

SD 62.18a**(Catukka) Kāla Sutta 1****SD 62.18b****(Catukka) Kāla Sutta 2**

The 1st & 2nd Discourses on Times | A 4.146 + 147

Be *Kāla,sutta,dvāyaṃ* The 2 Discourses on Times

Theme: The duties of Dharma practice

SD 62.18c**Kāla Dāna Sutta**

The Discourse on Timely Giving | A 5.36

or, **(Pañcaka) Kāla Sutta** The (Fives) Discourse in Time

Theme: The 5 kinds of material giving

Translated by Piya Tan ©2014; 2025

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1 Sutta summaries

1.1 THE 2 KĀLA SUTTAS (*kāla,sutta,dvāyaṃ*)

There are 2 Kāla Suttas—**Paṭhama Kāla Sutta** (Kāla Sutta 1) and **Dutiya Kāla Sutta** (Kāla Sutta 2)—dealing with the same topic: the 4 right times for Dharma practice [1.2 f]. Hence, the Burmese Tipiṭaka calls them “**the 2 Kāla Suttas**” (*kāla,sutta,dvāyaṃ*) in its contents page. **Kāla Sutta 1** is a very short sutta that lists only the 4 times for practice [1.1.1], and **Kāla Sutta 2** lists the same tetrad followed by a parable [1.1.2].

1.2 PAṬHAMA KĀLA SUTTA (A 4.146/2:140)

The Paṭhama Kāla Sutta (Kāla Sutta 1) or the First Discourse on Times list the 4 times—that is the right times—for Dharma practice by way of:

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------|
| (1) listening to the Dharma, | [2.1] |
| (2) discussing the Dharma, | [2.2] |
| (3) calm (practice), and | [3.2] |
| (4) insight (practice). | [3.3] |

1.3 DUTIYA KĀLA SUTTA (A 4.147/2:140)

1.3.1 The Dutiya Kāla Sutta (Kāla Sutta 2) or the Second Discourse on Time lists the 4 times [§s1-2]—as in Kāla Sutta 1 [1.1.1] and then follows with a parable of water flowing from the mountains down through the land into the ocean, that is, a symbolism of life and plenty [§§3-4].

1.3.2 In terms of teachings—the 4 right times for Dharma practice—the first 2 deals with the training and mastery of Dharma theory [2], and the last 2 with practice, that is mental cultivation by way of calm (*samatha*) and insight (*vipassanā*) [3].

1.4 (PAÑCAKA) KĀLA SUTTA (A 5.36/4:41), SD 62.18c

There is at least a 3rd sutta of the same name in the Aṅguttara Book of Fives (*pañcaka nipāṭa*), that is, **the (Pañcaka) Kāla Sutta** (A 5.36) [SD 62.18c]. It lists 5 kinds of gifts to be given at the proper times, that is, to visitors, those travelling, the sick, famine victims, and the virtuous.

2 The 2 trainings in Dharma study

2.1 LISTENING TO THE DHARMA [§2(1)]¹

2.1.1 Maṅgala and Commentary

2.1.1.1 “Hearing Dharma when it is timely” (*kālena dhamma,savanam*) or “timely Dharma hearing” is the 26th blessing (*maṅgala*) as listed in **the Maṅgala Sutta** (Khp 6 = Sn 265c).²

The Khuddaka,pāṭha Commentary (Param’attha,joyikā 1) explains that timely hearing the Dharma is when the mind is attended by restlessness or is overcome by thoughts of sensual desire, (ill will, or cruelty,) doing so on such an occasion in order to remove these thoughts.

¹ Throughout, such refs are parallels in **Kāla S 1** (A 4.146) and **Kāla S 2** (A 4.147).

² Sn 265 + Khp 5.8c/3 (SD 101.5).

Some say that “timely hearing Dharma” is hearing the teaching every 5 days (*pañcame pañcame divase* or *pañc’āhikam*), according as it is said by the venerable Anuruddha (as recorded in **the Cūḷa Go-siṅga Sutta** (M 21), **the Upakkilesa Sutta**, M 128, and the Mahā, vagga of the Vinaya):

“Every five days,³ bhante, we sit out the whole night together in talking on Dharma.”⁴

(KhpA 147,26-148,2)

2.1.1.2 Furthermore, “timely Dharma hearing” can also be understood as hearing Dharma at a time at which one approaches spiritual friends (teachers and elders) in order to be able to hear such Dharma as will remove one’s doubts, according as it is said (in **the Das’uttara Sutta**, D 34), “From time to time he approaches them, and he asks and he questions,”⁵ and so on. (KhpA 148,3-7)

This is the 2nd of “the 8 things of great help” in spiritual cultivation, as listed **the Das’uttara Sutta** thus:

“The 8 things of great help (*aṭṭha bahu,kāra*).

What are the 8 things of great help? Eight causes, eight conditions conduce to wisdom in the fundamentals of the holy life, to gaining what has not been gained and to increasing, cultivating and developing what has been gained. Here,

(1) one lives close to the teacher (*upanissaya*) or to a fellow-monk with the standing of a teacher, being thus strongly established in moral shame and moral fear, in love and respect. ...

(2) Then, from time to time he goes to them, asks and interrogates them (*paripucchati paripañhati*): “How is this, bhante? What does this mean?” Thus his venerable teachers reveal what is hidden and clarify obscurities, in this way helping him to clear his doubts. ...

(3) Then, having heard Dharma from them, he gains the double withdrawal (*dvayena vūpa-kāśena*),⁶ those of body and mind. ...

(4) Further, a monk is moral (*sīlavā*), he lives restrained according to the restraint of the discipline, persisting in right conduct, seeing danger in the slightest fault, and keeping to the training rules. ...

(5) Also, a monk, having learnt much (*bahu-s,sata*), remembers and bears in mind what he has learnt, and those things that are beautiful in the beginning, in the middle and in the ending, which in spirit and letter proclaim the fully perfected and purified holy life, he remembers and reflects on, and penetrates them with vision. ...

³ The Buddhist **lunar week** refers to the period from one uposatha day to the next. It is different from the modern 7-day week following the “planetary system.” The Pali “week” is simply “the seven” (*sattaha*), frequently used by the Buddha in the framing of Vinaya rules [V 1:138] and the regulation of his own activities [V 1:4]. For a chart the traditional Buddhist week and fortnight within the months, for one season of 4 months, see [BuddhaNet]. However, according to a tradition preserved by Buddhaghosa, an uposatha coming at the end of a 14-day period (*catu-d,dasī*) occurs only 6 times during a year of 12 months. According to him, they came in the 3rd and 7th fortnight (*pak-kha*) of each of the 3 Indian seasons (“cold,” *hemanta*: “hot,” *gimha* and “spring/rains,” *vassanā*) (A 4:138; SnA 317). Thus the remaining 18 are invariably “15th day,” ie, *pannarasī uposatha*. What is interesting to observe is the “14th day” uposatha (coinciding with the new-moon days), occurs every other month alternating with the “15th day” new moon. Perhaps, in spite of the new-moon days of both types, the term *catuddasī* came to be exclusively used for the new-moon day, while *pannarasī* for the day of the full-moon (Kaṅkhāvitaraṇī, Pṭmka 3).

⁴ *Pañc’āhikam kho pana mayam bhante sabba,rattim dhammiyā kathāya sannisidāmā ti* (M 31,9/1:207, 128,14/-3:157, Mv 10.4.5 @ V 1:352,17).

⁵ *Te kālena kālam upasāṅkamitvā paripucchati paripañhatī ti* (D 34,2.1(1b)/3:285,5).

⁶ This word—a synonym of *viveka* (DAṬ 2:61)—seems to occur only here. Comys are silent. Here, it probably means bodily is more confident in keeping the precepts, and mentally, he meditates better. Or he then goes into retreat (bodily withdrawal) and meditates (mental withdrawal). On the 3 solitudes (*viveka*)—bodily, mental and spiritual—see **Viveka,nissita**, SD 20.4 (4.2).

(6) Again, a monk, having stirred up energy (*āradḍha, viriya*), continues to dispel unwholesome states, striving strongly and firmly, and not casting off the yoke of the wholesome. ...

(7) Again, a monk is mindful (*satimā*), with the highest mindfulness and discrimination, remembering and bearing in mind what has been done or said in the past. ...

(8) Also, a monk continually contemplates the rise and fall (*udaya-b, bayānupassī*) of the 5 aggregates of clinging, thinking: “Such is material *form*, its arising and passing; such are *feelings* ... , such are *perceptions* ... , such are the *mental formations* ... , such is *consciousness*, its arising and passing.

This is the 8th condition conducive to wisdom in the fundamentals of the holy life, to gaining what has not been gained and to increasing, cultivating and developing what has been gained.

These are the 8 things of great help.”

(D 34,2.1/3:284,17-286,14)

2.1.1.3 Timely hearing of Dharma should be understood as a “blessing” (*maṅgala*) since it is a cause for acquiring the many distinctions beginning with the abandoning of hindrances,⁷ the 5 benefits [2.1.1.4], and the destructions of influxes,⁸ this being said,

“Bhikṣhus, on an occasion on which a noble disciple hears the Dharma, giving ear by heeding, attending and wholeheartedly responding, then on that occasion there is in him none of the 5 hindrances,”⁹ and this:

“Bhikṣhus, when ideas that have come to the ear ... are well penetrated, 4 benefits can be expected,”¹⁰ and this,

“Bhikṣhus, there are these 4 states, which, when they are rightly cultivated, rightly conforming (to Dharma), eventually bring about the destruction of the influxes. What are the four? Hearing Dharma when it is timely,,”¹¹ and so on. (Khpa 148,7-18)

2.1.1.4 The Dhamma-s, savana Sutta (A 5.202) lists the 5 benefits of listening to the Dharma:

1 Bhikṣhus, there are these **5 benefits from listening to the Dharma**. What are the five?

- | | |
|---|----------------------------|
| 2 (1) He hears what has not been heard, | <i>assutaṃ suṇāti</i> |
| (2) Having heard, he purifies himself, | <i>sutaṃ pariyodāpeti</i> |
| (3) He crosses over doubt, | <i>kaṅkhaṃ vitarati</i> |
| (4) He straightens his views, and | <i>diṭṭhiṃ ujuṃ karoti</i> |
| (5) His mind brightens with faith. | <i>cittamassa pasīdati</i> |

These, bhikṣhus, are the 5 benefits from listening to the Dharma.¹²

(A 5.202/3:248), SD 3.2(5.1)

2.1.1.5 The Caṅkī Sutta (M 94) gives the following list known as the “12 gradual steps of training” (*anupubba, sikkhā*) for discipleship, that is, the attaining of the path as a streamwinner or higher. The

⁷ The 5 hindrances (*pañca, nīvaraṇa*) are: (1) sensual desire (*kama-c, chanda*); (2) ill will (*vyāpāda*); (3) sloth and torpor (*thīna, middha*); (4) restlessness and worry (*uddhacca, kukkucca*); (5) doubt (*vicikicchā*). See **Nīvaraṇa, SD 32.1**; (**Nīvaraṇa**) **Saṅgārava S** (S 46.55), SD 3.12.

⁸ The 4 influxes (*āsava*) are those of: (1) sensual lust (*kām’āsava*); (2) existence (*bhav’āsava*); (3) views (*diṭṭh’āsava*), and (4) ignorance (*avijjāśava*). See SD 9 (10.4.2.2) n; SD 70.18 (2.4.1 n).

⁹ **Avaraṇa Nīvaraṇa S** (S 46.38/5:95,19), SD 41.10.

¹⁰ A 2:185,4.

¹¹ Cf A 2:140,11.

¹² See **Vicikicchā**, SD 32.8 (4.1).

same 12 steps are given by the Buddha in **the Kīṭāgiri Sutta** (M 70), where the list presented as Dharma investigation (*samannesanā*) leading to the discovering of truth (*saccānubodha*).

Here is the “**gradual training**” passage from **the Caṅkī Sutta** (M 95):

20 To the extent of examining (*samannesamāno*)¹³ him, he observes (*samanupassati*) that he is purified of states of delusion, he thus puts **faith** in him.¹⁴

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| (1) Out of faith, he approaches him. | <i>upasaṅkamati</i> |
| (2) Having approached, he draws near [attends] to him. ¹⁵ | <i>payirūpāsati</i> |
| (3) Having drawn near to him, he lends his ear . ¹⁶ | <i>sotaṃ odahati</i> |
| (4) Having lent his ear, <u>he listens to the Dharma</u> . ¹⁷ | <i>dharmam suṇāti</i> |
| (5) Having heard the Dharma [teachings], he remembers the Dharma. | <i>dharmam dhāreti</i> |
| (6) Having remembered the Dharma, he examines their meaning. | <i>attham upaparikkhati</i> |
| (7) Having examined their meaning, he reflectively accepts them. ¹⁸ | <i>dharmā nijjhānam khamanti</i> |
| (8) Having reflectively accepted them, desire ¹⁹ for mindfulness arises. | <i>sati chando jāyati</i> |
| (9) Having desire for mindfulness, he exerts himself. | <i>ussahati</i> ²⁰ |
| (10) Having exerted himself, he weighs [harmonizes] them. | <i>tulayati</i> ²¹ |
| (11) Having weighed them, he strives on . | <i>padahati</i> ²² |
| (12) With a resolute [striving] mind, he realizes the ultimate truth with his own body, he <u>sees</u> it (true reality) by <u>penetrating it with wisdom</u> . | <i>sacchikaroti</i> ²³ |

¹³ See Intro (1.3.2).

¹⁴ *Yato nam samannesamāno visuddham mohanīyehi dhammehi samanupassati*. These 12 stages of learning are reversed in §§21b-33, in response to Kāpaṭhika’s question. On *samannesanā*, see Intro (1.3.2).

¹⁵ See “venerate” at §14a n & (5(3) n).

¹⁶ See SD 12.15 (5(4) n).

¹⁷ Alt tr: “Respectfully sitting close, he listens attentively.”

¹⁸ *Nijjhānam khamanti*, lit “insights are endured,” ie “capable of bearing insights”; idiomatic meaning “he is pleased with, approves of, finds pleasure in” (M 1:133 f; 479 f, 2:173, 175; S 3:225, 228, 5:377, 379; Vv 84.17). *Khanti* usually means “patience” but here it means “choice, receptivity, preference, acceptance.” The BHSD defines *kṣānti* as “intellectual receptivity; the being ready in advance to accept knowledge.” *Khanti* is often used in the Canon in this latter sense (see SD 12.13(2a) for refs). The phrase can also be freely rendered as “receptivity in harmony with true reality.” See *Kālāma S* (A 3.65.3a(8)/1:189), SD 35.4 comy 3a(8). On *khanti* as “mental receptivity,” see *Aniccā S* (A 6.98), SD 12.13(3).

¹⁹ Also *will* or *will-power* in the simple psychological sense, without any philosophical connotation.

²⁰ “Exerting oneself” (*ussahati*) is applying the will as a basic strategy in the practice. The term “strive” (*padahati*) below, refers to the effort in seeing insight, leading into the path itself.

²¹ Comy: He investigates (*tīreti*) states by way of impermanence, etc (MA 3:426). *Tīreti* (caus of *tarati*, meaning (1) to cross over, or (2) to be in a hurry), meaning (1) to bring through, finish, execute (a business), to accomplish; (2) to measure, judge, recognize, always in formula *tuleti tīreti vibhāveti* [“Nc,” says PED, but unattested] (cf J 5:48), as interpretation of *jānāti* (PED). However, if we look at the progression of the method here, what clearly follows is the balancing of the practice in terms of the faculties (*indriya*): see *Āpaṇa S* (S 48.50/5:225 f), SD 10.4. However, in Buddhaghosa’s def of *tīraṇa, pariññā*, he says, “having known this, that is, investigating the 5 aggregates in their 42 aspects as being impermanent, suffering, a disease, etc” (*evam ñatam katvā pañcakkhandhe tīreti aniccatto dukkha-to rogato ti dvā, cattālīsāya ākārehi*) (SA 1:45), in which case, this would be “insight contemplation.”

²² *Padahati* and *ussahati*: see (9) n here.

²³ *Pahit’attato samāno kāyena c’eva parama, saccam sacchikaroti, paññāya ca nam ativijja passati*. Comy: He realizes nirvana with the conascent mental body (*saha-jāta, nāma-kāya*) (of the streamwinning path), and having penetrated the defilements with wisdom, he sees it (nirvana) clearly and manifestly. (MA 3:426 f)

To this extent,²⁴ Bhāra,dvāja, there is the preserving of truth. To this extent, one preserves truth. To this extent, we declare the preserving of the truth. But there is as yet no attaining to the truth.²⁵

21 “To this extent, master Gotama, there is the discovering of truth. To this extent, one discovers truth. To this extent, we see the discovering of the truth.”²⁶

(M 95,20-33), SD 21.15; also (M 70,24), SD 11.1

Note that in the conclusion (beginning, “To this extent, ...”), the Buddha reminds Bhāradvāja this is only the gradual practice of preparing oneself with “the truth.” However, knowing the truth alone may help preserve Dharma, but one has yet to practise for oneself so that one is transformed inwardly, and free from ignorance (including views). This right knowledge is helpful in bringing one to the right practice.

2.2 DISCUSSING THE DHARMA [§2(2)]

2.2.1 Maṅgala Sutta verse and Commentary

2.2.1.1 “Timely Dharma discussion” (*kālena dhamma,sācacchā*) (Khp 5.9 = Sn 266) is the 30th blessing (*maṅgala*) as listed in **the Maṅgala Sutta** (Khp 6 = Sn 266c).²⁷

The Khuddaka,pāṭha Commentary (Param’attha,joyikā 1) explains that timely Dharma discussion was done at dusk (*padose*) or in the early dawn (*paccūse*), when, say, two monks who are sutta-experts discuss with one another about suttas, or two Vinaya-experts about the Vinaya, or two Abhidhamma-experts about the Abhidhamma, or two Jātaka-reciters about the Jātakas, or two Commentary-masters about the Commentaries. Or else, they converse from time to time for the purpose of purifying the mind that is sluggish or restless or doubtful: this is “timely Dharma discussion.”

Timely Dharma discussion is a blessing since it is a cause for such special qualities as particular distinction in the texts and so on. (KhpA 151,9-29)

2.2.1.2 **The Commentary** on the Kāla Suttas [2.2.1.1] explains “timely Dharma discussion” as an important on-going monastic practice amongst the experts and the specialists on Dharma, the Vinaya, the Abhidhamma, and the Jātaka verses and stories. Clearly, such discussions are to ensure that these masters in their own fields “on the same page” regarding the teachings and stories, and also to promote fellowship among themselves. Dharma discussion was a vital aspect of **the oral tradition** of early Buddhism, especially for those amongst these specialists when teaching the laity who had no printed texts on the suttas or the teachings as we do today.

With **the easy availability of Buddhist texts today**—the Pali texts, their translations and their interpretations—Dharma discussion has become a universal practice amongst the various groups of Buddhists, especially in modern Buddhism and Western Buddhism. We have almost no idea whether Buddhists in the Buddha’s time or in the following centuries had their own Dharma discussions. However, from the teachings of **the 2 Kāla Suttas**—and such texts as **the Maṅgala Sutta** [2.1.1.1, 2.2.1.1]—clearly, the practices of Dharma listening and of Dharma discussion at proper times are encouraged, even necessary for Buddhist learning, practice, fellowship and propagation.

²⁴ See **Kiṭṭāgiri S** (M 70) where this 12-step training is mentioned, and rebuking the indisciplined monks, the Buddha tells them that this training is not found in them (M 70.22-24/1:479 f), SD 11.1.

²⁵ *Na tv-eva saccānuppatti hotī ti*. This statement—that there is *no* awakening at this stage—is obvious because the listeners (Kāpaṭhika and the brahmins) are not yet practitioners. Technically, we can say (as at M:NB 1301 n892) that this stage of “discovering the truth” refers streamwinning, while “the attaining of the truth” (*saccānuppatti*) [§21.2] then refers to the attainment of arhathood.

²⁶ “The discovering of the truth [the awakening to the truth]” here refers to streamwinning.

²⁷ Sn 266 + Khp 5.9c/3 (SD 101.5).

3 The 2 trainings in mental cultivation

3.1 SAMATHA AS “CALM” PRACTICE [§2(3)]

3.1.1 Definition of *samatha* meditation

3.1.1.1 The Pali term ***samatha*** means “calm or tranquil,” that is, the concentrated state of mind arising from meditation, such as the breath meditation. In commentarial usage, the term generally refers to the actual methods of generating mental calm and of developing a deeply concentrated mind.

The word *samatha* often refers specifically to concentration (*samādhi*). Equating *samatha* with *samādhi* is in accord with both the Abhidhamma and the suttas, for no matter which special powers or attainments a person reaches, the essence of tranquillity meditation is concentration.

3.1.1.2 The purpose or benefit of *samatha* is the attainment of **dhyana** or meditative absorption (*jhāna*). In *samatha* practice, one fixes one’s mind on an object (*ārammaṇa*) until the mind is one-pointed (with the appearance of the “sign,” *nimitta*);²⁸ this is called *samādhi* (“samadhi,” concentration). When samadhi is properly established, the mind enters the 1st dhyana. In the 4 form dhyanas (*rūpa, jhāna*), one uses aspects of form or materiality as the object of attention.

3.1.1.3 More refined than the form dhyanas are **the 4 formless attainments** (*arūpa, samāpatti*), in which one uses formless or immaterial objects as the focus of attention, that is, progressively from that of *infinite space*, to *infinite consciousness*, to *nothingness*, and to *neither-perception-nor-non-perception*. These 4 formless dhyanas are called “attainments” (*samāpatti*) probably because they are all rooted in the 4th dhyana, where the mind is fully free from all sense-based limitations, that is, the body comprising the 4 elements, earth, water, fire and air.

3.1.2 The 8 attainments

3.1.2.1 These dhyanas are altogether called **the 8 attainments** (*samāpatti*). They are actually 8 progressive stages of mental absorption always beginning with the 1st dhyana. Adept meditators are able to quickly attain the 1st dhyana and progress to the level he or she wishes to remain in.

While a meditator is in dhyana, the mind is happy, peaceful and bright; there is neither dullness nor disturbance; the mind is free from the hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*) [2.1.1.3]. For the duration of dhyana, one is said to be free from the mental defilements (*kilesa*). The defilements return, however, when one exits dhyana. This kind of suppression of defilement by concentration during dhyana is termed “cessation by suppression” (*vikkhambhana, nirodha*) and “freedom by suppression” (*vikkhambhana, vimutti*).²⁹

It must be added that a dhyana meditator, even yet unawakened, still enjoys benefits of the dhyanic experience in his daily life. His constant and habitual joy makes it easier for him or her to keep to a Dharma-spirited life of moral conduct. A dhyana meditator, even a lay person, is likely to exude a radiant personality in daily life.

3.1.2.2 With proper practice of dhyana, the possible fruits of dhyana are the 5 special powers (*pañc’-abhiññā*):

²⁸ The sign (*nimitta*) may be seen as marking the mind’s full freedom from the body of the sensed and physical elements.

²⁹ Pm 2:221; DA 2:246; MA 4:168; SA 3:209.

(1) psychic powers,	<i>iddhi, vidhā</i>
(2) telepathy (the divine ear),	<i>dibba, sota</i>
(3) mind-reading,	<i>ceto, pariya, ñāṇa</i>
(4) retrocognition (recollection of one's own past lives), and	<i>pubbe, nivāsānussati</i>
(5) the karmic recollection of others' past lives (the divine eye),	<i>cutūpapāta, ñāṇa</i>

The 5 superpowers are not exclusive to Buddhists, but attainable by anyone who is able to attain the 4th dhyana.³⁰ One explanation for the efficacy of these powers is that the meditator, on reaching the 4th dhyana, fully transcends the 4 elements that is the physical body. If the meditator so wishes, he may go on to cultivate control over the 4 elements (earth, water, fire and air), and also space, that is, the 5th element.

Hence, these powers are regarded as mundane; they do not bring one to the path of awakening. Only the 6th superpower, the direct knowledge of the destruction of the mental influxes [2.1.1.3] is regarded as supramundane; it is the quality of only arhats.³¹

3.2 VIPASSANĀ AS “INSIGHT” PRACTICE [§2(4)]

3.2.1 Definition of insight meditation

3.2.1.1 A vision of true reality—the nature of the world as it is—is the basis for the arising of insight or wisdom, sometimes known as “insight wisdom”—that leads to the path of awakening. In the suttas, the term “**insight**” (*vipassanā*) simply refers to this vision. However, the Abhidhamma and Commentaries have, for the sake of convenience, combined both the vision and its quest through contemplation and meditation. In modern times, the term Vipassana is often used even more narrowly to refer to a type of meditation.

As a living religion, Buddhism (that is, early Buddhism) often adjusts its terminology to address the needs and tendencies of the times. Hence, we may use the term **vipassana** (the anglicized term in lower case) as refers to *both* the meditation and its goal (that is, insight into true reality). In fact, as a rule, those groups that use or claim Vipassana as meditation method tacitly accept and understand that their goal is *insight* into true reality.

3.2.1.2 Practically speaking, we meditate simply to gain **both calm and insight** (*Samatha, vipassanā*). Mental calm helps us focus so that we have a joyful, calm and clear mind. A joyful mind means that we enjoy the meditation, which means that we are charged up to sustain and enhance our practice as is proper. A calm mind is ready to direct itself mindfully to the mind-object; and a clear mind is able to see the mind-object *as it really is*, that is, as impermanent, perhaps even as suffering, or nonself.

Logically then, a meditation beginner does not decide between “samatha” or “vipassana” since he or she will not be experienced enough to know their difference and how it all will turn out. It would also be unhelpful if a zealous teacher insists that one should only do Vipassana, as if there is no need for samatha or calm at all. It seems to be just a friendly war of words. The solution is the peace of mind that sees the mind-object.

³⁰ On Asita's 5 *abhiññā*, see SD 49.18 (1.1.4.2).

³¹ **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2,89-99), SD 8.10; **Kevaḍḍha S** (D 11,55-66), SD 1.7; SD 27.5a (5).

3.2.2 Preliminary stages of insight

3.2.2.1 Take the **breath meditation**, for example, we begin—following the **Ānāpāna, sati Sutta** (M 118)—by watching the breath just as it is—in and out, long or short³²—to free the mind from distractions and hindrances [2.1.1.3], and let it settle. Once the mind settles, and stays stably settled, it focuses and gains concentration, even dhyana.

(1) Once we have had a good taste of this mental calm, we emerge from it and reflect on *that calm mind as being “constructed” (saṅkhata), and as such, impermanent*.

(2) If we are ready and able, we then go on to reflect thus: *What is impermanent is “unsatisfactory, suffering.”* There is an advantage in using more than a word here; especially when we may be intellectually inclined to wonder if “suffering” is such a negative word.

(3) Then, when our meditation has improved and we have a more sustained calm mind, we can extend this “insight” practice (after emerging from the concentrated mind) to reflect thus: *What is constructed is impermanent. What is impermanent changes and becomes other: it is unsatisfactory, suffering. What is impermanent and suffering cannot be really said to be I, me or mine; it is nonself*.

3.2.2.2 This reflection [3.2.2.1] is famously found in the teachings of the **Anatta Lakkhaṇa Sutta** (S 22.59).³³ During the insight practice, it is best to carefully hold that theoretical knowledge by its neck like a watersnake and cast it as far away as possible.³⁴

After reflecting on the insight stages, we just let them be; we think no more of them; perhaps we go back to the meditation. Over time, when we least expect it, this insight into the true nature of the “constructed” or “impermanent” or “suffering” or “nonself” will arise in us in a eureka (*aho buddho*) moment. Then, again it may take us some time for that insight to mature.

Meantime, if we like, we should look at the **Anatta Lakkhaṇa Sutta** and re-read the teachings on insight there. This is how we enrich our theoretical understanding of the teachings and advance with the practice, too.

3.3 LEVELS OF FREEDOM

3.3.1 Temporary freedom of mind

3.3.1.1 Samatha, as we have noted [3.1.1], gives us the mental calm with which to free ourselves from negative emotions and mental defilements while **vipassana** powers us with the wisdom with which to free ourselves from ignorance.

The Commentaries listed the many definitions of “(mental) freedom” (**vimutti**) into 5 groups following the same model they used for the definitions of “cessation” (**nirodha**).³⁵ These 5 groups are a useful summary of the freedoms, as they contain the essence of all their definitions:³⁶

1. Vikkhambhana, vimutti, “freedom through suppression (of defilements).” The 5 hindrances [2.1.1.3] are warded off by the power of concentration. This mental freedom may occur momentarily or even for a while when one is well concentrated. As a rule, the mind must be free from at least the 5 hindrances [2.1.1.3] to attain the 1st dhyana and beyond. Thus, this freedom refers to the precondition for all the 8

³² M 118/3:77-88 (SD 7.13).

³³ S 22.59/3:66-68, (SD 1.2) esp §§12-16.

³⁴ For the watersnake parable, see **Alagaddûpama S** (M 22,10), SD 3.13.

³⁵ See Payutto 2021: ch 6 (Nibbāna) on *jhāna*, *nirodha* and *nibbāna*.

³⁶ See UA 32; DA 3:879; MA 4:168; SA 3:209; DhA 1:158, 434; Vism 410. Cp *viveka* (VbhA 316) and with *pahāna* (Pm 1:26 f, 2:220; Vism 693 f).

attainments (*samāpatti*): the 4 form dhyanas and the 4 formless attainments, and sometimes includes “access concentration” (*upacāra, samādhi*).

2. *Tad-aṅga, vimutti*: “freedom by displacement (of defilements).” One is freed from unwholesome qualities by their substitution with wholesome opposite qualities. Technically, it is the freedom from wrong views and attachments through the application of insight or wisdom. For example, focusing on impermanence frees one from the belief in permanence. Since the mind is preoccupied with the whole-some mind-object, the mind is “to that extent” (*tad-aṅga*) free from the defilements.

3.3.1.2 “Freedom” can also be used in connection with moral virtue or any wholesome qualities. For example: practising generosity frees one from stinginess and greed; showing lovingkindness frees one from ill will and negativity; and cultivating compassion and non-violence frees one from cruelty and violence.

These first 2 kinds of freedom cover the meanings of “temporary freedom of mind” (*sāmāyika, ceto-vimutti*) and are of mundane (*lokiya*) nature. They are temporary and do not bring us to the path of awakening by themselves. However, such a habit has the advantage of gaining better concentration, with which we can go deeper into cultivating the mind.

3.3.2 Permanent freedom of mind

3.3.2.1 To become any of the 4 kinds of noble saints—the streamwinner, the once-returner, the non-returner and the arhat—one first gains the path (*magga*), that is, when one *has cut off or uprooted* the relevant fetters;³⁷ one gains fruition (*phala*), that is, becomes full-fledged saint by *the total removal* of the fetters and one becomes *mentally stilled*. Then, with *full escape* (the breaking of all 10 fetters), one becomes an arhat. The Commentaries have systematized the descriptions of these attainments and given them definitive terms, as follows:

3. *Samuccheda, vimutti*: “(mental) freedom by cutting off (of defilements).” This is freedom through final knowledge, that is, freedom as the path (*magga*) of awakening.

4. *Paṭipassaddhi, vimutti*: “(mental) freedom by utter removal and stilling (of defilements).” This is freedom as the fruit (*phala*), the full-fledged attainment of the path of awakening.

5. *Nissaraṇa, vimutti*: “(mental) freedom by full escape,” that is, complete liberation leading to supreme joy and spiritual engagement with the world without being caught in it; that is to say *vimutti* as nirvana.

These final 3 kinds of *vimutti* are permanent mental freedoms (*asāmāyika, cetovimutti*) and are supramundane or transcendent (*lok’uttara*); they bring us to the path of awakening; we become stream-winners, and so on.

Essentially, these 5 kinds of freedom are equivalent to ***samatha, vipassanā, magga, phala***, and ***nirvana***, respectively.

³⁷ These are the 10 fetters (*dasa saṃyojana*): 1. self-identity view (*sakkāya, diṭṭhi*), 2. spiritual doubt (*vicikicchā*), 3. attachment to rituals and vow (*sīla-b, bata, parāmāsa*); 4. sensual lust (*kāma, rāga*), 5. aversion (*paṭigha*); 6. lust for form existence (*rūpa, raga*), 7. lust for formless existence (*arūpa, raga*), 8. conceit (*māna*), 9. restlessness (*ud-dhacca*), 10. ignorance (*āvijjā*). The streamwinner has broken the first 3 fetters; the once-returner has broken the 3 fetters and weaken the 3 unwholesome roots; the nonreturner has broken all the 5 lower fetters; and the arhat all the 10 fetters. See SD 10.16 (1.6.6-8); SD 11.1 (5.1.4); SD 3.3 (2); SD 56.1 (4.4).

3.3.2.2 To gain the path and its fruition, one has to undergo the 3 trainings (*sikkha-t, taya*) by fulfilling one's *moral conduct, mental concentration* and gaining *wisdom*.³⁸ Among the various conditions that helps one's training are the "**5 ripening factors for spiritual freedom**" (*vimutti, paripācāniya dhamma*).³⁹ They are the key teaching of **the Meghiya Sutta** (A 9.3 = U 4.1) where they are called "the 5 conditions that bring about the full maturing by way of the freedom of mind" (*ceto, vimuttiyā pañca paripakāya, dhammā*),⁴⁰ namely, **spiritual friendship, Dharma-centred talk, moral virtue, zealous exertion, and insight into impermanence**.⁴¹ [§§7.2-12].

Of these, the first 2—*spiritual friendship and Dharma-centred talk*—are the meditator's external limbs (*bāhira aṅga*) for ripening of spiritual freedom. These are the benefits we get from an experienced teacher. The last 3—*moral virtue, exertion and insight*—are the internal limbs (*ajjhātika aṅga*); these are gained through self-cultivation. (UA 234)

3.3.2.3 The Commentaries extend the **factors leading to spiritual freedom** (*vimutti, paripācāniya dhamma*) to a set of 15 factors that purify the 5 faculties (*pañc'indriya*: faith, effort, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom), that is, liberation through mental cultivation. **The 15 factors** are the following **3 factors** cultivated in connection with each of the 5 faculties:

- (1) avoiding people who lack the faculty;
- (2) associating with those who are endowed with the faculty; and
- (3) reflecting on suttas that inspire spiritual maturation.

The Commentaries expand on this with another set of **15 qualities** with emphasis on practice, thus:

- (1) the 5 faculties;
- (2) the 5 perceptions partaking of penetration, namely: perception of *impermanence, suffering, nonself, abandoning and dispassion*;⁴² and
- (3) the 5 qualities the Buddha taught Meghiya [3.3.2.2]: *spiritual friendship, Dharma-centred talk, moral virtue, zealous exertion, and insight in impermanence*.

4 Training in calm and insight

4.0 THE 4 METHODS OF MEDITATING WITH CALM AND INSIGHT

4.0.1 Yuganaddha Patipadā Sutta (A 4.170)

4.0.1.1 The Yuganaddha Sutta (A 4.170) records the elder Ānanda as telling the monks thus: "Avuso, whichever monk or nun declares before me that he or she has attained arhathood, all of them have done

³⁸ On the 3 trainings, see **(Ti) Sikkhā S** (A 3.88), SD 24.10c; **Sīla samādhi paññā**, SD 21.6; SD 1.11 (5). On the training and sainthood, see **(Sekha) Uddesa S** (A 3.85), SD 3.3(2).

³⁹ The *vimutti, paripācāniyā dhammā* are listed in **A 9.3 = U 4.1/36,4** (UA 220,23-33), SD 34.2; **S 35.121/4:105,16** (SD 93.6); **M 147,2/3:277,25**. **D 33,2.1(26)/3:243** mentions the 5 things that bring one to successively greater levels of *vimutti* (*pañca vimutti, paripācāniyā dhammā*).

⁴⁰ More briefly, "the conditions conducing to full maturity" (*pañca dhammā paripakāya*) (UA 219).

⁴¹ **A 9.3,7.2-12/4:357.5-30 = U 4.1,7.2-12/36,3-28**.

⁴² On the last 2, the perceptions on *pahāna + virāga*, respectively, see **Giri-m-ānanda S** (A 10.60,8 f/5:110,13-20), SD 19.16.

so by 4 paths,⁴³ that is, by one or other amongst them.”⁴⁴ **The 4 modes of meditation practice** for attaining arhathood are summarized as follows:⁴⁵

- | | | |
|---|--|-------|
| (1) “insight preceded by calm,” | <i>samatha,pubb’aṅgama vipassanā</i> | [4.1] |
| (2) “calm preceded by insight,” | <i>vipassanā,pubb’aṅgama samatha</i> | [4.2] |
| (3) “calm coupled with insight,” and | <i>samatha,vipassanā,yuga.naddha</i> | [4.3] |
| (4) “a mind seized by dharma-restlessness.” | <i>dhamm’uddhacca,viggahita mānasa</i> | [4.4] |

4.0.1.2 The sutta context should be noted. Ānanda is not saying that these are 4 meditation methods we can or should choose from. They are the various meditation methods used by meditators to attain arhathood. In other words, these are meditation methods used by advanced meditators, especially saints on the path who are working to attain arhathood.

For average meditators familiar with samatha and vipassana, they should try out the basic method of meditation mentioned above [3.2.2], which coincidentally is method (1) listed above. If that does not work, then perhaps they should go on to try method (3) and so on. Of course, all this is done more effectively with the proper guidance of an experienced meditation teacher.

4.1 INSIGHT PRECEDED BY CALM⁴⁶

4.1.1 The *Paṭisambhidā,magga* defines the method of “**insight preceded by calm**” (*samatha,pubb’aṅgama vipassanā*) as follows: Initially, the mind is one-pointed, steady and concentrated.⁴⁷ This concentration can arise from any of these conditions:

the power of renunciation (*nekkhamma*); the power of a freedom from ill will (*avyāpāda*); the perception of light (*āloka,saññā*), which combats drowsiness; an absence of restlessness (*avikkhepa*); reflection on aspects of Dharma (*dhamma,vavatthāna*), which dispels doubt; knowledge (*ñāṇa*); joy (*pāmojja*);⁴⁸

the 1st dhyana; the 2nd dhyana; the 3rd dhyana; the 4th dhyana; the base of infinity of space; the base of infinity of consciousness; the base of nothingness; the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception; the 10 *kaṣiṇa* meditations; meditation on the 10 reflections (*anussati*); meditation on the 10 stages of decay (*asubha*); and meditation on the 32 aspects of mindfulness of the breath.⁴⁹

4.1.2 Concentration is followed by wisdom, which discerns all the attributes of the different stages of concentration as *impermanent*, *suffering*, and *nonself*. The Commentaries present a simpler explanation for this first way of practice: a person first develops concentration (either access concentration or

⁴³ Here [§3] and below [§6] A 2:157,2+26: Be Ce Se *maggehi*, but Ee *aṅgehi* (prob wr); Pm 2:92,10 also reads *maggehi*; PmA 3:584,24-25: **catūhi maggehi** ti upari vuccamānehi catūhi paṭipadā,maggehi, na ariya,maggehi, “**by 4 paths**: by the 4 paths of practice spoken of above, not by the noble paths.”

⁴⁴ A 4.170/2:157 f, SD 41.5; MA 2:92; qu by VismṬ:Be 2:428.

⁴⁵ For explanations, see SD 41.5 (2-5).

⁴⁶ For details, see SD 41.5 (2).

⁴⁷ Pm 2:93-96; cf Pm 1:95, 175 f.

⁴⁸ *Paṭisambhidā,magga* describes how these 7 qualities, from renunciation to joy, are involved in the arising of access concentration (*upacāra,samādhi*) for pure or “dry” insight practitioners (*sukkha,vipassaka*): PmA 1:310; cf PmA 1:68, 103.

⁴⁹ It would be sufficient to only mention the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, since this is the highest dhyana. This long list is to show the distinction between mental states attained (from 1st dhyana to the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception) and ways of practice to reach these attainments (cf PmA 1:312).

attainment concentration). He then reflects on that level of concentration, along with accompanying mental factors, as *impermanent*, and so on, until he attains the noble path (*ariya-magga*).⁵⁰

4.2 CALM PRECEDED BY INSIGHT

4.2.1 The Paṭisambhidāmagga explains the method of “calm preceded by insight” (*vipassanā, pubb’aṅgama samatha*) as follows:⁵¹ Initially, a person uses insight to see things as *impermanent*, *suffering*, and *nonself*. Then, he “lets go” of all the qualities arising during insight meditation, and this “letting go” becomes the new meditation-object. The mind then becomes one-pointed and concentrated.

4.2.2 Samatha only, vipassana only⁵²

4.2.2.1 The Commentaries elaborate: A person has not yet developed calm, but he or she discerns the universal characteristics (*impermanence*, etc) in the 5 aggregates of clinging (*upādāna-k, khandha*). When insight (*vipassanā*) is complete, he or she “lets go” of all factors of insight. This “letting go” becomes the meditation-object, and the mind becomes one-pointed and concentrated. This leads to path attainment.

4.2.2.2 The Samādhi Sutta 2 (A 4.93) mentions those who have calm but no insight, and those who have insight but no calm. These attainments are respectively called “mental calm” (*ceto, samatha*) and “insight that is wisdom regarding states” (*adhipaññā, dhamma, vipassana*).⁵³ The Commentary explains these as:

1. attainment concentration (*appanā, samādhi*), and
2. insight contemplating conditioned phenomena. (AA 3:116)

The Samādhi Sutta 2 passage shows that gaining insight does not inevitably give rise to calm, or as the commentaries say: although one gains insight, one may not reach the desired level of concentration, that is, dhyana. One is thus advised here to go on to cultivate samatha. The same Sutta passage also encourages the cultivation of calm and insight as a pair in order to remove the influxes in due course.⁵⁴

4.2.2.3 The Abhidhamma speaks highly of these 2 terms, equating *ceto, samatha* with form dhyanas and formless attainments, and *adhipaññā, dhamma, vipassanā* with path and fruit.⁵⁵ From this explanation, one who attains calm but not insight is an unawakened person who has reached the 8 attainments, while someone who attains insight but not calm is a noble disciple who is a pure-insight practitioner. One who has attained neither is an ordinary, unawakened person.

4.2.3 The Commentaries say that whichever of these two ways of practice one follows (calm preceded by insight or insight preceded by calm), calm and insight must always arise together at the path-moment attainment.⁵⁶ This is so because samatha and vipassana are essentially equivalent to the 8 limbs of the noble path: vipassana equals right view (*sammā, diṭṭhi*) and right intention (*sammā, saṅkappa*), while

⁵⁰ MA 1:108; NmA 2:313.

⁵¹ Pm 2:96.

⁵² For details, see SD 41.5 (3).

⁵³ A 4.93/2:92-94 (SD 95.8).

⁵⁴ Cf A 5:99; A 4:360 f = Pug 7 f, 61 f.

⁵⁵ PañcABe 94 = PugA 244.

⁵⁶ MA 1:108; Vism 682. PmA 1:281 states that calm and insight are mutually supportive both at the time of aspiring to the noble path and at the moment of attaining the path. AA 2:184 states that calm and insight act as a pair at path-attainment and at fruition-attainment. Cf Pm 1:70; PmA 1:287; UA 397; ItA 2:29.

samatha comprises all the remaining 6 limbs. These 8 limbs arise naturally together at the moment of attaining the “noble realm” (*ariya, bhūmi*).⁵⁷

4.3 CALM COUPLED WITH INSIGHT⁵⁸

4.3.1 The Paṭisambhidā, magga explains⁵⁹ that one develops calm and insight together (*samatha, vipassanā, yuganaddha*)⁶⁰ in 16 ways. One of these ways is that the practice of samatha and of vipassana lead to an identical meditation-object of meditation (*ārammaṇa*). For example, when one abandons restlessness (*uddhacca*), the mind becomes concentrated and gains “cessation” (*nirodha*). (At the same time), by abandoning ignorance, insight arises and “cessation,” the mind becomes the object of awareness. In this way, calm and insight work together on an equal basis.

4.3.2 Some commentarial passages claim that although there is cooperation between calm and insight, this does not mean that samatha and vipassana arise simultaneously, since it is not possible to contemplate conditioned phenomena while the mind is one-pointed in dhyana. These passages state that these 2 ways of meditation act as a pair in so far that insight follows on from a one’s level of concentrative attainment, and equally the next level of concentrative attainment relies on one’s previous level of insight, as described in **the Aṅguttara Commentary**:

One enters the 1st dhyana, exits it, contemplates the conditioned nature of 1st dhyana; enters the 2nd dhyana, exits it, contemplates the conditioned nature of the 2nd dhyana; enters the 3rd dhyana, and so on, enter each, then exit, and finally one enters the conditioned nature of the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, and then exit from it.⁶¹

An important example of this explanation is the account of the elder Sāriputta, who developed calm and insight together, from the 1st dhyana to the attainment of path and fruit (of arhathood).⁶²

4.4 A MIND SEIZED BY DHARMA-RESTLESSNESS⁶³

The 4th meditation method is “a mind seized by dharma-restlessness.” (*dharm’uddhacca, viggahita mānasa*), that is, when the mind is misled by higher states of mind.

The Paṭisambhidā, magga explains⁶⁴ that when one reflects on the 3 characteristics in reference to the 5 aggregates, the following 10 kinds of mental states may arise:⁶⁵

radiance (*obhāsa*), knowledge (*ñāṇa*), bliss (*pīti*), tranquillity (*passaddhi*), joy (*sukha*), determination (*adhimokkha*), balanced effort (*paggāha*), careful attention (*upaṭṭhāna*), equanimity (*upekkhā*), and devotion (*nikanti*).

The practitioner here believes that the radiance that he “sees” in dhyana, for example, is a higher state of mind: he thinks that he has attained path, fruit or nirvana. Thinking in this way causes restless-

⁵⁷ The *ariyā* refer to the streamwinner, etc: Dh 236 (DhA 3:178,5 = J 4:187,4; MA 2:127,11),

⁵⁸ For details, see SD 41.5 (4).

⁵⁹ Pm 2:97-100.

⁶⁰ **Yuga, naddha** (*yuga*, “yoke; pair” + *naddha* or *nandha*, “tied, bound, put on”), “putting a yoke, yoke together: Pm 2:92 f; KhpA 27; (adj) congruous, harmonious: UA 153, 398; (neut) congruity, association, common cause”: KhpA 27; Pm 2:98 = Vism 682.

⁶¹ AA 3:143,12-18.

⁶² MA 4:90 on M 111/3:25-29.

⁶³ For details, see SD 41.5 (5).

⁶⁴ Pm 2:101 f.

⁶⁵ The 10 are known as “impurities of insight” (*vipassan’upakkilesa*): Vism 633-638; AA 3:143; NmA 106; VAT:Be 2:236-240; VismT:Be 2:427-433.

ness to arise in him, since he fails to see these 10 mental states as they really are, as *impermanent*, *subject to change*, and *nonself*.

Wisely discerning these 10 mental states settles the restless or wavering mind to become clear and concentrated. With this wisdom, one is not carried away by any of these mental states. The mind remains pure and calm, and one's meditation will be neither distracted nor impaired. The path may arise in due course.

5 Cultivating insight while in dhyana

5.1 NO THINKING IN DHYANA?

5.1.1 Mental qualities of dhyanas

5.1.1.1 There is a well-known controversy regarding whether it is possible to develop insight or to apply wise reflection while in dhyana. Those who reject this possibility usually tend to refer to **the dhyana-factors**. In the 1st dhyana, a meditator has initial application and sustained application (*vitakka, vicāra*), while in other, higher dhyanas, one only has bliss, joy and one-pointedness. Such being the case, how can one engage in any thinking or reflection?

It should be noted that the dhyana-factors are merely used as criteria for determining whether one has attained dhyana and which level of dhyana. They are not the only mental qualities present in a dhyana. In fact, the mind in dhyana is endowed with many qualities, as verified in the suttas and the older texts of the Abhidhamma. **The Anupada Sutta** (M 111), for example, lists the mental qualities present in every level of dhyana, from the 1st dhyana to the base of nothingness, including: will (*chanda*), determination (*adhimokkha*), energy (*virīya*), mindfulness (*sati*), attention (*manasikāra*) and equanimity (*upekkhā*).⁶⁶

5.1.1.2 Similarly, **the Dhamma,saṅgāṇī** lists numerous qualities present at each level of dhyana, especially in “transcendent” dhyana (*lok’uttara jhāna*),⁶⁷ including the 5 spiritual faculties (faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom), all the 8 limbs of the noble eightfold path, and both calm and insight.⁶⁸ Some later commentaries⁶⁹ expand upon these passages⁷⁰ and make it clear that concentration and wisdom act in unison in “the dhyanic mind” (*jhāna, citta*).

The reason that initial application and sustained application are absent in higher dhyanas is because the mind therein is firmly established and deeply stilled. It is not necessary to turn attention (*vitakka*) to mind-objects or to sustain attention (*vicāra*) on these objects. The reflection present in the mind excels these modes of attention.

5.1.2 Shifting the attention in dhyana

5.1.2.1 The Abhidhamma presents a detailed analysis, breaking the mind down into separate mind-moments, describing mental activity in relation to other factors, for example, when processing sense-impressions. The Abhidhamma claims that it is not possible to cultivate insight in dhyana because at the moment of concentrative attainment the mind is one-pointed on the mind-object (*ārammaṇa*) pertain-

⁶⁶ M 111,5-167/3:25-28 (SD 56.4).

⁶⁷ This is said to refer to momentary attainment-concentration (DhsA 117, 213).

⁶⁸ Dhs 31, 75.

⁶⁹ Dhs 60; VAṬ:Be 1:367, 375, 2:177, 242 f; VismṬ:Be 1:173 f.

⁷⁰ PmA 1:132, Vism 148 f, NmA 1:133.

ing to dhyana. The mind-objects involved in insight practice are separate and therefore one cannot cultivate insight during the same mind-moment of dhyana.⁷¹

One must, in dhyana, first move attention away from the mind-object to direct it to another object—which means *emerging from the dhyana*.⁷² Actually, this is neither impossible nor takes much effort: it simply requires an adjustment or interruption in the awareness stream (of one-pointedness) and entering into *subliminal consciousness*, which is the same as exiting dhyana.⁷³

The subliminal consciousness (*bhav'āṅga*)⁷⁴ is a “subconscious” stream of the mind, an idea introduced in the Commentaries as the “life-continuum,”⁷⁵ which arises to fill the “gap” when ordinary consciousness is not present, such as during sleep or unconsciousness.⁷⁶ When we do not exert mindfulness or awareness, our actions or non-action are, as a rule, taken over by the subconscious. Take, for example, we go for our regular walk from home to the bus-stop; we do a series of actions without much or any thought (leaving the house, walking down the road, waiting for the bus, taking it, and so on).

5.1.2.2 The Commentaries often mention that at the moment of realizing **arhathood** the mind must reach “attainment-concentration” (*appanā, samādhi = jhāna*), even for one who has never previously gained dhyana.⁷⁷ Following the model of the Abhidhamma, these passages outline the sequence of the mental process at the moment of realizing path and fruit⁷⁸ for one who uses **insight as a vehicle** (*vipassanā, yānika*).

An outline of the process can be illustrated thus (the numbers in parentheses refer to distinct mind-moments):⁷⁹

(*saṅkhārupekkhā-ñāṇa*⁸⁰ → *bhavaṅga* →) *mano, dvār'āvajjana* (mind-door impulsion)
 → (1) *parikamma* (preparation)⁸¹ → (2) *upacāra* (approach) → (3) *anuloma* (adaptation)
 → (4) *gotra, bhū* (maturation) → (5) *magga, citta* → (6-7) *phala, citta*⁸² → *bhavaṅga*.

⁷¹ AA 3:143.

⁷² VA 1:229.

⁷³ MA 2:30; AA 3:409, 5:15; VbhA 463; VAṬ Tatiyapārājikaṃ Ānāpānassatisamādhikathāvaṇṇanā; [VinT. 4/137]; VismT Paññābhāvanānisamsaniddesavaṇṇanā, Nirodhasamāpattikathāvaṇṇanā.

⁷⁴ In the Pali canon, the term *bhavaṅga* or *bhavaṅga, citta* occurs only but frequently in **Paṭṭhāna** (the last book of the Abhidhamma), eg, Paṭ 159, 160, 169 f 325 f. The terms often occur in Comys.

⁷⁵ Also *bhav'āṅga, sota*, “subconscious stream” (MA 2:293; AA 3:28), a concept peculiar to later Pāli epistemological and psychological theory, which Comys define as the foundation of experience. The life-continuum (*bhav'āṅga*) is a “stream” (*sota*) of subconscious and unconscious mind-moments that carry with them the impressions or potentialities of past experience. Under proper conditions, these potentialities ripen as conscious moments, which, in turn, interrupt the *bhavaṅga* flow briefly before the mind lapses back into the subconscious continuum. Moments of consciousness and unconsciousness are discreet and never overlap in time, with unconsciousness (comprising the latent tendencies, *anusaya*) being the more typical of the 2 states. This continuum is, therefore, what makes possible the faculty of memory. Hence, in Abhidhamma the mind as *mano* (“mind”) or *man'āyatana* (“mind-base”) is the same as *bhavaṅga, citta*.

⁷⁶ SD 17.8a (6.1); SD 32.1 (3.8); SD 48.1 (9.2.1.3).

⁷⁷ UA 33; PmA 1:29; DhSA 231; Vism 669 f; Abhs 4.14.

⁷⁸ The “period of attainment impulsion” (*appanā, javana, vāra*) in the path-process (*magga, vīthi*).

⁷⁹ Further see Payutto 2021:903.

⁸⁰ This is the 8th level of insight knowledge (*vipassanā, ñāṇa*). On the 10 vipassana knowledges, see (Abhs 9.25); SD 60.1d (6.2.4.4 n).

⁸¹ This stage is sometimes omitted.

⁸² This stage has 2 mind-moments (unless *parikamma* is left out, in which case it has 3 mind moments). PmA 29 and DhSA 231 present an alternative outline which has 2 mind-moments of adaptation and a single moment of *phala, citta*, but this is refuted at Vism 675.

We see a similar intervening presence of *bhavaṅga* in the mental process of one who uses **calm as a vehicle** (*samatha, yānika*), outlined here:

bhavaṅga → *ñāṇa, vīthi* (consciousness-process of knowledge) →
bhavaṅga → *vipassana, vīthi* (consciousness-process of insight)⁸³ →
bhavaṅga → *magga, vīthi*⁸⁴ → *bhavaṅga*.

Whether the meditation vehicle is *samatha* or *vipassana*, we can see that at the moment of realization of arhathood, the mind's attention merges with the *bhavaṅga* and then returns to the mind-process. This model can be used to understand how the normal unawakened mental process works, too. The *bhavaṅga* is always present in between the moments of our thought process whenever we consciously act. In this case (of the unawakened), this is how our karmic potential influences our actions, especially when we are not mindful of our actions.

In any case, the knowledge and clear insight arising at the moment of **awakening**, which produces a profound transformation by dispelling mental defilement and altering personality, must be an experience that permeates the entire mind and body. Thus, someone who attains *dhyana* but does not use it as a basis for insight will only develop insight with the assistance of “access” (*upacāra*) or “momentary” (*khaṇika*) concentration. This will be similar to someone who develops insight without having ever attained *dhyana*.

5.1.2.3 Having emerged from *dhyana*, the mind immediately resumes the stability of attainment concentration (*appanā, samādhi*) with the mental dexterity developed in *dhyana*. (We should not misunderstand that exiting *dhyana* implies returning to a mundane state of mental fuss and flurry.) One then uses attainment concentration to cultivate insight by contemplating the factors present at the level of *dhyana* from which one has just emerged and seeing them in light of the 3 characteristics.⁸⁵ These factors become the objects of insight.

More comprehensively, a person contemplates aspects of *dhyana* (*jhāna, dhamma*), things associated with *dhyana* (*jhāna.sampayutta, dhamma*), aspects of attainment (*samāpatti, dhamma*), states associated with attainment (*samāpatti.sampayutta, dhamma*), the mind and mental factors arising in *dhyana*, or even conditioned phenomena.

5.1.2.4 We can see from the above that

- (1) the teachings on cultivating insight *while in dhyana* and
- (2) those on first *exiting dhyana* before practising insight

are *not* contradictory.

The first can be called sutta teaching and is more general. In this teaching, the word “*dhyana*” refers to both the actual state of *dhyana* and to the mental stability generated by the power of *dhyana*. The expression “cultivating insight while in *dhyana*” refers to entering *dhyana* and then using the power of *dhyana* to practise insight.

The second can be called Abhidhamma teaching and is more specific.⁸⁶ Here the definition of *jhāna* is restricted to the process during which the mind is one-pointed and focused on the meditation object, say the “mental image” (*nimitta*) of the breath or of a *kaṣiṇa* object. The Abhidhamma explains that the

⁸³ This is a simplified presentation; in fact, during the insight process, there is a repeated entry of the mind into the subconscious (*bhavaṅga*).

⁸⁴ The course of the path (*magga, vīthi*) is identical (steps 1-7) to that shown above.

⁸⁵ Vism 187 f, 371.

⁸⁶ For refs to the sutta teachings (*suttanta, desanā*) as being “general” (*pariyāya*) and the Abhidhamma teachings (*abhidhamma, desanā*) as being “specific” (*nippariyāya*), see DhsA 307; VismT:Be 1:408.

mind in dhyana is one-pointed on the object of awareness throughout. When the mind begins to apply wisdom for contemplation, the focus of awareness must move away from that original object.

5.1.2.5 The Abhidhamma distinguishes the state of mind powered by dhyana as a separate process, one of releasing the object of calm and exiting dhyana, although they grant that the mind is still exceptionally concentrated. The practitioner uses this power of mind to cultivate insight and turns to the dhyana just exited along with its attributes, for example, initial application (*vitakka*), sustained application (*vicāra*), zest (*pīti*), joy (*sukha*), enthusiasm (*chanda*), and energy (*virīya*), as the objects of contemplation. This change of focus results in exiting dhyana and entering the *bhavaṅga*.

From this point on, one begins a new stage of meditation, of insight meditation (*vipassanā*). By making this distinction a new term was necessary to describe this process, since despite exiting dhyana the mind does not revert back to the state preceding dhyana. The commentators coined the expression “using jhāna as a foundation.”⁸⁷ They also referred to the principle of the “subconscious mind” (*bhavaṅga, citta*) to define the exit or break from the state of dhyana.

5.1.3 The mind in dhyana

5.1.3.1 From such evidence, we can conclude that the general statement “cultivating insight in dhyana” is equivalent to the more specific statements found in the Commentaries, such as these:

“Having entered dhyana, one exits and contemplates conditioned phenomena”,⁸⁸

“Exiting the foundational dhyana, one contemplates phenomena”,⁸⁹

“Making dhyana as foundation, one establishes insight”,⁹⁰

“Having attained dhyana, one develops insight with dhyana as basis”,⁹¹ and:

“Exiting concentrative attainment, one practises insight with a firmly established mind.”⁹²

The essential message of the sutta teachings and the Abhidhamma teachings is the same: to apply the power of concentration generated in dhyana and thus to foster the optimum conditions for wisdom to discern reality. By entering dhyana the mind is prepared for the next stage, of insight (*vipassanā*).

5.1.3.2 Because of the reliance on dhyana, the Commentaries call this process “insight with dhyana as a basis” (*vipassana.pādaka, jhāna*) or simply “with dhyana as basis” (*pādaka-j, jhāna*). This explanation is consonant with the frequently mentioned in this passage from **the Bodhi Rāja, kumara Sutta** (M 85):

When my concentrated mind was thus purified, bright, unblemished, rid of imperfection, malleable, wieldy, steady, and attained to unshakable steadiness,⁹³ (M 85,36/2:93), SD 55.2

⁸⁷ *Vipassanā.pādaka, jhāna, vipassana.pāda, samāpatti, pādaka-j, jhāna*, etc; eg DA 3:804; MA 5:24; PmA 1:193; DhsA 228; VbhA 121; Vism 666-668; VA 1:156 = 167 = DA 1:233 = MA 1:124 = 3:265 = AA 2:100 = 263 = PañcA:Se 243; VA 1:244 = DA 3:897, 1002 = MA 2:87 = SA 1:26 = NmA 1:120 = VAṬ:Be 1:395; MA 2:146 = NmA 2:332 = VAṬ:Be 2:53; MA:Se 2/468; MA 45:160 [Se 3/571]; VbhA. 413; MA 4:200; AA 1:223; AA 2:41; MA 1:142 [Se 1/257]; MA 2:234.

⁸⁸ AA 2:100.

⁸⁹ Vism 666 f.

⁹⁰ VismṬ:Be 1:11.

⁹¹ Vism 189 f; VismṬ:Be 1:299.

⁹² MA 1:124; Vism 371.

⁹³ *So evaṃ samāhite citte parisuddhe pariyodāte anaṅgaṇe vigatūpakkilese mudu, bhūte kammaniye ṭhite āneñ-ja-p, patte.* M 85,36/2:93 (SD 55.2).

With dhyana a person thus prepares the mind for engagement with insight. This state of mind is called “resolute” (*abhinīhāra-k,khama*), and it leads to ever loftier attainments. Based on the sutta passage above, we have the **9 qualities** of an awakened mind, or even any mind in dhyana (albeit only temporary for an ordinary person); it is said to be:⁹⁴

1. concentrated;	<i>samāhita</i>
2. purified;	<i>parisuddha</i>
3. bright;	<i>pariyodāta</i>
4. unblemished;	<i>anaṅgaṇa</i>
5. rid of imperfection;	<i>vigatūpakkilesa</i>
6. malleable;	<i>mudu,bhūta</i>
7. wieldy [workable];	<i>kammanīya</i>
8. steady;	<i>ṭhita</i>
9. attained to unshakable steadiness.	<i>āneñja-p,patta</i>

5.1.3.3 We have established that some kinds of subtle mental actions can and does occur in the minds of spiritually developed individuals, such as those working to attain arhathood. The question thus remains whether an ordinary person can make any such deliberations while in dhyana? It is not difficult to answer this question. Firstly, it is very difficult for an ordinary person to attain dhyana. To be able to attain dhyana, one must thus be able to free the mind from any kind of thinking. Secondly, this means that should any thought arises for such a person in dhyana, he or she would lose that dhyana.

Mental deliberations only work with those who have fully mastered dhyana. This also means that he or she has a better understanding of how the mind works. Moreover, a spiritually developed person, especially such a dhyana-attainer—we may include any path-attainer here—due to their having overcome at least some of the mental fetters, is able to mentally and wholesomely act during dhyana.

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SD 62.18a

Paṭhama (Catukka) Kāla Sutta

The 1st (Fours) Discourse on Times

A 4.146/4:140

1 There are, bhikshus, these **4 times**. have I heard.
What are the four?

2 THE 4 RIGHT TIMES

- (1) The time for listening to the Dharma.
- (2) The time for discussing the Dharma.

kālena dhamma,savananm
kālena dhamma,sākaṇṇā

⁹⁴ NmA 2:357; Vism 373.

- (3) The time for calm.
 (4) The time for insight.

*kālena samatho*⁹⁵
kālena vipassanā

3 These are the 4 times.

—evaṃ—

SD 62.18b

Dutiya (Catukka) Kāla Sutta The 2nd (Fours) Discourse on Times

A 4.147/2:140

1 Bhikshus, these 4 times, rightly developed, right engaged in, gradually bring about the destruction of the influxes.⁹⁶

2 What are the four?

- (1) The time for listening to the Dhamma,
 (2) the time for discussing the Dhamma,
 (3) the time, for calm, and
 (4) the time for insight.

These, bhikshus, are the 4 times, *rightly developed, right engaged in, gradually bring about the destruction of the influxes.*

3 Bhikshus, just as, when it is raining and the rain pours down in large droplets on a mountain top, the water flows down along the slope and fills the clefts, gullies, and creeks;

the clefts, gullies, and creeks, becoming full, fill up the pools;

the pools, becoming full, fill up the lakes;

the lakes, becoming full, fill up the streams;

the streams, becoming full, fill up the rivers;

and the rivers, becoming full, fill up the great ocean;

4 so too, bhikshus, these 4 times, rightly developed, right engaged in, gradually bring about the destruction of the influxes.⁹⁷ [141]

— evaṃ —

⁹⁵ Be Ee Se *samatho*; only Be *sammasanā*. *Sammasana* (n) from *sammasati* (*saṃ + masati*), “to touch, seize, grasp, know thoroughly, (mentally) master.” Apparently, the Buddha is recorded to have used the *sammasaṃ* (synonymous with *sammasana*) at length only in **Sammasa S** (S 12.66), SD 107.9. The Sutta Comy explains “**internal scrutiny** as the scrutiny of conditions within oneself [one’s own mind]” (*antaraṃ sammasan ti abbhantaram paccaya, sammasanaṃ*, SA 2:119). In the post-canonical texts, *sammasana, jāṇa* is a technical term for the understanding of the 5 aggregates by way of the 3 characteristics (Pm 1:53 f, quoted at Vism 20.6-20/607 f). In the Sutta, however, *sammasa(na)* is used in the scholastic sense of “discernment of conditions” (*paccaya, pariggaha*) (Vism 19.1-13/598-600).

⁹⁶ *Ime kho bhikkhave cattāro kālā sammā bhāviyamānā sammā anuparivattiyamānā anupubbena āsavānaṃ khayam pāpentī.*

⁹⁷ *Ime kho bhikkhave cattāro kālā sammā bhāviyamānā sammā anuparivattiyamānā anupubbena āsavānaṃ khayam pāpentī.*

SD 62.18c

Kāla Dāna Sutta

The Discourse on Timely Giving

or, (Pañcaka) Kāla Sutta the (Fives) Discourse in Time
A 5.36/3:41

1 Bhishus, there are these 5 timely giving. What are the five?

- | | |
|--|---|
| (1) One gives a gift to a visitor. | <i>āgantukassa dānaṃ deti.</i> |
| (2) One gives a gift to one going on a journey. | <i>gamikassa dānaṃ deti.</i> |
| (3) One gives to the sick. | <i>gilānassa dānaṃ deti.</i> |
| (4) One gives to those suffering a famine. | <i>dubbhike dānaṃ deti.</i> |
| (5) One presents the first crop and the first fruits
first to the morally virtuous. | <i>yāni tāni nava,sassāni nava,phalāni
tāni paṭhamam sīlavantesu patitṭhāpeti</i> |

*Kāle dadanti sappaññā
vadaññū vīta,maccharā
kālena dinnam ariyesu
uju,bhūtesu tādisu.*

At proper times, the wise,
charitable, generous,
gives timely gifts to the noble ones,
those upright, who are such.⁹⁸

*Vippasannamanā tassa
vipulā hoti dakkhiṇā.
Ye tattha anumodanti
veyyāvaccam karonti vā.*

To the giver with a clear mind,
the offering is abundant.
Those who rejoice therein,
or who give service,

*Na tena⁹⁹ dakkhinā ūnā
tepi puññassa bhāgino
tasmā dade appaṭivāna,citto
yattha dinnam maha-p.phalam
puññāni para,lokasmim
patitṭhā honti pāṇinan ti*

Those not wanting in the giving,
have a share of the merit.
Therefore, one should give with an open mind;
in such giving there is great fruit,
merit for the hereafter,
supports for the living.

— evam —

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⁹⁸ *Tādisu* (loc pl of *tādi*, “such”), describing the arhat’s natural and constant goodness: see SD 39.3 (1.4.3); M 47,-10.2 n (SD 35.6); SD 15.7 (2.2.2); SD 49.20 (1.21).

⁹⁹ Be so; Ee Ka *na resam*.