves, we or they, and are not under anyone’s control. After penetrating this insight, consciousness will abandon them and end suffering through abandonment.

9.3.1.4 A meditator may be accustomed to concentration (*samatha*) practice or may think that *Dhamma* practice is simply meditation for tranquility. The tranquility arising from concentration meditation is more refined than sensual pleasure (*kāmasukha*). Some concentration meditators may have peace of mind. Others may develop certain knowledge and perception power, of which they take pleasure and pride. They are much admired by their fellow practitioners. Thus, when they confront any *Dhamma* that is hostile to tranquility, they will try to abandon it.

9.3.2 **Whenever mindful of a moral state (*kusala dhamma*), these practitioners will try to maintain or develop it.** They hope that continuous development of moral consciousness will lead to enlightenment one day in the future because a holy one (*arahant*) is “one whose consciousness is moral forever.” This is a very wrong attitude because **both**

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consciousness (*citta*) and moral mental factors (*kusala cetasika*) are conditioned things (*saṅkhāra*) and thus are impermanent and not-self. It is insight into this truth that causes the mind to give up clinging to consciousness and liberates the mind by detachment. It is not making impermanent consciousness permanent, making suffering consciousness happy, or making consciousness that is not-self, a self.

9.4 **Conditioning of consciousness:** To be mindful of Matter and Mind as they truly are, not only must one refrain from adapting an object, i.e. Matter/Mind, one must also refrain from adapting consciousness that is mindful of the object, i.e. Matter/Mind. When thinking of practice, however, almost 100% of *Dhamma* practitioners usually begin by **adapting consciousness to an extraordinary state** first. Then, they will be **intentionally mindful** of Matter and Mind. Others may even ignore Matter and Mind. Following are examples of the adaptation of consciousness:

9.4.1 **Repression of consciousness so that it holds still.**

When thinking of practice, however, almost 100% of *Dhamma* practitioners usually begin by adapting consciousness from its normal state. They repress it so that it is extraordinarily calm and collected. As a matter of fact, we practice insight development with the view to see the true nature of body and mind. If we adapt consciousness such that it is different from its normal state, then how can we see the true nature of consciousness? That will only be inducing of consciousness towards tranquility. **Although consciousness may realize that other objects of consciousness are subject to the Three Characteristics of Existence (*tilakkhana*), it perceives itself to be still, calm, intransient and not subject to the Three Characteristics of Existence.** As such, the Wrong View that consciousness is a self cannot be eliminated. The delusion of self (*sakkāyaditthi*) cannot be abandoned, and the practitioner cannot attain the Fruition of Stream Entry (*sotāpatti*).

9.4.2 **Making consciousness empty:** Some practitioners have heard their teachers say “At the end of the path, the mind is empty of defilement and empty of the Aggregates.” Thus, they aim to penetrate such emptiness directly by **holding consciousness still and conditioning emptiness** in an attempt to imitate the destination of their practice. They do not take into consideration that the Buddha teaches us to begin practice by mindfulness of Matter and Mind/body and mind. When the mind comprehends the truths of Matter and Mind and gives up clinging to Matter and Mind, it will eventually penetrate that emptiness of defilement and the Aggregates. Keeping the mind empty on purpose will at most be contemplation of infinite space (*ākāśānancāyatana*) or contemplation of

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nothingness as an object of consciousness (*ākiñcaññāyatana*), which is a concentration practice (*samatha*). **Some of these practitioners find that their consciousness is bright, clear and firm for a long time such that they misunderstand that they have attained the stage of holiness (*arahant*), despite the fact that with ignorance their consciousness still conditions an empty existence (*bhava*) and is attached to that existence.**

In reality, “the mind is empty of defilement” because it has gained insight into the truths of Matter and Mind such that it relinquishes clinging to Matter and Mind; and defilement and craving have no chance to arise again. Thus the mind can be conscious of any sight, sound, odor, taste, bodily contact (*phoṭṭhabba*) and object of consciousness. It need not avoid all other objects of consciousness with the view to contemplate only emptiness. “The mind empty of the Aggregates” does not imply that it is not mindful of the Aggregates. Despite being mindful of the Aggregates, it truly apprehends the Aggregates as empty of an ego-entity as an animal, a person, a self, I or he.

9.4.3 Abandoning consciousness: Some practitioners try to abandon consciousness by various means. Following are examples:

(1) **Gazing at Matter:** Some practitioners may be mindful of movements of the body, but simply inattentive to consciousness. Instead of separating Matter and Mind with comprehension that “Matter is moving, consciousness is minding it”, a practitioner may firmly fix mindfulness to Matter such that consciousness is still and devoid of thinking or imagination. That is object-scrutinizing or ‘*ārammaṇupanijjhāna*’, which is a concentration practice. Object-scrutinizing will finally lead to *catuttha-jhāna* or the 4th absorption. Then, associated by inattentiveness to Mind, consciousness will be further absorbed in *asañña-satta bhūmi*³⁴, i.e. the cessation of perception. Consciousness will vanish at that very moment; and the body remains stiff in the state of a so-called ‘unconscious *brahma*’. A person who has practiced these absorptions may, after returning to the worldly state, perceive the world as empty of a self because when mindful of an object, consciousness will neither think nor add a perception to consciousness. Some think they have attained the stage of holiness (*arahant*) because no defilement arose at all. However, it was not truly a state of oblivion because **that emptiness of a self was conditioned by the mind itself**. It temporarily repressed defilement through object-scrutinizing until despite no scrutinizing consciousness was firmly fixed to the object. One may misunderstand that one has fulfilled the holy life because there is no need to scrutinize an object

³⁴ one of the sixteen rūpa-brahma planes where there is only rūpa, not nāma.

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or to make a mental note of an object any more. In addition, the existence of Matter/Mind is also separated into two: the inner part of consciousness is hollowed/empty and unmindful, and consciousness that is deluded and firmly fixed to an external object of consciousness. When the power gained from object-scrutinizing subsides, defilement will be many times more intense than that of ordinary people.

Abandonment of consciousness is also possible by another method: (2) Increasing tension such that consciousness is extremely tense. Consequently, consciousness will flee suffering and slipped out to condition emptiness. Then, it will abide in that emptiness without paying attention to mindfulness of consciousness. Tension may be increased by several methods: (a) Practicing mindfulness of objects continuously such that consciousness gets extremely tense; and (b) overdoing, e.g. sitting or walking continuously day and night for several days at a time. When tension peaks, some practitioners may even suffer mental abnormalities or fall sick. Others may find that consciousness sneaks out to abide in outer emptiness in **escape from inner suffering**. As the result, the practitioners may misunderstand that they have attained it because their minds slipped out. Their consciousness is externally bright, at ease and cheerful. They view the external world as empty of a self, but they do not see their own minds. They feel consciousness is hollow; and consciousness cannot revert to look at the inner mind. **With ignorance, it indulges in the outer abode**. Some practitioners who follow this kind of practice often condition loving-kindness (*metta*) and abide in that state.

9.4.4 Attempt to increase efficiency in mindfulness: As a practitioner is not confident that recollection alone is effective enough for enlightenment, he tries to increase the efficiency of mindfulness by various methods, for example:

9.4.4.1 Helping the mind contemplate a condition that is being known: For example, when consciousness is mindful of hatred (*dosa*), one may try to contemplate that hatred is not good, unsatisfactory and very harmful.

9.4.4.2 Gazing at a condition seriously so that consciousness will be able to know it more clearly or so that the condition will disappear. Sometimes, a practitioner may gaze at a condition so seriously that he forgets himself and plunges deeply into the inner mind although he may be conscious of the object at that very moment. That is consciousness of a person who leans out to look at something in the water and falls into the water, but does not realize that he has fallen into the water.

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9.4.4.3 **Balancing one’s virtues.** It is inspired by an idea that “I still lack some virtues, such as charity (*dāna*), morality (*sīla*), moral shame (*hiri*), moral dread of the outcome of an evil (*ottappa*), truthfulness (*sacca*), self-control (*dama*), patience (*khanti*), sacrifice (*cāga*), renunciation (*nekkhamma*), faith (*saddhā*), mindfulness (*sati*), endeavor (*virīya*), joy (*pīti*), tranquility (*passaddhi*), concentration (*samādhi*), indifference (*upekkhā*), wisdom (*paññā*), etc. So, I have to develop these qualities first so that they will be enough to balance other qualities. Then, I can practice mindfulness.” **In fact, if one has knowledge and understanding (the Right View (*sammādiṭṭhi*)) and has learned how to be mindful, all virtues will arise easily.** If one aims to develop those qualities (*parami*), but neglects to practice mindfulness, it is the same as a traveler who has prepared a lot of foodstuffs for a long journey, but never steps out of his house. No matter how many years have passed, the traveler will never reach his destination.

9.5 **One must be mindful of the condition and characteristics of Matter and Mind in the aspects taught by the Buddha.** Mindfulness of a condition as it really is must correspond to teachings of the Buddha, not what one expects or believes to be right. Nor is it in line with a teaching of one’s own meditation master, but contrary to or against the teachings of the Buddha.

9.5.1 **The condition that consciousness is mindful of:** The Matter and Mind that consciousness is mindful of must be in accordance with teachings of the Buddha. For example, mindfulness is recollection, not mental noting. Wisdom or insight (*vipassanā ñāṇa*) is true knowledge of the mind, not a strange bodily reaction. Suffering is feeling, not Matter in the form of a red light.

9.5.2 **The characteristics that insight comprehends:** If mindfulness recollects a condition rightly, consciousness will be mindful, awaken and cheerful because momentary concentration (*khaṇikasamādhi*) arises automatically. An object of consciousness or Matter and Mind must exhibit any one of the Three Characteristics to the mind. For example, Matter shows pain and nature of elements, and Mind shows impermanence and not-self. In particular, immoral Mind must vanish immediately when mindfulness arises.

9.6 **The reason for having to be mindful of a condition as it really is, is that we need to know the truth of the condition. We do not want to adapt it or control it.** Clauses 3 and 4 of this Article have already explained that failure to perceive a condition as it really is or **ignorance (*avijjā*) causes craving, which is the cause of suffering. If ignorance**

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is overcome, craving and suffering will have no chance to arise again.

9.7 Any attempt to interfere with mindfulness of a condition will cause even more delusion. For example, when defilement like distraction arises and a practitioner tries to abandon it by noting it mentally, “distracted”, “distracted”, distraction will vanish soon (because the repeated noting blocks the flow of thoughts, which is the root of distraction). Then, the practitioner may have a wrong view that defilement is controllable (a self) or that consciousness is a self that is under one’s control (an ego). The more one practices, the more skilled one is in gazing or mental noting to overcome defilement. Delusion will accumulate and cause higher conceit (*māna*) and ego (*attā*). Nor will consciousness have a chance to realize that **any *dhamma* arising from a cause ends when its cause ends. On the contrary, one may believe that one can end any *dhamma* as one wishes because one has practiced “*vipassanā*” so expertly.**

9.8 By nature of the worldling (*puthujjana*), immoral consciousness arises almost all the times; moral consciousness seldom arises. For example, it is usual for one to be absent-minded for a long time, possibly for hours (when overpowered by delusion (*moha*)). Then, one may recollect that one was absent-minded just now. At the moment one was absent-minded, consciousness was immoral. At the moment **mindfulness recollects it** and absent-mindedness vanishes automatically, consciousness is already moral. (Once mindfulness/awareness arises, immoral consciousness will vanish automatically. When mindfulness/awareness arises, immoral consciousness no longer exists for one to abandon. What one has abandoned are latent dispositions (*anusaya*) or defilements that lurk deep within the mind. For this reason, **our task is to be mindful of it, not to abandon it because at the moment that one is perfectly mindful, there is no defilement to be abandoned. Even suffering need not be abandoned. If there is a cause, it will arise. If the cause ends, suffering will also end.** Our task is only to be mindful of suffering.) A weak point of mindfulness practitioners is that they do not clearly comprehend the principle of mindfulness. As the result, their consciousness turns immoral in the wink of an eye. When awareness flashes, they may ignorantly bemoan the past that “Oh no! I’ve been mindless for one hour. Then, how can I be good at *Dhamma* practice?” Otherwise, one may worry about the future that “How can I avoid being mindless as I was before?” **An attempt to do anything other than being naturally mindful of an object, moment by moment, is a serious blunder.**

9.9 **Recollection, if pure, perfect and at peak, will reach a state called “impassive recollection”. It is a state in which consciousness**

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is mindful of a present condition as it really is, without adding anything to knowing at all. Following are examples: (1) **It does not add an intention to think about a condition** (*ārammana*, meaning an object of consciousness) that “This is Matter. This is Mind. This name is doing this act. This is the result. This is the proximate cause. This is impermanent. This is suffering. This is not a self. This is impure. This is impassive knowing.”; and (2) **It does not add an intention to perceive consciousness**, even a little.

9.10 **The will, intention or greedy volition (*lobha cetana*) to perceive (an object of) consciousness, which covers both the perception of an object and the perception of consciousness, is a nutriment or a factor that causes an act (*karma*) or a mental karma (and subsequently, a bodily karma), called “*Dhamma* practice” or “meditation practice”.**

The truth behind the intention is *taṇhā* or a craving for making “our body and mind” happy and free from suffering forever.

The truth behind craving is *avijjā*, particularly (1) **ignorance of the Truth of Suffering**, i.e. ignorance of the truth that “this Matter/Mind is impermanent, suffering and not-self, but is worldly wealth”, which causes a craving for making “one’s body and mind” happy and free from suffering forever; and (2) **ignorance of the Cause of Suffering**, i.e. ignorance of the truth that a struggle to escape suffering and to find happiness by seeking sensual pleasure, forcing the body and mind, and avoiding contact with an object of consciousness will cause becoming (*bhava*), birth (*jāti*) and suffering (*dukkha*). (Most practitioners are tied by attachment to consciousness. Thus, they crave for “making their minds free from suffering” and are always in the pursuit of *Dhamma*. They do not realize that the struggle to seek *Dhamma* is a conditioned moral state or *puññābhisankhāra* or *attakilamathānuyoga* (self-mortification), which is also rooted by ignorance (*avijjā*), like a conditioned immoral state, or *apuññābhisankhāra* or *kāmasukh’alikānuyoga* (constant attachment to sensual pleasures).

These conditioned states conceal the pure nature that is empty of a self (*Nibbāna*). It eclipses a vision of truth (*ñāṇadassana*) such that a practitioner cannot penetrate into *Nibbāna*, an immortal element that fully appears right before one’s very eyes.

9.11 **“Impassive recollection” arises from wisdom** at different levels: (1) Consciousness that is wisely aware of the two extremes, i.e. being deluded by defilement into seeking an external object, and gazing and forcing one’s own body and mind; (2) Consciousness that wisely recollects

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pleasure or displeasure when consciousness contacts objects through the six sense-doors, and most importantly, (3) Consciousness that wisely discerns the truth that all objects of consciousness are transient, be it happiness or suffering, good or evil. As the result, consciousness ceases craving for one object and hating another object. It becomes neutral to all objects of consciousness and reaches the stage of impassive knowing. **Whatever appears, consciousness is impassively mindful of that object because it has gained insight** (*sarikhārupekkhānāna*) into the truth that all conditioned states are transient.

9.12 Without an intention to perceive an object, but being mindful of an (ultimate) object and without an intention to perceive consciousness, but being mindful of consciousness, it will be able to perceive all objects of consciousness and consciousness (*citta*) as they truly are. Eventually insight will mature. The mind will penetrate the Truth of Suffering or the true knowledge about the Aggregates. Initially, it will comprehend the real truth that **“the Aggregates are not a self. A self is not the Aggregates. No self ever exists in the Aggregates or anything else.”** This is the primary wisdom, which is the knowledge of a Stream-enterer (*sotāpanna*).

Then, further development of mindfulness of Matter/Mind will bring insight that **“when a craving or lust for a sight, a sound, an odor, a taste, a contact (an object of sensual pleasure) or even a craving for thinking of object of sensual pleasure arises, mental suffering will arise. When the mind is devoid of craving, it has inner peace.”** Those have gained this intermediate insight will be content with the peace of mind. They view that consciousness that is tranquil and devoid of defilement and craving is a spot or an island of the Extinction of Suffering in the midst of the sea of rebirths (*saṃ sāraccakka*). Thus, it ceases wavering and struggling to seek objects of sensual pleasures, and reaches perfect concentration. Consciousness is firm and eminent without keeping watch over it. This is the level of insight of a Non-returner (*anāgāmi*).

With keener insight through steady practice until the controlling faculties (*indriya*) are really perfected, “intuitive insight into Suffering” will instantly flash forth. It will penetrate the truth that **“Consciousness itself is a kind of nature, which is still subject to the Three Characteristics of Existence. Thus, it is not a resort for taking refuge in at all.”** Those with a strong faculty of faith will realize impermanence of consciousness. Those with a strong faculty of concentration will realize suffering. Those with a strong faculty of wisdom will realize impersonality. **All at once, the mind will abandon consciousness and surrender it to nature because it has attained purity of insight that consciousness itself is virtually a**

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mass of suffering. It is not a good and miraculous thing as one has felt and cherished before.

It is this insight into the Truth of Suffering that automatically eradicates the Cause of Suffering (*samudaya*); and all of a sudden, a natural state that is purely tranquil, free of defilement and the Aggregates, empty of a self and all conditioned states will appear immensely right before the eyes. This is the Extinction of Suffering, *nirodha* or *Nibbāna*.

Meanwhile, a pure mind and *Nibbāna* are *Dhamma* of different nature. A pure mind is the knowing nature that is egoless, formless, dimensionless and boundless, but is still in the group of *Dhamma* that rises and falls. In contrast, *Nibbāna*, nature that is also pure, egoless, formless, dimensionless and boundless, is an object of consciousness, not possessed by anyone and not subject to rises and falls.

9.13 The “impassive knowing” is developed through insight into the truths of Matter and Mind such that consciousness becomes neutral to Matter and Mind. Consequently, it will attain relinquishment of Matter and Mind and the Extinction of Suffering, as described in the teaching of the Buddha to *Bahiya* that:

*Bahiya, you should learn to understand as such.
Bahiya, whenever you see is just see, hear is just hear,
perceive is just perceive, or realize is just realize,
at such moment, the so-called ‘you’ will no longer exist.*

*Whenever there is **no ‘you’**, at such moment,
‘you’ will neither exist in this realm,
next realm, nor between those realms.*

That is the end of suffering.”

(Bahiya Sutta/Tipitaka 25/49)

10. What is the Benefit of Mindfulness?

10.1 Having heard about a teaching, “Be mindful of the present condition as it actually is”, a lot of practitioners may doubt if this simple practice will be useful because even much more difficult practice does not help one attain enlightenment. **Actually, practicing mindfulness of Matter and Mind or *satipaṭṭhāna* is the most miraculous thing, so miraculous that Lord Buddha Himself confirms that it is the only path to purification with rapid success. Some attain enlightenment within 7 days, some within 7 months, and others within 7 years.**

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10.2 There is no need to imagine what the benefits from mindfulness practice are because the Buddha has already described them, as quoted below.

Bhikkhus,
when (1) **sati sampajañña** is present,
endowed with the cause for *sati sampajañña*,
(2) the cause for **hiri ottappa** gets completed.
When *hiri ottappa* is present,
endowed with the cause for *hiri ottappa*,
(3) **indriya saṃvara** gets completed.
When the *indriya saṃvara* is present,
endowed with the *indriya saṃvara*,
(4) **sīla** gets completed.
When *sīla* is present,
endowed with the cause for *sīla*,
(5) **sammā samādhi** gets completed.
When *sammā samādhi* is present,
endowed with the cause for *sammā samādhi*,
(6) **yathābhūtañāṇanadassana** gets completed.
When *yathābhūtañāṇanadassana* is present,
endowed with the cause for *yathābhūtañāṇanadassana*,
(7) **nibbidā virāga** gets completed.
When *nibbidā virāga* is present,
endowed with the cause for *nibbidā virāga*,
(8) **vimuttayanadassana** gets completed.

(*Sati Sutra/Tipitaka 23/187*)

10.3 Based on the above saying of the Buddha, it is obvious that all the supreme virtues will be perfected only through mindfulness and clear consciousness (*sati* and *sampajañña*).

10.3.1 **Hiri and ottappa** (Moral shame and moral dread of the outcome of an evil): Whenever mindful and clearly conscious, the mind will be aware of the arising of all defilements (*kilesa*) and the harm they will bring--that defilements will cause wrong bodily actions, wrong speeches and wrong mental *karma* and how defilements bring suffering and trouble to the mind. Thus, moral shame and moral dread of the outcome of an evil will arise, and there is no chance that a mindful one will do a seriously immoral act. Meanwhile, *hiri* and *ottappa* are *deva-dhamma* (an angel's *Dhamma*) or *Dhamma* that makes a human an angel.

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10.3.2 **Indriyasamvara** (control of the mental faculties (e.g. eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind) when they contact *ārammana* (e.g. a sight, a sound, a smell, a taste, a touch or a mind-object), in the absence of which an evil and an immoral consciousness may dominate the mind): Whoever has mindfulness and clear consciousness will have moral shame and moral dread of an evil and will automatically have sense-restraints (*indriyasamvara*). Meanwhile, mindfulness of conditions when the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind contact objects of consciousness is the most direct insight practice (*vipassanā-kammaṭṭhanā*).

10.3.3 **Sīla** (the normal state of mind): When mindful (*sati*) and clearly conscious (*sampajañña*) of contact with objects of consciousness through the six sense-doors, consciousness will not be dominated by an immoral. It is unbiased as it abides in its normal state or *sīla* (morality). The normal state of mind is characterized by lucidity. It is mindful, awaken, cheerful and automatically concentrated. If one has experienced this state of mind before, one will know well that the mind in that state can live very peacefully in the present. Meanwhile, *sīla* (morality) can bring happiness, wealth and *Nibbāna* because the more normal the mind is, the less is the conditioning. If the mind transcends the conditioning, it can realize *Nibbāna* which is beyond conditioning.

10.3.4 **Sammāsamādhi** (which is firmness of mind as mentioned in Clause 6.4 of this Article): By nature, moral consciousness (*citta* with *sīla*) is consciousness with the Right Concentration; and consciousness with the Right Concentration is moral consciousness. Morality and the Right Concentration (*sīla* and *sammāsamādhi*) are refiners that support each other. It is like washing the right hand with the left hand and washing the left hand with the right hand. Meanwhile, when the Right Concentration is frequently practiced, it may lead some practitioners to tranquility in absorption (*jhāna*), which brings happiness in the present and results in rebirths in the Fine-Material and Immaterial Worlds (*brahmaloka*) if they cannot attain *Nibbāna* in this life.

10.3.5 **Yathābhūtañāṇadassana** (the knowledge and vision of the truths of Matter and Mind according to reality. The term *Bhūta* here means Matter and Mind/the five Aggregates, not a ghost in the Thai language): Knowledge and vision of the truth is part of insight (*paññā*). The proximate cause of insight (*paññā*) is the Right Concentration (*sammāsamādhi*). When consciousness is firm, neutral and mindful of an object (Matter and Mind), consciousness will perceive Matter and Mind as they truly are, not as it wishes them to be (with a craving (*taṇhā*)) or expects them to be (with a wrong view (*ditṭhi*)).

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10.3.6 ***Nibbidāvirāga*** (dispassion and disenchantment): When mindful of Matter and Mind as they truly are, consciousness will become ***Nibbidā*** or dispassionate and disenchanted with all Matter and Mind because it has realized their insubstantiality. *Nibbidā* is not worldly boredom, which is getting bored of suffering, but fond of happiness. *Nibbidā* views both suffering and happiness, both good and evil, both rough and refined, both internal and external, as equally boring.

When *Nibbidā* arises, consciousness will relinquish struggles and desires to escape suffering or to seek pleasure. After continued mindfulness practice, consciousness will become truly neutral to Matter and Mind, and will clearly comprehend the truths of Matter and Mind that (1) no animal, person, self, I or they ever exist in nature; there are only Matter and Mind; (2) Matter and Mind are subject to the Three Characteristics of Existence (*tilakkhana*): impermanence, suffering and non-self or uncontrollability; 3) Matter and Mind arise when there are causes and factors, and change according to the causes. If the causes end, Matter and Mind will end; (4) Attachment to Matter and Mind causes Suffering; and (5) When insight peaks, consciousness will realize that **Matter and Mind themselves are Sufferings**. This perfection of the knowledge of Suffering, which leads to clear comprehension of the Noble Truths (*ariya sacca*) that ***samudaya* (Cause of Suffering) causes *dukkha* (Suffering); ignorance of *dukkha* causes *samudaya***.” *Dukkha* and *samudaya* rely on each other, rise and fall after the other continuingly and endlessly. However, **“with clear comprehension of *dukkha*, *samudaya* is abandoned. With extinction of *samudaya* is realization of *nirodha* or *Nibbāna*. This is the Noble Path.”** This is the Extinction of Suffering. Meanwhile, *Nibbāna* itself is ***virāga dhamma*** or a state of liberation from craving.

In sum, when consciousness has been neutral to all conditioned states until it realizes the Noble Truths, it will instantly progress by leaps and bounds towards liberation although a practitioner does not intend to do so. Once the mind abandons the Aggregates, it will suddenly attain *nirodha*, *Nibbāna*, *visārikhāra* or *virāga*, which is the destination of *Dhamma* practice in Buddhism.

10.3.7 ***Vimuttayanadassana*** (Perfection of knowledge about the state of liberation from suffering and defilement): When the mind has abandoned Matter and Mind and realized *Nibbāna*, the practitioner will gain knowledge and comprehension of the enlightenment process, and will understand the condition of *Nibbāna* as well. He/she will realize that *Nibbāna* is empty of defilement and the Aggregates, but is not emptiness in the sense

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of annihilationism (*ucchedadiṭṭhi*)³⁵. At the same time, it is not a kind of *bhava* (existence) that is eternally permanent as conditioned by the mind (*sassatadiṭṭhi*)³⁶. *Nibbāna* is a natural condition that is immense and perfect all the time. It is tranquil, peaceful, pure, unconditioned by all and safe from disturbance of all kinds.

A practitioner who has realized *Nibbāna* through enlightenment of the path and the fruition of holiness for 4 times will be completely liberated from suffering and defilement because his/her **mind has been liberated from cankers (*āsava*), like a chick forcing a way out of the eggshell. There is no way for the chick to go back into the eggshell again.** The mind is freed and is sublimely tranquil because it is no longer oppressed by craving. It has no burden to struggle and no grief to bear. It will be happy in every bodily posture, both day and night, both asleep and awake. Meanwhile, one who has realized *Nibbāna* at the moment of enlightenment may perceive *Nibbāna* again as an abode of happiness in the present. It can be attained by two methods: (1) By not *manasikāra* (paying attention) to all conditioned states (*sarikhāra*), after which the mind will perceive *Nibbāna*; or (2) By reflection on *Nibbāna* directly. These two practices are useful and blissful in the present and can be attained only with mindfulness.

10.4 In conclusion, **the more frequent mindfulness arises, the better it is. Other than *atipatṭhāna*, i.e. development of mindfulness of Matter and Mind, it is not a path or the true Noble Path. Any teaching that focuses on conditioning (of moral states) to overcome conditioning (immoral states) is, but a delay (but may be necessary to some beginners). Any teaching focusing on mindfulness of conditioned states (both moral and immoral) such that the mind is liberated from conditioning (both moral and immoral) is a path (*maggā*) that is a short-cut to the Extinction of Suffering (*nirodha/Nibbāna*).**

The Forest Tradition venerable monks who are the author's meditation masters (e.g. *Luang Pu Dun Atulo, Luang Pu Thate Desaransi, Luang Por Budh Thanayo, Luang Pu Suwat Suvaco*) stressed again and again that the author must develop mindfulness, i.e. be aware of it. Some quoted the core of teachings by *Luang Pu Mun Bhuridatta Mahathera* to teach the author that "*Luang Pu Mun* used to teach that **"concentration (tranquility) meditation is time-consuming. Contemplating too much is distracting. The most important thing in practice is to develop**

³⁵ annihilationism, i.e. vision that after attainment of *Nibbāna*, everything will vanish.

³⁶ eternalism i.e. the vision that the Aggregates are still in existence after attainment of *Nibbāna*

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Phra Pramote Pramotecho

mindfulness in daily life. To practice walking meditation, one must walk with mindfulness. To practice sitting meditation, one must sit with mindfulness. Whatever one does, one must do it with mindfulness because whenever mindful, the mind has perseverance, Whenever mindless, the mind has no perseverance.” The author has always followed these teachings of the meditation masters as guidelines in practice.

(July 30, 2006)

***“The path still exists. Travelers still follow in a steady stream.
Set off today before the wind of time blows away His holy footprints.
Then, we will have to wander without directions for long.”***

Phra Pramote Pramotecho

BOOK-END NOTE

Cycle of rebirth (*vatta*)

“From *samudaya* arises *dukkha*.

From ignorance of *dukkha* arises *samudaya*.”

Absence of the cycle of rebirth (*vivatta*)

“With keen insight into *dukkha*, abandoned is *samudaya*.

With the extinction of *samudaya*, attained is *Nibbāna*.”