

THE SIXTEEN VIPASSANĀ-ÑĀṄAS



From Impermanence to Liberation



Guy Eugène DUBOIS

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FROM IMPERMANENCE TO LIBERATION

Guy Eugène DUBOIS

Dhamma
books

“ Spiritual wisdom is a gift to be shared with insight and compassion, not exploited for personal gain. When wisdom is commercialized, it loses its purity and becomes a commodity, diminishing its transformative power. ”

(Guy E. Dubois)

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This book is a contemplative English edition of the original Dutch work *De Zestien Vipassanā-Nāṇas – Van Vergankelijkheid naar Bevrijding*. The Dutch text serves as the point of departure for this English edition, which has been carefully rendered for an international readership while remaining faithful to the author's understanding. The original Dutch edition remains the definitive source text for this English edition.

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• *Yo kho dhammaṃ passati, so maṃ passati. —*
Whoever sees the Dhamma sees me. •

Vakkali Sutta, Saṃyutta Nikāya 22.87

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A NOTE TO THE READER

This book does not translate words.
It translates understanding.

Although this English edition is based on an earlier Dutch work, it is far more than a translation. Every chapter has been carefully revised, expanded, and refined in the light of continued study, reflection, and editorial development. The result is an independent English edition that reflects the author's most mature understanding of the early Dhamma and the contemplative path it reveals.

The Pāli Canon and related Buddhist traditions preserve a rich terminology that often carries meanings for which no single English equivalent exists. Throughout this book, many key Pāli and Sanskrit terms have therefore been retained, accompanied by concise explanations where appropriate.

Pāli and Sanskrit terms are presented in roman type rather than italics, reflecting the editorial principle that these terms form an integral part of the text rather than foreign expressions. Only complete footnotes are set in italics.

The words of the Buddha are presented in italics and enclosed within ‘...’ quotation marks, allowing them to remain quietly distinct from the surrounding text.

Unless otherwise indicated, all translations, terminology, and interpretations are based on the earliest Dhamma preserved in the Pāli Canon.

FOREWORD

There are books that are meant to be read, understood, and remembered.

This is not one of them.

What lies before you is not a textbook, a manual, or a collection of knowledge. It is an invitation. An invitation to become still, to look, to listen to what quietly unfolds beyond words.

The sixteen stages of insight are not a technique, nor are they a ladder to be climbed. They form the landscape through which a yogi gradually learns to let go. They are not a route to be followed, but footprints in the sand—fleeting traces left by those who came, looked, and moved on.

In the early Dhamma texts, the Buddha is often referred to as the Tathāgata ¹—the One who has thus come and thus gone, without clinging to what passes away; who comes and goes like the wind, leaving nothing behind to which the world can cling.

The Tathāgata walks an uncharted path—holding on to nothing, leaving nothing that lingers in time or space. ²

Not as someone who possesses or claims anything, but as a presence moving through the world like a bird through the open sky, leaving no path behind.

As the Dhammapada expresses it metaphorically (Verse 93): ³

• *Suññato animitto ca, vimokkho yassa gocaro; ākā-seva sakuntānaṃ, padaṃ tassa durannayaṃ. — The path of one who dwells in the liberation that is empty and signless is difficult to trace—like the flight of birds through the sky. •*

So it is with the sixteen stages of insight: fleeting traces of seeing and letting go, disappearing like footprints in wet sand as the wind begins to rise.

Within that very impermanence, the essence of practice reveals itself: it is not sitting that matters, but seeing. ⁴ Not form, but essence.

Sitting may indeed be helpful, offering the mind a stable space in which to settle. Yet the moment form is mistaken for the essence, the heart of the practice is lost. ⁵ A skilful means (upāya; upāyaḥ) must never be confused with the reality toward which it points.

The Dhamma is neither ritual nor technique. It is not a structure. It is an invitation to meet reality directly—free from self-centred intention and expectation.

The danger, however, is that practice itself becomes a new identity: the quiet, seated seeker—someone with a path to follow, a goal to attain and the promise of future fulfilment. Yet the moment the inner journey becomes another way of confirming the self, the practitioner is once again caught in the very snare from which liberation is sought.

The Buddha did not point to postures, rituals, or structures, but to insight. He pointed to impermanence, to the relinquishment of clinging, and to not-self, so that suffering might come to an end.

Seeing—that is what matters.

Seeing how everything arises and passes away. Seeing thoughts move, seeing perceptions and feelings arise and pass away, without grasping or pushing anything aside. Seeing without resistance, without interference, without wanting experience to be other than it is. Direct seeing, unfiltered by thought or conceptualization.

True meditation has no fixed form. ⁶ Once the mind becomes clear, every technique falls away. The object of attention gives way to mindfulness (*sati*; *smṛti*) and wisdom (*paññā*; *prajñā*). Meditation is then no longer a matter of posture or method, no longer an exercise in form or structure, but simply an open and uncontrived awareness of this moment, and therefore of every moment.

Even the most profound states of stillness or spaciousness, however subtle or refined, remain subject to arising and passing away.

Even openness itself—even the absence of objects—is simply another appearance within the stream of consciousness.

Such experiences can easily be mistaken for liberation, yet they are not liberation. Liberation does not arise from abiding in any particular state, but from clearly seeing whatever arises and passes away—without craving, without grasping, without attachment.

Whether walking, washing the dishes, sitting, or lying down: wherever there is clear knowing (*pajānāti*; pra-

jānāti), ⁷ there is practice. Only where there is seeing does liberation come into view. ⁸

It is therefore not sitting that liberates (vimutti; vimukti), ⁹ but the insight (vipassanā; vipaśyanā) that dawns when we let go of what we think we must do, achieve, or become. ¹⁰

Where outward forms fall away, truth may reveal itself—not as something new, but as what has always been here. Dhammatā. ¹¹

Truth requires no structures, no lineages, no rituals, no words to validate it. ¹²

It asks not for form, but for openness—a receptivity that excludes nothing.

Acceptance.

Clarity.

Stillness.

Liberation.

It asks for acceptance—the willingness to see things as they are, rather than as we imagine, wish, or want them to be.

It asks for clarity—a mind that sees without grasping, without judging, condemning, or excluding.

It asks for stillness—not the absence of sound, but the absence of resistance.

It asks for liberation—not as a goal to be attained, but as the natural consequence of letting go.

What is directly seen in silence is reflected in the Buddha's teaching.

Nibbāna (nirvāṇa) is not presented in the Pāli Canon as a new form of existence or as an entity, but as the Unconditioned (asaṅkhata; asaṃskṛta)—open, free from all forms and concepts.

Openness (anālaya; id.)¹³ and wisdom (paññā; pra-jñā) are cultivated through meditation and mature in the direct realization of anicca, dukkha, and anattā. Stillness and liberation are not ends in themselves, but the natural flowering of that insight.

For this reason, the Buddha also describes Nibbāna as santi (śānti): peace.

Whoever enters these pages is not invited to achieve anything, but to relinquish whatever stands in the way of achievement. Not to become something (bhava; id.),¹⁴ but to disappear into the simplicity of what is.

Read this book as you would contemplate a flower, watch the morning mist, or follow a falling star. Do not read in order to grasp, but to allow what wishes to reveal itself to unfold of its own accord.

For what is sought does not lie outside ourselves.

What binds us is not a chain, but an illusion. Even the teachings themselves are only pointers. They are not truth, but invitations to see.

The Dhamma begins there.

Not with belief. Not with conclusions. But with the simple willingness to look.

This English edition is not simply a translation of an earlier Dutch work. It has been thoroughly revised, expanded, and refined throughout, incorporating further study, reflection, and editorial development. It is therefore best regarded as a new and independent edition, reflecting the author's most mature understanding of the early Dhamma and the contemplative path it reveals.

This book does not seek to convince. It simply invites you to look.

It is not an instruction manual, but a dismantling; not an encouragement to search, but an invitation to let go.

And then—only silence.

In the Buddha's words: ¹⁵

• *Yaṃ kiñci samudayadhammaṃ sabbaṃ taṃ nirodhadhammaṃ. — Whatever is subject to arising is subject to cessation.* •

Guy Eugène Dubois
Beerzel, August 2026

INTRODUCTION

There is a silence that reaches deeper than the mere absence of sound. It is the silence of insight—the wordless understanding that arises when the mind grows still and reality reveals itself in its naked simplicity. Yet this silence is not easily attained. It is not the fruit of technique, nor the result of effort.

As Jiddu Krishnamurti observed: ¹⁶

“ The silence that thought constructs is still and lifeless. But the silence that comes into being when thought has understood its own beginning, knows its own nature, and sees that all thought is never free but always old— this silence is meditation, in which the meditator is completely absent, where the mind has emptied itself of the past. ”

What we ordinarily call silence—the cessation of activity, the quieting of thought—is often little more than a subtle act of control. Understand that the mind which tries to become silent is still engaged in activity; the search for peace still presupposes the movement of craving.

True silence arises only when the mind understands itself ¹⁷—its attachment to the past, its tendency to grasp and identify—and when that very seeing is sufficient for all conditioned activity to dissolve. Then no effort remains, but only an open space without a centre, without an “I”. No practitioner remains, no striving—only uncontrived presence.

Within that openness arises a silence that cannot be captured in words.

This silence is not an absence, but a presence that permeates everything. What cannot be expressed in words flows like an unheard song—a song beyond concepts and forms, requiring no explanation because it simply is.

Words are but a shadow of this reality. They cannot touch the essence of what is known when the yogi's mind falls silent and opens to the Ineffable—to the Unconditioned.

In the simplicity of silence, the universal mystery becomes tangible—not as thought, but as a direct realization (paṭivedha; prativēdha) ¹⁸ of what has always been present. No dogma. No esoteric display. No imagination. Only simple presence—accessible to anyone willing to listen without expectation, without striving, without hope of reward.

True inner silence opens onto a deeper way of seeing and knowing ¹⁹—a luminous awareness, a natural wisdom ²⁰ that requires no words and no forms to which it might cling. It is the Unconditioned (as-aṅkhata; asaṃskṛta), ²¹ more lucid and more primordial than thought itself (pabhassara-citta; prabhāśvara-citta). ²²

Within silence, that which cannot be spoken reveals itself—recognizable only to those who are willing to listen with an open heart.

Silence is the threshold of the innermost sanctuary, the hidden cave of the heart. It is the song of the

heart—a language without words, universal and requiring no translation. Like love, unborn and timeless, silence speaks to all who are willing to listen. ²³ A melody without sound, recognizable alike to those who are musical and to those who are not; to those who are religious and to those who are free from religion.

Go into the forest. Listen to the whispering of the leaves, to the breathing of the wind. Sit beside the sea and let the roar of the waves fill your ears. Look up into the immeasurable stillness of the night sky.

Open the inner ear of the mind. Listen to the sound of silence itself. There, within that inaudible melody, the gentle joy of contemplation is born. There blossoms a happiness that is never sought, but appears in the absence of craving.

Within that silent clarity, insight is born—not as a thought, not as a conclusion, but as an immediate knowing of how all things arise and pass away—without an owner, without a centre.

It is within this silence, within this spacious openness (*suññatā-vihāra*), ²⁴ that the *vipassanā-ñāṇas* (*vipaśyanā-jñāna*) take root and gradually mature. ²⁵

Just as a flower does not force itself to bloom, ²⁶ so the stages of insight do not unfold through effort or desire, but through the gradual letting go of the obscurations that conceal them.

In silence, insight matures naturally. The ancient masters observed this process with great care and described it with remarkable precision.

In the earliest texts we do not yet find a systematic presentation of the stages of insight. What we do find are the living traces of an inner process of maturation—a contemplative landscape that would later be distilled, from Upatissa's *Vimuttimagga* ²⁷ through the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* ²⁸ to the *Visuddhimagga*, ²⁹ into the sixteen stages of insight as they are known today.

What, then, are these *vipassanā-ñāṇas*? How did they emerge, and in what way can they serve as a gentle guide along the path of inner liberation? ³⁰

The pages that follow seek to explore these questions—not as instruction, not as dogma, but as an invitation to pause together and contemplate this process of maturation and letting go. Not in order to attain something, but to make space for what has awaited discovery all along. ³¹

The *vipassanā-ñāṇas* (*vipaśyanā-jñāna*)—the insights that mature through deep meditation—are not conceptual constructions or theoretical schemes.

Rather, they are traces: gentle markers along the inner path, born of careful and reverential observation (*yoniso manasikāra*; *yuktiso manaskāra*) ³² of the process of liberation itself.

Their roots reach back to the earliest traditions of the *Buddhadhamma*.

The Pāli Canon contains no formal enumeration of sixteen stages of insight. Yet throughout its discourses a recurring pattern can be discerned: insight gradually matures as ordinary looking gives way to direct seeing—a clear and immediate recognition of

impermanence (anicca; anitya), unsatisfactoriness (dukkha; duḥkha), and not-self (anattā; anātman).

Again and again, the Buddha points to the arising and passing away of phenomena (udayabbaya; utpādayaya)³³—body, feelings, perceptions, mental formations, and consciousness—and to the relinquishment of all attachment to them (upādāna).³⁴

He did not teach an abstract philosophy.³⁵ He invited the practitioner to look directly and fearlessly at reality itself:

• *Yarṇ kiñci samudayadhammaṃ sabbaṃ taṃ nirodhadhammaṃ. — Whatever is subject to arising is subject to cessation.* •³⁶

This is the pure and unblemished knowing of the Dhamma. Nothing is permanent. Nothing can truly be possessed. Nothing can provide lasting satisfaction.

This simple yet profound observation lies at the very heart of all insight meditation (vipassanā; vipaśyanā).

When the mind grows still and observes without interference, reality reveals its impermanent nature of its own accord—not as an idea, but as direct experience.

Vipassanā is therefore not a matter of intellectual understanding, but of immediate, lived realization.

— Not everything needs to be spoken,
not everything needs to be explained.
Sometimes what is most essential

is precisely what remains
unspoken. —

Vipassanā refers to direct realization (*paccanubhūta*; *pratyanuṣṭhita*)³⁷—not as a single flash of insight, but as a continually deepening and ever more refined understanding, lived and verified anew in direct experience.³⁸ This immediate realization is like the very breath of the path to liberation: quiet, alive, and ever present.

Only later, when the first generations of Buddhist monks began to reflect upon and organise their contemplative experience, did a more systematic map of this inner path emerge.

In works such as the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*³⁹—included in the *Khuddaka Nikāya* of the Pāli Canon—we find one of the earliest systematic descriptions of the progressive unfolding of insight.

Later still, within the commentarial tradition of Theravāda Buddhism, this understanding developed into the sequence of the sixteen *vipassanā-ñāṇas* (*vipaśyanā-jñāna*) as they are known today.

The great synthesis of this tradition is the *Visuddhimagga*⁴⁰—The Path of Purification—compiled by Buddhaghosa during the fifth century CE.

There, the sixteen stages are described in meticulous detail—not to elevate them into goals in themselves, but to offer the practitioner points of recognition: quiet landmarks that gently accompany the contemplative traveller along the way.

Buddhaghosa himself understood that insight cannot be manufactured.

His work is not a manual for producing Awakening, but a careful description of the way insight may unfold when the mind has become ripe for it.

The sixteen stages describe a process of natural maturation. They are not brought about through will-power or manipulation, but ripen as the natural consequence of wise attention (*yoniso manasikāra*; *yukti-iso manaskāra*), meditation (*bhāvanā*; *id.*), and the gradual maturation of insight (*anupubba-paṭipadā*; *anupūrva-pratipad*). ⁴¹

Just as a sunflower opens, not because someone pulls at its petals, but because the sun has risen high enough in the sky, so too insight unfolds when the necessary conditions have matured.

Yet, like every natural process of growth, this map also has its limits. It points the way; it is not the destination.

Even this map is provisional. The Buddha compared the Dhamma to a raft: something to cross the river with, not something to carry on one's shoulders after reaching the Further Shore. ⁴²

So it is with the sixteen *vipassanā-ñāṇas* (*vipaśyanā-jñāna*). They are to be understood as a support, as a skilful means (*upāya*; *upāyah*), never as something to cling to; as a mirror, not an idol.

What these stages describe is not a method imposed upon reality. Insight (*vipassanā*; *vipaśyanā*) is the

direct seeing of yathābhūta—reality as it truly is, free from distortion and conceptual overlay.

They are an invitation to encounter that reality directly. To see what is, without interference, without expectation, without fear. To remain still and watch everything arise and pass away—and, in that seeing, to relinquish what was never truly ours, yet what, in our innocent credulity, we imagined we possessed: a permanent core, a self, a soul, ⁴³ a solid ground.

The vipassanā-ñāṇas (vipaśyanā-jñāna) are not a ladder leading to some higher attainment. Nor are they an accomplishment or a badge of spiritual achievement.

They describe an inner process of maturation—a natural unfolding of the mind as it becomes quiet, clear, and unburdened. In other words, they are natural stages of insight (ñāṇa; jñāna) that arise through right practice.

Just as fruit ripens in the orchard, unaware of its own growth, so insight matures in a mind that sees through and relinquishes its own conditioning. The maturation of insight is not a process that can be forced or deliberately manipulated.

In the Satipaṭṭhāna Suttas, mindfulness (sati; smṛti) gives rise to insight when there is no striving for results. ⁴⁴ Likewise, classical works such as the Visuddhimagga emphasise letting go rather than acquisition.

In this sense, the path of insight is not directed towards attainment, but towards relinquishment. Not

towards constructing new structures, but towards allowing existing ones to fall away.

The path is characterised by the gradual dismantling of attachment and illusion—of arising and cessation (samudaya and nirodha) ⁴⁵ clearly understood—rather than by the construction of a new self or a conceptual system.

Each vipassanā-ñāṇa invites a deeper relaxation, a greater openness, and a further release from everything that binds the practitioner to the conditioned and the impermanent.

The process is marked by increasing clarity (paññā; prajñā), the fading of craving (taṇhā; tṛṣṇā), and an ever more deeply established equanimity (upekkhā; upekṣā).

This book is not a manual for producing these stages. It offers no recipes and no guarantees. ⁴⁶ What follows is simply a description—not of a path that lies somewhere outside ourselves, but of one that unfolds within the practitioner's own mind.

Each stage of insight represents a possibility—a reflection of the way wisdom may blossom when the necessary conditions have matured: clarity, mindfulness, and surrender. It is a maturation born not of striving, but of the quiet unfolding of causes and conditions.

The invitation is therefore both simple and radical: to become still, to look, not to grasp, not to strive. To allow whatever is ready to mature to mature, without interference. Just as the sun does not force the lotus

to open, but simply warms it until it awakens naturally from the mud.⁴⁷

May this presentation of the vipassanā-ñāṇas serve as a quiet companion—not as a guidebook that tells you how or when, but as a gentle reminder that the path of insight already lies within you. May it invite you to walk the path of silence, not with ambition, but with openness. And may the maturation of insight, when the time is ripe, unfold like a flower opening to the sun—without haste, without force, without attachment.

Within silence, one final reflection unfolds...

...In the search for wisdom, Awakening, or realization, the path is often presented as a ladder: a series of rungs to be climbed, a gradual ascent in which every step is thought to bring us closer to the goal. We are encouraged to strive, to improve ourselves, to rise above the limitations of ordinary existence.

Every "success" is regarded as a step upward; every "failure" as a temporary setback.

Yet profound insight reveals something altogether different. Wisdom does not lie in reaching the highest rung of this imaginary ladder.

It reveals itself the moment we stop, turn around, and realise that the entire idea of climbing was itself an illusion. The ladder—the striving, the longing to become someone, to attain something—is nothing more than a projection of craving itself.

Only when this illusion is seen through, only when we no longer cling to the idea of progress or perfection, does genuine liberation reveal itself.

Wisdom does not arise by climbing higher, but through the clear seeing that there is nowhere higher to climb.

There is no summit. No final victory. No ultimate completion. True liberation is the realization that we never needed to be anywhere other than here, in this very moment. That we never needed to become anything other than what we already are.

The ladder symbolises becoming (bhava; id.) and craving (taṇhā; tṛṣṇā)—two of the fundamental roots (mula; mūla) of suffering, as the Buddha repeatedly taught.

As long as we strive to become something, as long as we continue climbing, we perpetuate the cycle of arising and passing away—saṃsāra itself.

As long as we believe that liberation awaits us at the end of striving, we remain caught in the conditioning of a mind that is always searching elsewhere, always on its way, yet never fully present here and now.

The ladder is more than a symbol of personal ambition. More broadly, it represents every structure born of the desire to become: temples and monasteries, rituals and prescriptions, schools and traditions, lineages that formalise the path into successive stages of supposed spiritual progress.

What was once a simple gesture pointing towards the inexpressible gradually becomes an accumulation of rules, traditions, and dogmas. What was intended as a pointer becomes an end in itself.

As the Buddha taught, no structure, no doctrine, no authority can ever replace direct realization (paṭivedha; prativēdha)—seeing things as they truly are (yathābhūta-ñāṇadassana; yathābhūta-jñānadarśana).

In the silence in which the ladder disappears, the need for a temple that offers protection, a lineage that confers legitimacy, or a structure that promises certainty likewise falls away.

True liberation does not arise through the sanctification of forms, but through letting them go. It arises through the profound wisdom (paññā; prajñā) that no structure can contain what is formless; that no ladder can reach the boundless openness of the Unconditioned (asaṅkhata; asaṃskṛta).

The realization that no ladder is needed is the awakening to emptiness—suññatā (śūnyatā), the open ground of being.

There is nothing to attain. There is nothing to hold on to. Everything we seek is already present the moment craving comes to an end. What becomes evident when striving—when the ladder itself—falls away is silence: a quiet presence that neither strives, nor grasps, nor seeks to become. Simply this present moment.

This realization does not require an ascent, but a letting go—a relinquishment of every notion of height and depth, gain and loss, becoming and non-becoming. It calls for a radical simplicity: a return to what has always been here, the natural condition of being, untouched by ambition and unspoiled by illusion.

Within that silence, wisdom flowers of its own accord. Not as a triumph. Not as the highest rung of a ladder. But as the simple clarity that sees there was never any ladder to climb.

When striving for results comes to an end, the groundless freedom of simple being reveals itself. Then the masks fall away...

What then remains is reality itself.

Awakening is not an act of becoming (bhava), nor an achievement that a yogi can claim as his own. It is the quiet and simple realization that there is no enduring self—only impermanent processes arising and passing away, without an owner, without a centre, without an "I."

The search for liberation is often driven by a deeply felt longing: the desire to become something, to be freed from suffering, to bring an end to the fundamental unsatisfactoriness of existence. Yet even this longing, however sincere, subtly presupposes a fixed identity—an "I" that must travel from here to there, from bondage to freedom.

As insight matures, this image gradually dissolves. Not through abrupt disappearance, but through the increasing transparency of something that never truly

existed. The seeker discovers that what was sought can never be found through seeking. What remains is reality in its naked simplicity—not as a concept, not as a thought, but as direct experience.

No permanent essence can be found in body or mind; no unchanging centre can be identified as "I."

What we encounter are only phenomena arising and passing away: feelings, thoughts, bodily sensations, perceptions, mental formations, and consciousness. Like clouds drifting across the sky, they pass by—ungraspable, without ownership, without permanence.

Amidst this continuous arising and passing away, a simple realization dawns:

• *Etaṃ mama, eso 'ham asmi, eso me attā. — This is not mine. This I am not. This is not my self.* ♣⁴⁸

This insight is not the product of thought or reasoning, but of clear seeing—a non-contracting awareness that observes the stream of experience without identifying with it.⁴⁹

Clear seeing is neither analysis nor explanation, nor is it detached observation. It is an open, non-judging awareness that experiences without interference, without grasping, without rejecting. Within this quiet attentiveness, the habitual tendency to regard experience as "mine" or "myself" falls away. What is revealed is pure knowing—without centre, without boundary.

Thus the simplicity that has always been present reveals itself. What remains is not a new identity, nor some exalted state of being, but reality itself—untouched by striving, by craving, or by aversion.

Within this silence every notion of possession falls away, together with every fixation upon becoming or attaining.

There remains only the clear seeing of impermanence (*anicca*; *anitya*), unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha*; *duḥkha*), and not-self (*anattā*; *anātman*). Herein lies a liberation that neither adds nor takes away.⁵⁰ Liberation (*vimutti*; *mokṣa*) is not the result of effort, but of letting go—of striving, of clinging, and of every conceptual and metaphysical construction.

The pages that follow are offered in that same spirit: not as something to be believed, but as an invitation to look carefully, to see directly, and to discover for oneself what becomes visible when the mind grows quiet.

My sincere thanks go to my spiritual friend and *kalyāṇamitta*, Jan Dewitte, whose thoughtful editorial feedback, careful reading, and numerous valuable suggestions greatly enriched the original Dutch manuscript on which this English edition is based. I remain deeply grateful for his friendship, insight, and generosity throughout the development of this work.



PART I - PREPARATORY CLARITY

The sixteen vipassanā-ñāṇas may be understood as unfolding in three broad phases: Preparatory Clarity, The Unfolding of Reality, and The Breakthrough to the Unconditioned.

Preparatory Clarity lays the foundations upon which insight gradually matures.

The first three vipassanā-ñāṇas belong to this phase:

Nāmarūpa-pariccheda-ñāṇa (nāmarūpa-pariccheda-jñāna)—the clear discernment between body (rūpa; id.) and mind (nāma; id.). Here the yogi first sees that experience is not an indivisible "self", but a dynamic process of bodily and mental phenomena. This marks the beginning of insight into not-self (anattā; anātman), though not yet its complete realization.

Paccaya-pariggaha-ñāṇa (paccaya-pariggaha-jñāna)—insight into conditionality (paṭicca-samuppāda; pratītya-samutpāda). The practitioner sees how body and mind continually condition one another. Sensations, feelings, thoughts, craving, and aversion are understood as parts of an intricate web of inner and outer conditions.

Sammasana-ñāṇa (saṃmāśana-jñāna)—the systematic contemplation of all phenomena in the light of the three characteristics (tilakkhaṇa; trilakṣaṇa): impermanence (anicca; anitya), unsatisfactoriness (dukkha; duḥkha), and not-self (anattā; anātman). The practitioner carefully observes how these characteristics reveal themselves throughout the whole field of experience.

—Here seeing begins:
not by grasping,
but by letting go.
Not by changing,
but by looking.

What appears is simply seen.
What passes away is not held.—

Every genuine path begins, not with a great achievement or a triumphant decision, but with a quiet moment of clarity. Again and again, the Buddha points to the same simple movement: right view (*sammā-diṭṭhi*; *samyag-drṣṭi*) begins with a subtle inward shift rather than with dramatic transformation. Wise attention (*yoniso manasikāra*; *yoniso manaskāra*) likewise arises gently, without force or struggle.

TURNING INWARD

The mind of the yogi gradually turns inward.
Not to grasp (*gāha*; *grāha*),⁵¹
but to see (*vipassanā*; *vipaśyanā*).⁵²

Turning away from external objects (*bāhira*; *bāhya*),⁵³
it gently inclines inward (*ajjhata*; *adhyātma*),⁵⁴ allowing insight to mature naturally.

Within the Theravāda tradition, this inward turning is cultivated through inward mindfulness (*ajjhantikā sati*; *ādhyātmikī smṛti*)⁵⁵ and an inwardly established focus (*ajjhata-nimitta*; *ādhyātmika nimitta*).⁵⁶

—What turns inward seeks nothing.
What becomes still finds nothing.
And precisely there,
insight flowers without seeking.—

The movement inward is not an attempt to acquire something new, but the gradual relinquishment (vossagga; visarga) of all that is unnecessary.

Insight begins, not with doing, but with letting go. ⁵⁷

Throughout the Pāli Canon, vossagga is intimately associated with the fading of craving (taṇhā; tṛṣṇā) and the realisation of liberation (vimutti; mokṣa).

At the beginning of the path, the ground is prepared—not through effort or determination, but through simplicity. ⁵⁸ Conduct becomes purified. The mind grows quiet. ⁵⁹ Attention becomes gentle and clear.

Only within such simplicity can insight take root. ⁶⁰

—The simplicity of silence:
no striving,
no haste.
Only clear knowing.
Only the open space
in which insight ripens.—

What follows are the first preparations: the purification of conduct (sīla; id.), the calming of the mind (samādhī; id.), and the establishment of the conditions in which wisdom (paññā; prajñā) can naturally mature.

Without this preparation, the path remains hidden. Where simplicity prevails, and silence deepens, insight begins to flower.



CHAPTER 1 - THE 16 NĀṆAS: A MAP, NOT A ROUTE

A misunderstanding easily arises whenever we speak of stages, phases, or successive insights.⁶¹ It is tempting to imagine the path to liberation as a route: a straight line leading from a clear beginning to a clearly defined destination, carefully marked out and patiently followed. As though the mind—living, fluid, and ever changing—could be reduced to a fixed itinerary across stable ground.⁶²

The sixteen vipassanā-nāṇas (vipaśyanā-jñāna) are nothing of the kind. They are not directions to be followed step by step, like a traveller obeying signposts along a road. They are a map—but a map of a living landscape: one that continually changes, shifts with the light, and breathes with the one who looks.⁶³

The ancient masters did not construct a rigid system. Nor did they devise a programme through which every practitioner was expected to pass.

They simply listened to the stream of experience as it repeatedly unfolded in those who walked the path.⁶⁴

Again and again, they saw insight mature, silence deepen, old attachments fall away, and the mind gradually open towards an unbidden liberation.

The sixteen stages are descriptions of that unfolding. Not dogmas. Not immutable laws. Not prescriptions.

They reflect the natural maturation of insight, just as a river finds its own course without anyone drawing its bends.⁶⁵

—What grows in silence has no direction.
It opens, not towards a goal,
but towards the end of seeking.—

Every stage marks a further maturation of insight—a quiet deepening of seeing. At times these stages flow naturally into one another. At other times they recur, linger, or seem to disappear altogether, only to ripen silently until the conditions are right.

For this reason, we must proceed with care.

The moment we regard the sixteen stages as a ladder to be climbed, we misunderstand their very nature.

Insight does not grow through climbing, but through ripening. Not through conquest, but through letting go. Not through striving, but through relinquishing every impulse to strive—until the mind comes to rest in desirelessness (*appaṇihita-ceto-vimutti*; *appaṇihita-citta-vimutti*).⁶⁶

The map of the *vipassanā-ñāṇas* is intended as a gentle companion. A mirror in which the yogi may recognise where the process has brought him, without ever mistaking the reflection for the reality itself.

Sometimes the practitioner passes swiftly from one stage to the next. Sometimes a single stage remains present for a long time. Sometimes nothing appears to happen at all, while beneath the surface insight quietly continues to mature. Always the process remains open, free from compulsion, and illuminated by increasing clarity.

It is important to understand that these stages are not achievements. They are not rewards for diligent practice, nor signs of spiritual progress in the ordinary sense of the word. They simply reflect the gradual process of letting go—the quiet flowering of insight as the mind opens more fully to reality.

When the yogi's mind becomes clear and sees things as they truly are—impermanent (*anicca*; *anitya*), unsatisfactory (*dukkha*; *duḥkha*), and without an enduring self (*anattā*; *anātman*)—insight unfolds without being sought. Just as a flower does not think about opening its petals, but simply blossoms when warmed by the sun.

So insight matures. Without force. Without haste. Simply through being still, being present, and allowing the natural maturation of wisdom.

The sixteen stages are nothing other than this. Not a goal to be attained. Not a ladder to be climbed. But a living landscape that breathes with the one who sees. An invitation to look. To listen. And to trust, gently, the current that unfolds of its own accord.

The process of insight (*vipassanā*; *vipaśyanā*) does not unfold in a straight line, but as a gentle flowering, like a blossom opening in the morning light.

The ancient texts describe sixteen stages, not as a path that must be followed, but as movements of maturation that quietly unfold when the mind becomes clear and receptive.

In broad outline, they may be understood as follows:

1. The Clear Discernment of Mind and Body Nāmarūpa-pariccheda-ñāṇa

This first, simple insight—the discernment of nāma and rūpa—marks the first gentle crack in the familiar illusion of self.

The deeply conditioned conviction, "I am this body," "I am this mind," begins to loosen.

Not through struggle. Not through force. Simply through seeing clearly. Simply through being fully present with what is, without adding anything to it.

Through seeing.

In the early texts, this first insight is often regarded as the beginning of the dissolution of the illusion of a permanent self (attā; ātman): the first fracture in the belief that there is an enduring "I".

2. Insight into Cause and Condition Paccaya-pariggaha-ñāṇa

The practitioner begins to discern the intricate web of conditions that sustains experience. No feeling, no thought, no perception arises independently. Everything depends upon conditions (paṭicca-samuppāda; pratītya-samutpāda).

Nothing exists in isolation. Whatever appears does so because supporting conditions are present; whatever ceases does so when those conditions fall away.

3. Contemplation of the Three Characteristics Sammasana-ñāṇa

The systematic contemplation of the three characteristics (*tilakkhaṇa*; *trilakṣaṇa*) as they reveal themselves throughout experience:

impermanence (*anicca*; *anitya*),
unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha*; *duḥkha*),
and not-self (*anattā*; *anātman*).

These are not doctrines to be believed, but realities to be seen directly. Again and again, careful observation confirms their presence in everything that arises and passes away.

4. Insight into Arising and Passing Away **Udayabbaya-ñāṇa**

The practitioner begins to perceive the continuous arising and passing away of all conditioned phenomena: thoughts, feelings, sensations, perceptions. Each of them appears, abides briefly, and disappears.

Impermanence is no longer understood merely as an idea, but becomes vividly apparent in immediate experience.

5. Insight into Dissolution **Bhaṅga-ñāṇa**

As insight deepens, dissolution gradually becomes the dominant experience. Phenomena no longer appear as stable or enduring, but as a continuous process of disintegration.

Not as an abstract understanding, but as immediate experience. Everything that arises is already passing away.

6. Insight into Fearfulness

Bhaya-ñāṇa

As impermanence is seen ever more clearly, the practitioner begins to recognise the insecurity of everything that is conditioned.

What once appeared solid and dependable is revealed as fragile and transient.

The deepest attachment is gently exposed: the longing to remain, to possess, to become.

7. Insight into the Danger of Clinging

Ādīnava-ñāṇa

As insight continues to mature, what first appeared as uncertainty is recognised more deeply. Whatever is grasped carries within it the seed of dissatisfaction.

The danger lies not in the world itself, but in clinging to what cannot endure.

8. Insight into Disenchantment

Nibbidā-ñāṇa

As the danger of clinging becomes fully apparent, another quiet transformation takes place.

What once attracted the mind gradually loses its fascination. What was once pursued no longer calls it forward.

Not through aversion. Not through disappointment.
But through a deep and irreversible understanding:
nothing conditioned can offer lasting fulfilment.

9. The Desire for Liberation **Muñcitukamyatā-nāṇa**

When disenchantment has matured, a different longing quietly emerges.

No longer the search for pleasure. No longer the pursuit of becoming. Not the desire to become something else, but the longing to be free from everything that binds. Only the quiet aspiration for liberation.

10. Insight through Reflective Contemplation **Paṭisaṅkhā-nāṇa**

As the longing for liberation matures, the practitioner turns inward with renewed clarity.

No longer driven by seeking or becoming, the mind quietly investigates: What still binds? What remains to be relinquished?

Insight becomes increasingly subtle, revealing even the finest traces of attachment.

11. Equanimity **Saṅkhārupekkhā-nāṇa**

As the last traces of clinging begin to dissolve, a profound equanimity emerges. Nothing any longer needs to be resisted. Nothing needs to be held.

Phenomena are simply known as they arise and pass away. Without preference. Without aversion. Without interference.

The mind rests in effortless balance, allowing everything to unfold according to its own nature.

12. Conformity Knowledge

Anuloma-ñāṇa

When equanimity has become complete, an almost imperceptible shift takes place. Even the subtlest inclination to grasp is recognised and relinquished.

The mind comes into complete harmony with the Dhamma. Nothing is added. Nothing is resisted. Reality is allowed to reveal itself exactly as it is.

13. Change-of-Lineage Knowledge

Gotrabhū-ñāṇa

This marks the great turning. The mind no longer inclines towards what is conditioned and subject to arising and passing away. Quietly, irreversibly, it turns towards the Unconditioned.

14. Path Knowledge

Magga-ñāṇa

Then comes the silent breakthrough. Not gradually, but in a single timeless moment. Without mediation. Without becoming. The truth is directly realised, and liberation dawns.

15. Fruition Knowledge

Phala-ñāṇa

Following the breakthrough of the Path, nothing remains that can bind the mind.

This is not something acquired, nor something possessed. It is simply the natural fruit of the ending of craving, aversion, and delusion.

What remains is peace.

16. Reviewing Knowledge **Paccavekkhaṇa-ñāṇa**

Finally, there is quiet reflection.

Not the reflection of someone who has attained something, but the clear recognition of what has fallen away.

The path is seen.

The fetters that have been abandoned are seen.

The freedom that remains is seen.

Whoever no longer needs to possess anything, no longer needs to hold on. And whatever is no longer held is free.

The sixteen vipassanā-ñāṇas are neither a prescribed path nor a measure of spiritual achievement.

They unfold as conditions mature—

sometimes quietly,

sometimes with great intensity,

sometimes almost unnoticed.

They are not rungs on a ladder, but traces left by the gradual unfolding of insight.

Each stage reveals, with increasing clarity, how all conditioned phenomena arise, change, and cease, and how the tendency to cling gradually falls away.

The sixteen vipassanā-nāṇas (vipaśyanā-jñāna) describe this natural process of inner maturation. They trace the progressive deepening of insight into impermanence (anicca; anitya), unsatisfactoriness (dukkha; duḥkha), and not-self (anattā; anātman).

They are not teachings to be mastered, but movements of understanding to be recognised.

Be content simply to remain with them.
There is nothing to grasp.
Nothing to achieve.

Often it is the quietest processes that mature most deeply. These stages are not an end, but gentle transitions within an open and living process.

To illuminate this inner journey more clearly, the tradition often speaks of three complementary aspects of the Dhamma. They do not constitute a fixed system, but offer a simple way of describing the natural maturation of insight: pariyatti, paṭipatti, and paṭivedha.

The Dhamma is not a system. Not an ideology. Not a doctrine. It is a living stream. It is a process of unfolding that quietly invites us to awaken.

Pariyatti, paṭipatti, and paṭivedha describe the natural movement of this inner journey: understanding, practice, direct realisation.

Yet these three are not merely successive stages. They form a living cycle in which each continually nourishes and deepens the others.

After a breakthrough in practice (paṭipatti), a meditator often returns to the teachings (pariyatti) with fresh understanding. That deeper understanding, in turn, ripens into further realization (paṭivedha). And every realization transforms both one's understanding of the Dhamma and one's way of practising it.

Thus, pariyatti, paṭipatti, and paṭivedha do not form a rigid sequence, but a living interplay that continues to unfold throughout the path.

Pariyatti — Hearing & Understanding the Dhamma

Everything begins with listening. With reading the words of the Buddha carefully and reflecting upon them.

Pariyatti is the study and understanding of the Dhamma (dhamma-savana; dharma-śravaṇa).⁶⁷

It is the gradual familiarisation with the Four Noble Truths, the Noble Eightfold Path, impermanence (anicca; anitya), unsatisfactoriness (dukkha; duḥkha), not-self (anattā; anātman), and dependent arising (paṭicca-samuppāda; pratītya-samutpāda).

Yet pariyatti is more than the accumulation of knowledge. It is a first recognition. A quiet resonance. Something within the teachings touches something already known, though perhaps never before clearly seen.

From that recognition, confidence (*saddhā*; *śraddhā*) naturally begins to grow: not blind belief, but the quiet trust that the path is worth walking, that liberation is possible, and that the Dhamma can be known directly.

You sit down.

You open a sutta.

A single sentence reaches you more deeply than all the pages that came before: • *Birth is dukkha. Ageing is dukkha. Death is dukkha.* • ⁶⁸

And suddenly you understand.

This is about me.

About this body.

This mind.

This life.

—In that moment,
something quietly
recognises the truth:
This is Dhamma.
This is true.—

Paṭipatti — The Practice of the Dhamma

Understanding alone is not enough. Just as the taste of honey cannot be known from a description, so the truth of the Dhamma cannot be realized through concepts alone. It must be practised. It must be lived.

Paṭipatti is the practice of the Dhamma: in stillness, in ethical conduct, and in mindful presence (*sati*; *smṛti*). It is the integration of insight into the fabric of everyday life.

When irritation arises during a conversation. When desire begins to burn. When the heart closes in aversion.

Then paṭipatti is the choice to remain present. To look. To feel. Not to grasp. Not to reject. It is standing in the rain without seeking shelter—open, feeling, without resistance.

It is coming home to the breath. To the present moment. To the simplicity of what is.

Slowly, the understanding born of pariyatti takes root in experience itself. Wisdom begins to live in the flesh and blood of the practitioner.

—When anger arises,
can I simply be aware of it?
Without suppressing it,
without becoming lost in it?
Can I remain present—
breathing, feeling—
at the heart of what is difficult?—

Paṭivedha — Direct Realization

There comes a moment when insight is no longer conceptual. When things are seen as they truly are: impermanent, unsatisfactory, and without self.

Not because you think so, but because you see it, because you feel it.

Pain in the back arises and passes away. Thoughts of resistance dissolve. The breath arises and passes away without your intervention.

There is no "I" that breathes.

No "I" that governs feelings or thoughts.

You see clearly: everything simply happens. Nothing belongs to you.

As the Buddha says in the Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta: ⁶⁹

• *N'etaṃ mama, n'eso'ham asmi, na me so attā. —
This is not mine. This I am not. This is not my self.* •

Paṭivedha is this transparency. A clarity in which the heart no longer longs for anything. Where insight and liberation become one.

Liberation does not arise from abiding in an exalted or formless state, however subtle it may be. It arises when the mind sees clearly—what arises, what passes away—without desire, without attachment.

Formlessness ⁷⁰ may present itself, but in itself it is not a sign of realization. It is seeing through that liberates, not disappearing. For even the most silent or spacious awareness is impermanent. It may resemble freedom, but it becomes truly liberating only when this, too, is seen through and let go.

The Buddha did not teach a philosophy. He pointed to direct realization. Pariyatti, paṭipatti, and paṭivedha are therefore not three separate paths, but three aspects of one living process.

First we hear the Dhamma.

Then we practise it.

Finally, we realize it for ourselves.

Yet these three continually nourish one another. A deeper realization transforms our understanding of the teachings. A clearer understanding deepens our practice. And practice, in turn, opens the way to ever deeper realization. Like the inhalation and exhalation of a single breath, they belong together.

The Buddha called this the Unborn (ajāta; id.), ⁷¹ the Deathless (amata; amṛta). ⁷²

—Could it be that what I thought I was
was only a thought?
What remains when I hold on
to nothing?—

Entering the Stream

Taking refuge (saraṇa; śaraṇa) ⁷³ is not an escape. It is not a flight from life. It is to anchor oneself in the process of arising and passing away.

As the Buddha taught: ⁷⁴

• *Yo paṭiccasamuppādaṃ passati so dhammaṃ passati; yo dhammaṃ passati so paṭiccasamuppādaṃ passati. — Whoever sees dependent arising sees the Dhamma; whoever sees the Dhamma sees dependent arising.* •

The practitioner becomes a dhammanuvatti: ⁷⁵ one who not only understands the Dhamma, but lives in accordance with it, and ultimately becomes one with its unfolding.

First, the Dhamma is understood (pariyatti). Then it is practised (paṭipatti). Finally, it is directly realized

(paṭivedha). From this lived understanding, a quiet invitation arises.

An Invitation

Allow yourself a little silence. Sit down where nothing calls for your attention. Open the suttas of the Pāli Canon with care. Let the words of the Buddha pass gently through your hands like the beads of a mala. Reflect. Allow them to unfold. Let them become part of you.

Allow wisdom (paññā; prajñā) and compassion (karuṇā; id.) to settle quietly in your heart. Let birth and death gradually lose their hold. Let go. Enter the stream.

Wholeheartedly.
Wake up.
Awaken.



CHAPTER 2 - PREPARING THE WAY

There is no quick path to insight. No shortcut. In the Pāli Canon, wisdom (*paññā*; *prajñā*) is never presented as something that arises abruptly, but as something that gradually ripens—a process that unfolds when the necessary conditions are present.

Just as the morning mist does not disappear because we try to blow it away, but quietly dissolves when touched by the sun, so wisdom opens step by step—not through willpower, but through creating the conditions in which clarity can arise. Like a lotus unfolding in the morning light: without haste, without force. Like water becoming clear when it is no longer disturbed, revealing its own transparency.

In the Buddha's teaching, this preparation is gathered into three pillars: ethical integrity, concentration, and wisdom—*sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā*.

These three constitute the culmination of the Noble Eightfold Path. While the first five factors prepare the ground, these final three allow the heart to ripen.

They cannot be understood separately. They are intertwined like the roots, trunk, and branches of a single tree: without strong roots there can be no trunk; without a stable trunk, no branches.

In the *Sāmaññaphala Sutta*, ⁷⁶ the Buddha describes the fruits of the monastic life as a quiet process of maturation:

- the cultivation of ethical integrity (*sīla*; *śīla*),
- the deepening of concentration (*samādhi*; *id.*),

- the arising of insight (*vipassanā*; *vipaśyanā*),
- the realization of the four *jhānas* (*jhāna*; *dhyāna*)
- and ultimately, Awakening to liberation (*vimutti*; *mokṣa*).

Within this gradual unfolding, a path reveals itself that is never forced, but naturally discloses itself whenever the right conditions are present.

Sīla — The Ground of Ethical Integrity

Sīla is the strength of ethical conduct. Not moral compulsion, but a natural inclination towards non-harming (*ahiṃsā*; *id.*), ⁷⁷ towards respect, simplicity, and care.

It is the gentle ground in which the mind can come to rest, free from the disturbance that arises when moral conscience (*hiri*; *hrī*) and moral caution (*ottappa*; *apatrāpya*) ⁷⁸—the inner qualities that protect the heart from carelessness and ethical decline—are absent.

Whoever lives simply, refrains from lying, stealing, harming, or deceiving, and abandons coarse desire and ill will, gradually creates within themselves the space in which silence can flourish. ⁷⁹

Ethical integrity is not something we observe because we are commanded to do so. It is the natural expression of a mind that sees the interconnectedness of all things, and through that seeing becomes gentle, careful, and compassionate.

In other words, the Buddha taught *sīla* as the natural expression of insight into dependent arising (*paṭicca-*

samuppāda; pratītyasamutpāda), ⁸⁰ not as something to be obeyed out of submission to external rules.

Sīla is like fertile soil in which concentration (samādhi; id.) can take root. Without sīla, meditation remains superficial. But whoever lives ethically lives lightly. And a light mind—free from guilt, remorse, attachment, and fear—naturally becomes receptive.

Samādhi — Collected Attention

When the ground of sīla is firm and fertile, the mind can settle without distraction or confusion.

Samādhi literally means collectedness—a mind free from the Five Hindrances (pañca nīvaraṇāni; id.): sensual desire (kāmacchanda; id.), ill will (vyāpāda; id.), sloth and torpor (thīna-middha; styāna-middha), restlessness and remorse (uddhacca-kukkucca; audhatya-kaukrtya), and doubt (vicikicchā; vicikitsā).

In the Pāli Canon, samādhi is often associated with the four jhānas—meditative absorptions marked by profound tranquillity and deep collectedness. They provide the fertile ground in which clear insight may arise. ⁸¹

The mind is no longer carried away by every desire, every fear, every passing thought. It returns to a quiet, lucid stability.

This concentration is effortless and unforced. It is the natural collectedness that appears when craving and aversion fall silent.

Just as water becomes clear when the wind subsides, so the mind becomes clear when the ripples of desire and resistance come to rest.

Within this collected attention, perception becomes simple and direct. The breath is known exactly as it is. Sounds come and go without commentary. Thoughts arise and pass away like clouds drifting across an empty sky.

Samādhi quietens the mind through suppression (vikkhambhana; vikṣepapraśamana): ⁸² a temporary calming of craving and aversion. Only through the clarity of insight (vipassanā; vipaśyanā), however, does lasting relinquishment (pahāna; prāhaṇa) ⁸³ become possible.

Concentration is therefore not an end in itself. It simply prepares the field, making it quiet and receptive for liberating insight.

Paññā — The Unfolding of Wisdom

Wisdom—paññā (Skt. prajñā)—is not knowledge that is added. It is the unfolding of an understanding that has always been present, yet was concealed beneath the veil of ignorance and confusion.

When the mind becomes quiet and attention clear, the impermanence of all things reveals itself.

Whatever comes, passes away. Whatever arises, ceases (udayabbaya; udayavyaya). ⁸⁴ What is loved changes. What is hated also passes away. There is no enduring centre. No lasting core.

Only a continuous stream of phenomena (*santati; saṃtati*): ⁸⁵ flowing, ever changing, yet empty of any permanent essence.

This seeing is not reasoning. It is direct knowing—a seeing free from the interference of thought. ⁸⁶

Just as the eye does not have to think in order to see, wisdom does not have to think in order to know. It sees directly, not conceptually.

The *vipassanā-ñāṇas* (*vipaśyanā-jñāna*)—the stages of ripening insight—do not arise through ambition or willpower (*chanda; id.*). ⁸⁷

They arise where there is stillness. Where there is clarity. Where the natural process of seeing quietly unfolds.

The Conditions for Insight

Insight is like fire. It can only be kindled when the necessary conditions are present: dry wood, air, and a spark. ⁸⁸ In the same way, insight unfolds only when ethical integrity forms the foundation, concentration provides stillness, and the mind becomes receptive. ⁸⁹

This process cannot be hurried. There is no clever technique. No secret method. Only the patient work of letting go. Only the quiet labour of purifying conduct (*sīla; id.*), calming the mind (*saṃādhi; id.*), and opening awareness (*sati; smṛti*).

Insight cannot be forced into bloom. It does not flower through the desire for results, but through

spaciousness—through releasing tension and expectation.

—Where there is space,
something not made can appear.
Where expectation falls away,
clarity is born.—

For this reason, the path of insight does not begin with insight itself. It begins with preparation. With a simple, quiet, and lucid way of living. With ethical integrity that becomes effortless. With attention that is gentle and open. With a mind that, freed from its old habits, gradually learns to rest in what is.

Just as the ground is first cleared of weeds, then nourished, before it is ready to receive the seed—which is afterwards gently watered by the rain and warmed by the soft light of the sun—so the yogi's inner field becomes receptive when ethical integrity, concentration, and mindful awareness have quietly matured. Without this preparation, the seed of insight cannot germinate, however sincere one's intention may be.

Within that stillness, that simplicity, that silence, something grows that cannot be manufactured: insight—the fragrance of liberation. ⁹⁰



CHAPTER 3 - NĀMARŪPA-PARICCHEDA-ÑĀṆA

Nāmarūpa-pariccheda-ñāṇa (nāmarūpa-pariccheda-jñāṇa) ⁹¹ may be translated as "the clear discernment of body and mind."

Before Insight: The Undivided Field of Experience

At the beginning, everything appears as one. Body, feeling, and thought flow together as a single, uninterrupted stream—an apparently seamless whole in which no distinctions are yet visible. The practitioner lives within this immediacy, immersed in a continuous unfolding of impressions and reactions, without discernment, without transparency. ⁹²

Yet within the stillness of clear awareness (sampa-jāñña; samprajanya), ⁹³ something begins to change. What was once experienced as an indivisible whole gradually becomes transparent.

This is a bodily sensation.
That is a mental event.

What had seemed to be one continuous experience now reveals itself as the interplay of two distinct yet inseparable domains: body (rūpa) and mind (nāma).

Seeing Through Nāmarūpa-pariccheda-Ñāṇa

This insight is not a conceptual construction. It is the direct realization of reality as it truly is (yathābhūta-ñāṇadassana; yathābhūta-jñānadarśana), free from conceptual overlay. ⁹⁴

—When the mind grows still and attention

becomes rooted in the present moment,
reality begins to reveal itself differently.

What once appeared as one
quietly separates.

A sensation arises—

warmth, tension, movement—

And with it comes the simple recognition:

This sensation is not "I".

It is simply something appearing.—

The First Fracture in the Sense of Self

What once appeared indivisible now becomes clearly discernible. The insight of nāmarūpa-pariccheda-āñā quietly penetrates the deeply rooted conviction that body and mind together constitute a single, enduring self.

Until this insight arises, it seems entirely natural to experience oneself as an individual "I" that feels, thinks, moves, and perceives—a self-evident identity that is seldom questioned.

Everything appears as one continuous movement:

"I feel pain."

"I am happy."

"I am walking."

"I choose."

Yet every one of these experiences is permeated by identification.

With nāmarūpa-pariccheda-āñā, it becomes clear for the first time that what had been taken as "I" is, in reality, nothing more than two interdependent yet

distinct domains: the bodily (rūpa) and the mental (nāma)—feeling, perceiving, and directing attention.

This is not an idea. It is not a conclusion. It is an immediate and living recognition.

A hand moves—that is body.

The intention to move—that is mind.

A sensation arises in the chest—that is body.

The knowing of that sensation—that is mind.

What once seemed inseparable now reveals a subtle rhythm: distinct, yet inseparably intertwined.

As this early stage of insight unfolds, experience becomes increasingly transparent. The old habit of taking body and mind to be a fixed "I" begins to loosen.

What now appears is no longer an undifferentiated entanglement, but the clear discernment of nāma and rūpa, free from the veil of identification.

When the mind is not established in clarity, experience remains obscured by habit, conceptual thinking, and the persistent feeling of an "I" that somehow holds everything together. But here, in the light of clear awareness, it becomes visible how experience unfolds without a centre, without possession, without a permanent core.

—Then intention appears.

A choice.

Yet that, too, is observed.

Not self.

Simply another movement,
arising and passing away.

And quietly, without words,
understanding begins to dawn:
what I have taken myself to be
is no thing,
no owner,
no centre. —

Not Analysis, but Simple Seeing

To discern nāma and rūpa is not to engage in analysis. It is not a theoretical exercise in which the practitioner arrives at understanding through reasoning. It is immediate knowing—simple, uncontrived, and still.

The breath flows—that is body.
Attention rests upon the breath—that is mind.

No words. No judgement. Only the quiet clarity of knowing: This is body. This is mind.

Just as one may watch the current of a river without being carried away by it, so the mind gradually learns to observe these two movements of experience—distinct, yet inseparably woven together, like wind and water.

And within that quiet seeing, something both simple and profound reveals itself. The unquestioned identification with the stream of experience begins to weaken. What the "I" believed itself to be—this thought, this sensation, this inner voice—is no longer experienced as a single, unified whole.

No enduring core. Only movement. Only arising and passing away.

When the distinction between nāma and rūpa is seen with clarity, insight into not-self (anattā; anātman) arises naturally.

What had formerly been taken to be "I", "me", or "mine" is recognised as nothing more than the temporary coming together of bodily and mental processes, without an enduring essence. As Mettavihari often used to say: "You are only nāma and rūpa." ⁹⁵

—Yet there is no fear.
There is simplicity.
A quiet peace born of seeing.
As the waters of a pond
become still when the wind falls silent,
so the mind, too, grows transparent—
Ready to receive
what is true.—

The Simplicity of Not Knowing

Within this quiet clarity, insight is still delicate. The mind continues to reach out, wanting to name the experience, to understand it, to make it its own. Yet insight does not grow through knowing. Nor through defining. Nor through labelling. It grows through seeing. Through simple seeing.

When nothing is added, and nothing needs to be explained, a spaciousness opens in which reality is free to reveal itself.

The breath breathes.
The mind knows.
There is no "I" that breathes.
There is no "I" that knows.

Only breathing.

Only knowing.

Like rain and wind meeting—never becoming one,
never truly separate.



CHAPTER 4 - PACCAYA-PARIGGAHA-ÑĀṆA

The Conditions for Deep Insight

Two forms of purification provide the indispensable foundation for profound insight. The first is the purification of conduct (*sīla-visuddhi*; *śīla-viśuddhi*).⁹⁶ The second is the purification of mind (*citta-visuddhi*; *citta-viśuddhi*).⁹⁷

Ethical integrity is the ground upon which meditation rests. Collectedness (*samādhi*; *id.*) temporarily quietens the Five Hindrances (*pañca nīvaraṇāni*; *id.*), allowing the mind to become clear and receptive.

Only when these conditions are present does insight begin to deepen. Seeing becomes quieter, steadier, and more penetrating—just as stillness settles over a lake after the wind has fallen.

It is within that stillness that the next insight naturally unfolds.

Paccaya-pariggaha-ñāṇa (*paccaya-pariggaha-jñāna*)⁹⁸ is the insight into the conditional arising of phenomena—not as isolated or autonomous events, but as expressions of an intricate web of causes (*hetū*; *hetavaḥ*)⁹⁹ and conditions (*paccayā*; *pratyaṃyāḥ*).¹⁰⁰

This insight deepens the earlier discernment between *nāma* and *rūpa* by revealing their mutual conditionality. It is not merely an intellectual understanding, but a direct, lived recognition of the mutual arising and passing away of phenomena.

Once body and mind have been clearly distinguished, the mind becomes receptive to a deeper understanding. Nothing simply appears. Whatever arises bears within it the traces of what came before. No phenomenon stands alone. Nothing comes into being without conditions.

This insight—paccaya-pariggaha-ñāṇa—is the clear seeing of causes and conditions. The mind begins to see the web of relationships that sustains experience.

No feeling, no thought, no perception comes into being without the conditions that make it possible. Whatever arises does so in dependence upon conditions.

—The mind begins to feel like a field of relationships.
Feelings, moods, reactions—they are not mine,
but arise from a chain of conditions.
Sometimes ancient. Sometimes subtle.
Sometimes barely perceptible,
never without a cause.—

At this stage of insight it also becomes evident how body (rūpa) and mind (nāma) continually support one another.

Fatigue in the body affects the clarity of the mind; an intention arising in the mind gives rise to movement in the body.

What first appeared as two separate streams now reveals itself as a subtle dance of mutual dependence.

Nāma and rūpa are inseparably interwoven—not existing independently, but continually arising together through causes and conditions.

Awakening to Conditionality

We often live with the quiet assumption that things exist in themselves. That happiness, pain, love, and sorrow simply happen—or that we ourselves produce and control them. Yet when the mind becomes quiet and fully present, it becomes clear that every moment is a meeting place of causes and conditions.

A thought appears, supported by memory, mood, and impression. A feeling arises, awakened through contact, expectation, or desire.

—A thought appears. An image.
A feeling of unease.
And suddenly it becomes clear:
it does not arise by itself.
There was an impression,
a memory, an expectation.
And before that, something else.
Just as wind raises ripples upon water,
conditions give rise to the stream of experience.
Not randomly.
Not personally.
Only dependently.—

No experience exists independently. Every moment comes together like waves upon the ocean, carried by winds that reach farther than we can see.

Through this clear observation the mind begins to discern the profound relationship between feeling,

reaction, desire, and action. Whatever appears has arisen through conditions.

Nothing comes into being by itself. Nothing exists outside the web of conditionality. As this insight matures, the deeper uncertainty about life begins to fade.

What unfolds here is not yet Awakening, but a quiet and liberating opening: a firmer foundation upon which further insight may mature.

The first two insights—the discernment of *nāma* and *rūpa* and the seeing of their mutual conditionality—together provide the ground upon which later insight matures.

This Insight Is Simple, Yet Radical

There is no need to invoke magic, fate, divine will, some higher purpose, metaphysics, or supernatural power to explain why things happen as they do.

Whatever arises does so through causes. Whatever ceases does so when its supporting conditions fall away. Nothing more. Nothing less. Only the quiet working of dependent arising (*paṭicca-samuppāda*; *pratītya-samutpāda*).¹⁰¹

Whatever appears does so because the necessary conditions are present. When those conditions change, what appears changes with them.

Just as rain forms when moist air cools, just as a flower opens beneath the sun, so too joy and sorrow,

longing and peace arise—not by chance, but through the conditions that make them possible.

Again and again, the Buddha pointed to the conditioned nature of all phenomena: saṅkhata (saṃskṛta).

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There is a quiet order within the stream of experience. Not an order we control, but one that carries us. Within that understanding the world gradually loses its apparent randomness, and the mind its fear.

What happens does not arise in isolation or through an autonomous self, but within a web of conditions reaching farther than we can see.

The Gentle Breakthrough of Insight

When the mind begins to see this web of conditionality, something quietly relaxes. There is less clinging. Less resistance. As everything is seen to arise through conditions, the compulsion to possess, resist, or pursue begins to soften.

—There is nothing to hold on to. Nothing to control.

What appears, appears.

What disappears, disappears.

But in seeing the conditions,
the illusion of possession dissolves.

The world becomes lighter.

Less personal.

Less compelling.—

Thoughts become transparent. Feelings become lighter. There is less confusion, less pride, less remorse, less guilt. For the mind sees: this arises be-

cause of that, and that because of other conditions. There is no ultimate foundation. No absolute beginning. Only the quiet flow of causes and consequences, just as rain fills the rivers and wind bends the trees.

This first glimpse of conditionality provides a stable foundation for the further maturation of insight, supported by the purification of conduct (*sīla-visuddhi*; *sīla-viśuddhi*) and the purification of mind (*citta-visuddhi*; *citta-viśuddhi*).

Without that foundation, insight remains obscured by habit and ignorance.

This insight does not lead to apathy, but to freedom. What comes, comes. What goes, goes. Within that stream there is no "I" that must carry everything, no self that must control everything. There is only the rhythm of arising and passing away—simple, precise, and free.

The Wisdom of Seeing

Paccaya-pariggaha-ñāṇa teaches us to see. Not to grasp. Not to explain. But to see how things arise and pass away in dependence upon conditions. Just as a bird opens its wings to the wind—not to possess the sky, but to move effortlessly within it—so the mind learns to open itself to the web of causes in which it lives.

— No self carrying the world.
No world happening to me.
Only the rhythm of causes and conditions,
as rain fills the river,

as fire gives warmth.
In seeing that rhythm, the mind relaxes.
Effort becomes gentle.
Insight becomes clear.—

With that seeing, a first deep peace begins to grow.
Not resignation. Not surrender to fate. But clarity. The
quiet understanding that whatever appears has its
causes, and whatever disappears does so because
the conditions sustaining it have changed or ceased.

Nothing needs to be clung to (anupādāna; id.). ¹⁰³
Nothing needs to be rejected. Only clearly seen, in a
mind free from grasping (anurodha-paṭivirodha-
virahita; anurodha-pratipakṣa-vigata). ¹⁰⁴

Here, conditionality is not understood as a philosoph-
ical doctrine or an analysis of the twelve links of de-
pendent arising (paṭicca-samuppāda; pratītya-
samutpāda), but as the direct seeing of conditions as
they arise, function, and cease in immediate experi-
ence.

—Nothing arises by itself.
Nothing conditioned exists in isolation.
Whatever is seen has arisen.
And whatever has arisen can also cease.—



CHAPTER 5 - SAMMĀSANA-ÑĀṆA

Sammāsana-ñāṇa (saṃmārsāna-jñāna) ¹⁰⁵ marks a quiet yet decisive deepening of insight. Having discerned the distinction between mind and body, and having recognised that all phenomena arise in dependence upon causes and conditions, the practitioner now begins to contemplate experience more thoroughly.

The mind no longer rests with seeing *that* phenomena arise and pass away. It begins to investigate what every arising phenomenon reveals about its own nature.

What gradually becomes evident is simple, yet profound. Whatever appears bears three universal characteristics: impermanence (anicca; anitya), unsatisfactoriness (dukkha; duḥkha), and not-self (anattā; anātman).

These are not doctrines to be accepted or philosophical conclusions to be defended. They are discoveries, confirmed again and again through quiet and careful observation.

The Quiet Work of Contemplation

Insight rarely arrives as a dramatic breakthrough. More often it ripens almost unnoticed, through the patient rhythm of returning, again and again, to the simple act of looking.

The mind learns to remain with experience without interfering. Not to analyse. Not to explain. Simply to observe. Seeing gradually becomes clearer.

*—Like water falling again and again upon the same stone,
the rock slowly yields.
Not through force, but through constancy.
So too seeing deepens.
Nothing spectacular.
No great revelation.
Only the quiet clarity of what is,
revealing itself
to one who is willing
to keep looking. —*

In the earlier stages of insight meditation, phenomena are simply recognised as they arise. A sensation appears. A thought is noticed. A feeling comes into awareness. The practitioner learns to remain present without immediately becoming involved. With Sammāsana-ñāṇa, however, observation becomes more refined.

Every phenomenon that appears is quietly contemplated in the light of the three characteristics. Not as an intellectual exercise, but as a direct encounter with lived experience.

*—Joy arises—and passes away.
A thought appears—and dissolves.
A brief irritation.
The warmth of sunlight upon the skin.
A forgotten memory returning without invitation.
Each reveals the same quiet movement.
This does not remain.
This cannot be held.
This is not what I am. —*

The practitioner no longer asks what experience means. He looks at how experience unfolds.

Whenever something appears, its impermanent nature becomes visible. Its inability to provide lasting fulfilment becomes apparent. Its absence of ownership quietly reveals itself. Nothing is added. Nothing is taken away. Reality is allowed to speak for itself.

Vipassanā (*vipaśyanā*) is therefore not the analysis of experience.¹⁰⁶ It is a way of seeing so still and attentive that experience gradually discloses its own nature.

—The breath moves. The chest rises and falls.
A thought announces itself. Another follows.
Without trying to stop them, pursue them,
or understand them, the mind simply knows:
 This appears.
 This remains for a moment.
 This disappears.
 And within that seeing,
 something begins to grow quiet. —

Ordinarily we cling to what is pleasant and resist what is unpleasant. Yet careful observation slowly reveals the futility of both movements.

Every phenomenon completes itself without our assistance. Every experience follows its own course.

A thought arises—and fades.
Nothing has been lost.

An emotion changes.
Nothing needs to be repaired.

A bodily sensation disappears.
Nothing has failed.

Gradually the mind ceases arguing with reality. This is not resignation. It is understanding. Resignation still carries disappointment. Understanding carries peace. Letting go is no longer experienced as something that must be achieved. It becomes the natural consequence of seeing clearly.

Letting go, in this sense, means neither grasping nor resisting. It means making no attempt to interfere with the natural course of experience, but simply allowing each phenomenon to pass away in the same way it appeared—like a wave that quietly dissolves upon the shore.

In practice, this means recognising every experience as anicca, dukkha, and anattā. From that seeing, letting go follows naturally—not through control or deliberate effort, but through growing confidence in the lawful nature of things (sabhāva; svabhāva).¹⁰⁷

Everything follows its own lawful nature (dhammaniyāmatā; dharmaniyāmatā).¹⁰⁸ Phenomena arise when supporting conditions are present, and disappear when those conditions come to an end. The practitioner need not direct this process, control it, or explain it. It is enough simply to observe how one condition gives rise to another within the uninterrupted unfolding of dependent arising (paṭicca-samuppāda; pratītya-samutpāda).

—Everything follows its own nature.
As silence returns when sound has faded,
so every phenomenon completes itself.
In seeing this, confidence quietly appears.
Without grasping.
Without resistance.

*Without effort.
Then letting go is no longer an act.
It is understanding. —*

Impermanence (Anicca; Anitya)

Within the quiet continuity of contemplation, one characteristic gradually comes to the foreground. Not because the practitioner chooses it, but because it can no longer be overlooked.

Everything changes.

This is not an idea inherited from a tradition, nor a philosophical proposition to be defended. It is the simplest fact of direct observation.

The Buddha invited his disciples to verify this for themselves: *“Whatever is subject to arising is subject to cessation.”*

This is the simplest truth of experience.

Impermanence.

Anicca. Anicca. Anicca.

The Buddha does not ask us to believe it. He asks us to observe it.

Everything begins with seeing. Only afterwards is the Dhamma recognised.

To watch the ceaseless movement of arising and passing away. To look carefully. To look again. To recognise the universal law to which every conditioned phenomenon is subject—always and everywhere.

Change permeates everything. The young skin slowly ages. A familiar voice falls silent. A flower opens, blossoms, and withers. Joy arises and passes away. A thought appears and disappears. A dream takes shape before quietly dissolving. Everything changes. Everything is transformed. Nothing remains exactly as it was. Even what yesterday was experienced as "I"—an opinion, a feeling, a memory, a perception—has already become something different.

Every moment quietly confirms these words.

The breath enters.

The breath leaves.

A sensation appears within the body, changes almost immediately, and fades away.

A thought arrives with complete conviction, only to dissolve a moment later without leaving anything behind.

Joy appears.

Joy disappears.

Sadness follows.

It too comes to an end.

A memory unexpectedly returns, vivid for a brief instant, before disappearing once more into silence.

Again and again, experience reveals the same movement: arising, changing, passing away. Nothing remains exactly as it was. Nothing stands still. Nothing can be held in place.

The more carefully impermanence is observed, the more ordinary it becomes. It is no longer experienced as an interruption of life, but as the very rhythm through which life unfolds.

The young body grows older. The voice of someone we love gradually changes. A flower opens to the morning light and quietly withers. Dreams take shape. Dreams dissolve. The seasons turn without asking permission. Clouds gather. Rain falls. The sky clears.

Everything participates in the same movement.

Even what we habitually call *myself* cannot be found apart from this continual process.

The body changes from infancy to old age without ever becoming fixed.

Feelings arise according to conditions and disappear as those conditions change.

Perceptions shift.

Opinions evolve.

Mental formations continually arise and pass away.

Consciousness itself is never the same from one moment to the next.

The five aggregates (khandhā; skandhā) that we conventionally call a person are not a solid entity, but an unfolding process.

Form (rūpa; id.) changes.

Feeling (vedanā; id.) changes.

Perception (saññā; saṃjñā) changes.

Mental formations (saṅkhārā; saṃskārā) change.

Consciousness (viññāṇa; vijñāna) changes.

Nothing within them remains unchanged long enough to serve as a permanent foundation for identity.

The eye sees forms that disappear.

The ear hears sounds that fade into silence.
Fragrance vanishes.
Taste lingers briefly, then is gone.
The body receives sensations that continually transform.
The mind produces thoughts that appear and disappear like birds crossing an open sky.

Even our strongest emotions prove no different. Desire. Anger. Fear. Delight. None of them remains, however compelling they may seem while they are present.

*—How often have we clung
to a feeling
that was already fading?
How often have we grieved
for what
was never meant
to remain?
Rain falls.
Rain passes.
Yet we keep trying
to catch it
with hands
that were never made
to hold rain.—*

Much of our suffering arises, not because things change, but because we ask them not to.

We ask youth not to age.
Health not to fail.
Love not to change.
Life quietly refuses every one of these requests.
Not out of cruelty.
Simply because its nature is to change.

Seeing this does not diminish the beauty of life. It reveals it.

What is fleeting becomes precious precisely because it cannot be possessed.

The laughter of a child.
The warmth of another hand.
The fragrance of rain after a summer storm.
The silence before dawn.
Each is beautiful because each is passing.

Impermanence does not impoverish the world. It reveals its tenderness.

The Buddha therefore did not ask us merely to understand impermanence. He invited us to realise it directly. To see it within ourselves. To observe, with complete equanimity, the ceaseless arising and passing away of body and mind, without identifying with any of it.

—Thoughts arise.
They are known.
They disappear.
Feelings arise.
They are known.
They disappear.
The body changes.
It too is known.
Nothing needs to become different
from what it already is. —

As this understanding deepens, the heart begins to relax. There is less insistence. Less disappointment. Less fear.

Not because change has ceased, but because the demand that change should become permanence has quietly fallen away.

The practitioner no longer asks experience to remain. Each moment is allowed to complete itself in its own time. Nothing is hurried. Nothing is delayed. Nothing is resisted.

The mind gradually learns to move with the changing nature of things rather than against it.

Seeing becomes steadier. Clinging begins to lose its force. And with every moment of clear observation, confidence in direct experience quietly grows.

From this deepening understanding of impermanence, another insight naturally unfolds.

If everything continually changes, what can possibly provide lasting fulfilment?

Unsatisfactoriness (Dukkha; Duḥkha)

As contemplation of impermanence matures, a second characteristic quietly reveals itself: Whatever continually changes cannot provide lasting fulfilment.

This is the meaning of dukkha.

The word is often translated as *suffering*, yet its meaning is both broader and subtler. It points not only to pain or distress, but to the inherent instability of everything that depends upon conditions. Whatever arises can delight us for a time, comfort us for a

while, or seem to complete us for a fleeting moment. Yet because it cannot remain, it cannot finally satisfy.

Dukkha is therefore woven into the very fabric of conditioned existence. Even joy carries within itself the seed of its own ending.

This is not a pessimistic view of life. It is simply an honest one.

The Buddha did not teach that life is nothing but suffering. Nor did he ask us to withdraw from the beauty of the world. He invited us to look carefully enough to discover where suffering actually comes from.

Again and again, he returned to one simple theme:

• *Formerly, as now, I teach only dukkha and the ending of dukkha.* • ¹⁰⁹

Everything else serves this single purpose. Not speculation. Not metaphysics. Not philosophy. But the ending of suffering—here and now.

When this becomes the guiding question, observation acquires a new depth.

Pleasure appears. It changes.

Success arrives. It passes.

Health seems dependable—until illness quietly makes itself known.

Youth appears enduring—until age begins its gentle work.

Relationships blossom. They deepen. They change.
Sometimes they come to an end.

Nothing conditioned can provide the lasting certainty
for which the heart instinctively longs.

This truth becomes visible not only in life's great
events, but in its smallest moments.

The satisfaction of a good meal fades almost as soon
as it is finished.

A long-awaited holiday comes to an end.

The excitement of achievement quietly gives way to
the search for something new.

Even happiness cannot remain exactly as it is.

The mind begins to look elsewhere.

Again.

And again.

The movement is so familiar that it often passes un-
noticed. Yet it is precisely here that dukkha reveals
itself. Not only in pain. But in the quiet restlessness
that continually whispers: Perhaps something else
will finally satisfy.

Seen in this way, dukkha is not merely physical. Nor
merely emotional. It is existential.

It is present wherever lasting fulfilment is sought in
what cannot last. It is the uneasiness hidden beneath
success. The subtle tension within pleasure. The fear
concealed inside possession. The sorrow already
present within every farewell that has not yet arrived.

—Again and again
we hope that this time it will remain.
That this voice.
This embrace.
This happiness.
Will not leave.

Yet everything passes gently through our hands.
Even the most beautiful moment cannot be held.
Not because it is lacking. But because it is alive. —

For this reason the Buddha declared in his first discourse: ¹¹⁰

• *Birth is dukkha. Ageing is dukkha. Illness is dukkha. Death is dukkha. Sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair are dukkha. Association with what is unwelcome is dukkha. Separation from what is loved is dukkha. Not obtaining what one desires is dukkha. In brief, the five aggregates subject to clinging are dukkha.* •

These words are not intended to darken our view of existence. They illuminate it. They reveal where suffering actually begins. Not in experience itself. But in the mind's insistence that experience should be other than it is.

At first glance, it may seem that impermanence itself is the cause of suffering. Yet careful observation reveals something more subtle. Change is not what gives rise to dukkha. Rather, dukkha arises when the mind reaches for what cannot remain, resists what cannot be avoided, or seeks lasting security in what is by nature impermanent.

Impermanence simply reveals the way conditioned phenomena unfold. Suffering arises through craving (*taṇhā*; *ṭṭṇā*), clinging (*upādāna*; *id.*), and the tendency to grasp what cannot be held.

Again and again, careful observation reveals the same sequence.

Pleasant feeling arises.
The impulse to hold it appears.
Unpleasant feeling arises.
The impulse to resist it appears.

Between feeling and reaction there gradually opens a small but immeasurably precious space. Within that space, wisdom begins to replace habit.
Feeling is simply known as feeling.
Pleasure remains pleasure.
Pain remains pain.
Neither requires attachment.
Neither requires resistance.

As this understanding deepens, the burden carried by the heart begins to lighten. Not because life has become easier. Not because sorrow has disappeared. But because the struggle against reality has begun to come to an end.

The practitioner gradually sees that suffering does not arise merely because all conditioned things are impermanent. It arises because craving reaches for what cannot remain, resists what cannot be avoided, and seeks permanence where none can be found.

This is the quiet revolution that *Sammāsana-ñāṇa* prepares.

Meditation is no longer an attempt to produce pleasant states or escape unpleasant ones. It becomes an intimate investigation into the very mechanism through which suffering is born.

Again and again the mind sees:

Here is feeling.

Here is craving.

Here is clinging.

Here is becoming.

And seeing this, the chain begins to weaken.

The Buddha identified ignorance (avijjā; avidyā), craving (taṇhā; tṛṣṇā), and attachment (upādāna; id.) as the forces that perpetuate this cycle. They are not abstract concepts but movements that can be observed directly within one's own experience.

The more clearly they are seen, the less compelling they become.

—What if suffering is not a mistake,
but an invitation to look?
Not to change reality. Not to escape it.
But to understand it.
Quietly.
Openly.
Here.—

When wisdom (paññā; prajñā) begins to replace ignorance, suffering is no longer merely endured. It is understood. And whatever is fully understood begins, of its own accord, to lose its power.

From this understanding another question naturally arises. If nothing can rightly be possessed, then who is it that suffers? Who is the one we call “I”?

Not-Self (Anattā; Anātman)

As contemplation continues, a third characteristic gradually reveals itself. It is the most subtle of the three and, perhaps for that reason, the most frequently misunderstood.

Unlike impermanence and unsatisfactoriness, not-self cannot be grasped through reflection alone. It is not a philosophical position, nor a belief to be adopted. It reveals itself only through sustained observation, when the mind has become quiet enough to see without immediately interpreting what it sees.

Ordinarily, experience appears to revolve around a centre. There seems to be someone who thinks. Someone who feels. Someone who chooses. Someone to whom everything happens. This assumption is so deeply woven into ordinary experience that it is seldom questioned.

Yet careful observation begins to tell another story. Thoughts arise before they are invited. Feelings appear according to conditions. Intentions become known only after they have already begun to unfold. The body breathes without consulting us. The heart beats without instruction. Ageing continues whether we welcome it or not. Everything proceeds according to causes and conditions.

Where, then, is the permanent owner of these processes?

The question is not answered by reasoning. It is answered by looking.

The Buddha invited his disciples to examine the five aggregates (khandhā; skandhā) one by one.

Form (rūpa; id.).

Feeling (vedanā; id.).

Perception (saññā; saṃjñā).

Mental formations (saṅkhārā; saṃskārā).

Consciousness (viññāṇa; vijñāna).

Each is observed directly. Each arises. Each changes. Each passes away. None remains. None possesses complete autonomy. None can rightly be called *self*.

In the Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta, ¹¹¹ the Buddha expresses this with remarkable simplicity:

• *Form is not-self. If form were self, it would not lead to affliction, and one could say of form: 'Let my form be thus; let my form not be thus.' But because form is not-self, it leads to affliction, and it cannot be commanded in this way. Therefore form should be seen as it truly is: 'This is not mine. This I am not. This is not my self.'* •

The same is true of feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness.

When they are carefully observed, none proves capable of fulfilling the role we habitually assign to an enduring "I."

This insight is not an act of denial. The conventional person continues to function.

There is still walking. Speaking. Thinking. Remembering. Responding. But beneath these familiar activities, something fundamental has changed.

The assumption of an independent owner quietly begins to dissolve.

The practitioner gradually sees that what has long been called *self* is not a fixed entity, but an ever-changing constellation of conditions.

Like a river that keeps its name while none of its waters remain the same, the person exists conventionally without containing an immutable core.

Observation makes this unmistakably clear.
Thoughts appear. They are known. They pass away.
Feelings arise. They are known. They pass away.
No owner stands behind them.
Perceptions shift.
Mental formations come and go.
Consciousness continually renews itself.
Everything unfolds according to conditions.
Nothing stands outside the flow directing it. Nothing within this unfolding can rightly be regarded as permanent, independent, or truly one's own.

The experience of anattā is therefore neither abstract nor mystical. It is profoundly ordinary.

What we habitually call *my body, my thoughts, my feelings, my memories, my life* gradually reveals itself to be a dynamic process rather than a possession.

Nothing has been taken away. Rather, something imagined has quietly ceased to demand belief.

For the ordinary mind this possibility can initially appear unsettling. If there is no enduring self, what remains?

The question itself arises from the old habit of seeking something permanent to replace what has been relinquished.

Observation points elsewhere. Not towards another identity. Not towards a hidden essence. But towards a way of experiencing in which nothing needs to be owned. Towards a way of being that no longer depends upon defending an imagined centre.

—Who am I when there is nothing left to defend?
Who am I when nothing needs to be held?
What remains when the voice
that continually says
“I,” falls silent?
Not nothing.
But the quiet that remains.
when grasping comes to rest.—

Seen in this light, *anattā* is not a loss. It is a release. The burden of continually maintaining an identity begins to fall away.

There is less need to compare. Less need to defend. Less need to become.

The heart gradually relaxes into the simple unfolding of experience, no longer asking it to confirm the existence of someone standing apart from it.

The three characteristics now reveal themselves as inseparable.

Because all conditioned phenomena are impermanent, they cannot provide lasting fulfilment. Because they cannot provide lasting fulfilment, they cannot constitute an enduring self.

Each characteristic illuminates the other two. Together they disclose the conditioned nature of everything that arises.

This is the true work of Sammāsana-ñāṇa.

The practitioner no longer contemplates isolated experiences. A universal pattern gradually becomes apparent.

Every sensation.

Every perception.

Every thought.

Every emotion.

Quietly confirms the same pattern.

Arising.

Changing.

Passing away.

Again and again the mind returns, not to accumulate knowledge, but to deepen familiarity with direct experience.

Little by little, repeated contemplation becomes more natural.

The three characteristics become increasingly familiar through careful and repeated observation.

Confidence in direct observation gradually grows. Wisdom (paññā; prajñā) begins to replace habit.

As contemplation continues to mature, insight approaches a new phase.

This marks the transition to the next insight knowledge: Udayabbaya-ñāṇa (udayavyaya-jñāna)—the knowledge of arising and passing away.



PART II - THE UNFOLDING OF REALITY

—What once appeared clear begins to break apart.
What once seemed self-evident becomes unfamiliar.
Here begins the relinquishment of everything
that offers no lasting ground.—

When the mind has grown clear and learned to perceive reality in its web of conditions, a subtle turning takes place. Phenomena are no longer merely distinguished or understood; they begin to reveal themselves at a deeper level.

This second phase is more than a transition. It marks a profound shift: from looking to truly seeing; from observing to witnessing dissolution; from conceptual understanding to a quiet unlocking of reality.

Here impermanence becomes tangible—almost physically palpable. Reality opens from within. Insight ripens through the arising and passing away of phenomena, through their fragility, their emptiness, and their ungraspable nature.

—The practitioner watches
and sees everything arise
and disappear.
Everything moves,
without anything to hold on to.
Nothing endures.
What once resisted
becomes transparent.—

What previously seemed familiar begins to lose its familiarity. The practitioner begins to see. What now reveals itself is no longer the story shaped by expectation, but reality as it truly is.

This phase is accompanied by an inner purification: the gradual loosening of attachment and the quiet dying away of deeply held certainties.

—What I held on to falls away.
What I believed myself to be
dissolves.
Nothing remains to return to.
Only this quiet disappearing—
clear, inevitable. —

This is no easy transition. Yet neither is it a catastrophe. It is the natural consequence of seeing without grasping. Here the heart begins to understand what the intellect could never fully comprehend: that liberation is found not through control, but through an open acceptance of what continually changes.

Insight now begins to ripen. Reality reveals its true face: an uninterrupted stream of arising and passing away, without centre, without anything that can truly be possessed.

—There is nothing to grasp. Nothing to resist.
Only attentive seeing—allowing everything
to flow and pass away. —

As the mind grows ever clearer and understands more deeply the interplay of conditions, reality opens still further.

What until now appeared as separate experiences—thoughts, sensations, perceptions, feelings—gradually loses the appearance of independence.

Everything that appears does so because conditions are present. Everything that exists is fragile, dependent, and transient.

Reality is no longer understood as a concept. It is seen directly.

—Whatever appears, passes away.
 Whatever is grasped,
 slips through the fingers.
 What remains is only
 the open space
 of letting go.—

Whatever appears already contains the seed of its own dissolution. What is cherished reveals itself to be impermanent. What is held on to flows away like water through open hands.

The mind sees not only the impermanence of outward things, but also the subtle impermanence of desire, thought, and even the sense of a permanent self.

What once appeared solid becomes transparent. What once seemed fixed reveals itself as fluid.

Here the practitioner begins to understand that liberation is not found through mastery, but through relinquishment; not through force, but through insight; not through willing, but through the quiet recognition of the fragility of all things.

—I allow it. It breaks.
And in that breaking
there is no ending,
only space.

No loss,
only opening.—

Instead of resisting impermanence, a quiet surrender unfolds: a clear allowing, an intuitive understanding that what breaks is not destroyed, but opens a space in which freedom may reveal itself.

What passes away points towards a silence that does not depend upon what comes or goes. What disappears reveals the unborn openness of liberation.

Quietly and almost unnoticed, the practitioner begins to turn away from the world of becoming (bhava) and towards the path of relinquishment—a path paved not by ambition or effort, but by quiet confidence in the natural current of arising and passing away.

—No more strength is needed.
No defence.
Only the quiet whisper of understanding:
let it be, let it go,
let it disappear.—

What remains is never what is held.
Whatever is grasped is eventually lost.
Whatever is guarded becomes confined.
Whatever is defended eventually disappears.
What remains is that which has no need to protect itself.
That which neither comes nor goes.
That which is unborn— and therefore never dies.

What remains is the clarity of non-grasping.
Not as a state. Not as an attainment.

But as a natural lightness.
A knowing without searching.
A being without becoming.
A clarity that was never won, but quietly revealed
itself when everything was allowed to disappear.

What remains is the silence revealed through the
arising and passing away of all things. Not the silence
of emptiness, but the silence of spaciousness.

A silence that does not end when noise begins. It is
present everywhere—in passing away, in letting go, in
disappearance, and even in desire itself. For that too
dissolves. And what remains is peace.

Within this second phase, in which reality gradually
reveals itself, the following vipassanā insights unfold:

Udayabbaya-ñāṇa (udayavyaya-jñāna)—insight into
arising and passing away. A deep sensitivity devel-
ops towards the rhythm of appearance and disap-
pearance. Every experience arises, remains briefly,
and dissolves again. Impermanence is no longer
merely understood, but directly felt, both mentally
and physically.

Bhaṅga-ñāṇa (bhaṅga-jñāna)—insight into dissolu-
tion. Nothing remains. Everything breaks apart. What
once appeared solid dissolves. Body, thoughts, iden-
tity—everything is seen to disintegrate.

Bhaya-ñāṇa (bhaya-jñāna)—insight into fear. As im-
permanence is directly experienced, an existential
fear may arise. No lasting certainty remains; no en-
during ground can be found.

Ādīnava-ñāṇa (ādīnava-jñāna)—insight into the danger of clinging. The mind recognises that whatever is impermanent can never provide lasting security. Every act of grasping, every movement of becoming, leads to dukkha.

Nibbidā-ñāṇa (nibbidā-jñāna)—insight into disenchantment. What once appeared desirable gradually loses its fascination. The world of conditioned phenomena is seen as empty and incapable of providing lasting fulfilment. A quiet relinquishment begins.

Muñcitukamyatā-ñāṇa (muñcitukāmyatā-jñāna)—the longing for liberation. A single aspiration quietly emerges: to be released from the cycle of arising and passing away (saṃsāra).

Paṭisaṅkhā-ñāṇa (paṭisaṅkhyā-jñāna)—insight through careful reflection and skilful application. Meditation becomes increasingly refined. Like a musician tuning the strings of an instrument, the practitioner gently attunes the mind.

Saṅkhārupekkhā-ñāṇa (saṅskāropekṣā-jñāna)—equanimity towards all conditioned formations (saṅkhāra; saṃskāra). A quiet clarity appears. Whatever arises is simply known. Whatever passes away is quietly relinquished.

Anuloma-ñāṇa (anuloma-jñāna)—complete harmony with the path. Everything comes together in effortless alignment. The mind is fully attuned to the Dhamma. The gate of liberation now stands open.



CHAPTER 6 - UDAYABBAYA-ÑĀṆA

Udayabbaya-ñāṇa (udayavyaya-jñāṇa) ¹¹² is the direct insight into the arising and passing away of phenomena.

When the mind has contemplated impermanence (anicca; anitya), unsatisfactoriness (dukkha; duḥkha), and not-self (anattā; anātman) long enough, a quiet yet profound shift begins to take place.

What was previously understood as the universal characteristics of existence now reveals itself as immediate experience. The stream of phenomena is no longer approached through reflection alone, but is seen directly in its ceaseless unfolding.

This is the stage of udayabbaya-ñāṇa—the insight into arising and passing away, into appearing and disappearing.

The Quiet Rhythm of Change

Where the mind once tended to perceive experience as a succession of events, something more subtle now becomes visible: an uninterrupted movement of arising and passing away. Every sensation, every thought, every feeling arises, remains for a brief moment, and passes away.

—A touch. A thought. A movement. Arising.
A brief pause. Passing away.
No two moments are the same.
No experience endures.
Everything moves. Everything changes.

And yet there is no disturbance.
Only clarity.—

The practitioner no longer reflects upon impermanence. It is seen directly. Beneath the apparent solidity of experience, an uninterrupted movement gradually reveals itself.

The breath rises and falls. The heartbeat appears and fades into silence. Voices dissolve into the air. Thoughts flash briefly, like stars appearing and disappearing in the night sky.

There is arising.
There is passing away.
No moment remains the same.
Everything moves.
Everything flows.

What once appeared solid and enduring is revealed as an uninterrupted unfolding of conditions—without stillness, without anything that can be held onto.

The Tangibility of Impermanence

At this stage, *anicca* is no longer understood merely as an idea. It becomes immediate—something directly experienced.

The body is experienced as a field of ever-changing sensations: warmth, pressure, tingling, vibration.

No sensation remains the same. No moment ever repeats itself exactly.

The yogi no longer observes impermanence as something outside experience. Rather, experience itself is revealed as a continuous unfolding of arising and passing away. The understanding that everything changes is no longer theoretical. It presents itself naturally with every breath, every sensation, every perception.

—Whatever is perceived is alive.

Whatever is seen is changing.

Nothing needs to be done.

It arises.

It passes away.

It unfolds according to its own nature.

Only this is asked:

to continue looking,

to continue feeling,

to remain present. —

At this stage, subtle joy (*pīti*; *pīṭi*) ¹¹³ and clarity may also arise. At times, the practitioner experiences a deep tranquillity, a quiet delight, an unusual transparency of mind, and a growing confidence in the practice.

These are natural companions of the insight into arising and passing away. They need not be sought, nor should they be feared.

Yet it is precisely here that the ancient teachers offer a gentle caution. Even refined joy can become an object of attachment. The wish for such experiences to continue may quietly give rise to grasping, interrupting the simple clarity of observation.

The practitioner therefore learns to recognise even these beautiful states as conditioned phenomena-

They too arise because conditions are present. They too pass away when those conditions change.

—What arises, passes away. What shines, fades.
Joy is real, yet it is not mine.
No triumph. No exhilaration.
Only quiet wonder.
Life continues to unfold.
The mind sees, but does not grasp.
It rests within the movement.—

Trust in the Current

Directly seeing arising and passing away gives rise to a quiet confidence. As it becomes increasingly clear that everything depends upon causes and conditions, and naturally passes away when those conditions cease, the need to control experience gradually begins to fade.

Nothing needs to be forced.
Nothing needs to be defended.
Nothing needs to become other than it is.

Within this simple openness, insight continues to mature.

Not through analysis. Not through effort. But through quietly remaining present with the timeless rhythm of arising and passing away.

Things are no longer what they once appeared to be. They are neither solid nor enduring. Nor can they truly be possessed. They resemble waves upon the sea—taking shape for a moment, only to dissolve again into the water from which they arose.

The breath comes—and goes.
A thought arises—and passes away.
A feeling appears—and fades.

—I see arising.
I see passing away.
And between them, silence.
Not the silence of absence,
but the silence of knowing.
Here confidence quietly matures.
Here it becomes clear:
when everything arises
and passes away,
nothing needs to be held.
Only presence.—

Even celestial beings (*deva*; *deva*) may experience states of extraordinary joy and luminosity. What distinguishes *vipassanā*, however, is not the experience of such states, but the clear seeing that they too are impermanent.

Even the most refined joy arises. Even the brightest light fades. Only through seeing this directly does the way to liberation gradually open.

With every moment of clear seeing, understanding deepens. Nothing can be held. And within that freedom from grasping, a quiet peace begins to reveal itself—a peace that words can only point towards.

The Further Maturation

Yet this clarity continues to deepen. As insight matures, the quiet joy that first accompanied the clear seeing of arising and passing away gradually begins to fade.

Attention is no longer drawn equally to both arising and passing away. The passing away of phenomena begins to stand out with increasing clarity. What first appeared as a graceful rhythm of appearing and disappearing now reveals an ever subtler truth.

No phenomenon remains for long. Even as something appears, it is already changing. Even as it comes into being, it is already passing away.

The practitioner does not arrive at this understanding through reflection. It is simply what becomes visible.

The apparent stability of experience begins to dissolve. What once seemed continuous is seen as an uninterrupted unfolding of conditioned events.

Each moment gives way to the next before it can be held. Nothing remains fixed. Nothing offers lasting support.

Ageing, illness, and death are no longer perceived merely as events that occur within a lifetime. They begin to reveal themselves as expressions of the same law that is present in every moment of experience.

Whatever arises, passes away. This is not a cause for sorrow. It is simply the nature of conditioned existence.

Gradually another understanding begins to mature. Ageing is not the problem. Illness is not the problem. Death is not the problem. Suffering arises from resisting what cannot be otherwise.

The Buddha did not present ageing, illness, and death as enemies. He pointed instead to the mind that longs for permanence where none can be found.

Driven by craving, it hopes for lasting youth. Lasting health. Lasting life.

When change inevitably reveals itself, resistance appears. The struggle begins. Yet what struggles is not life itself. It is the mind's refusal to allow life to unfold according to its own nature.

The Buddha therefore did not point to the world as the source of suffering. He pointed to our relationship with it.

Wisdom grows, not through changing the conditions of life, but through seeing clearly how the mind responds to them. As seeing becomes clearer, resistance gradually loses its strength.

The struggle begins to fade. The mind grows quiet—not because experience has changed, but because it is no longer opposed.

When this quiet clarity becomes firmly established, another understanding naturally follows.

Liberation does not mean that impermanence disappears. It means that craving, resistance, and clinging gradually come to an end.

Ageing is no longer feared.

Illness no longer needs to be hidden.

Death no longer appears as an intrusion into life.

They are recognised as expressions of the same unfolding that has always been present.

This is the liberation taught by the Buddha. Not liberation from life, but liberation within life. Not the absence of impermanence, but the absence of conflict with what is impermanent.

Within that freedom, the peace of Nibbāna gradually comes into view: the extinguishing of the fires of craving (*taṇhā*; *tṛṣṇā*), the ending of suffering (*dukkha*; *duḥkha*), the peace of upasama, liberation (*vimutti*; *vimukti*), and the Unconditioned (*asaṅkhata*; *asaṃskṛta*).

As the practitioner continues to look in this way (*dassana*; *darśana*), ¹¹⁴ something else quietly begins to change. The fascination once exercised by phenomena gradually fades. Not because the world has become less beautiful. Not because life has lost its richness. But because everything is now seen in the light of its changing nature.

Whatever appears, changes. Whatever changes, passes away. Again and again, the same truth reveals itself. The mind no longer lingers upon appearances. It follows the unfolding of experience itself.

—A sound arises and disappears.

A sensation comes into being and fades.

A thought forms, only to vanish before it can be held.

Nothing remains.

Nothing endures.

Nothing can be possessed.

Impermanence no longer appears as one characteristic among others.—

It begins to illuminate the whole field of experience.
The practitioner notices this not only in the great
movements of life—birth, ageing, illness, and death—
but equally in its smallest expressions.

A single breath.
A fleeting sensation.
A passing thought.
Each reveals the same quiet law.
Arising.
Passing away.
Again and again.

As this seeing becomes increasingly refined, the
passing away of phenomena begins to stand out ever
more clearly.¹¹⁵

Without interruption.
Without exception.

Even the moment in which a phenomenon is known
is already giving way to another. Nothing escapes
this unfolding.¹¹⁶ Everything conditioned is subject to
arising and passing away.

Gradually the emphasis of observation shifts. Atten-
tion is drawn less to the appearance of phenomena
and more to their continual dissolution. Without in-
tention, without effort, simply because this is what
experience now reveals.

This marks the natural completion of udayabbaya-
ñāṇa. From here, insight deepens still further.

What has thus far been recognised as the continual arising and passing away of phenomena now begins to reveal itself primarily as dissolution.

In that quiet shift, the practitioner approaches bhaṅga-ñāṇa—the insight into dissolution. What now opens is an even deeper seeing of conditioned existence: an uninterrupted process without permanence, without a fixed centre, and without anything that can truly be held onto.



CHAPTER 7 - BHAṆGA-ÑĀṆA

Bhaṅga-ñāṇa (bhaṅga-jñāṇa) ¹¹⁷ means *insight into dissolution*. It emerges naturally from the previous insight, udayabbaya-ñāṇa (udayavyaya-jñāṇa).

When the mind opens completely to the rhythm of arising and passing away, an even subtler insight begins to unfold.

In udayabbaya-ñāṇa, the mind clearly perceives the arising and passing away of phenomena—a continuous pulsing of appearing and disappearing, like waves rising and falling.

As attention becomes ever more refined through quiet, uninterrupted observation, however, the emphasis gradually shifts. Arising no longer stands in the foreground. The mind becomes naturally attuned to dissolution. Whatever appears scarcely seems to have arisen before it is already falling apart.

—A touch—gone.
A thought—gone.
A feeling—gone.
Everything dissolves
into moments of nothingness.
It is as though reality
no longer has a body,
only movement.
Only appearing and dissolving.
No core.
No foundation.
Nothing to hold on to.—

Dissolution—the continuous fading and disintegration of phenomena—now becomes the dominant experi-

ence. Not as an idea, but as a tangible reality present in every moment of knowing.

The Immediate Dissolution of Everything

What once appeared more or less stable—a sensation, a feeling, a thought, a bodily impression—now reveals itself as already dissolving in the very moment it appears. There is no moment of stillness. No holding. No support. Everything exists in a state of dissolution, disintegration, and disappearance.

A tingling on the skin—gone.

A fragrance in the air—vanished.

A thought flashes forth—and immediately dissolves.

The yogi observes how even the subtlest impressions do not remain for a single instant. Phenomena do not first arise and only then disappear; they are already dissolving in the very moment of their appearance.

Just as dew dissolves in the morning light, just as mist disperses when the sun rises, so every experience dissolves in the very moment it appears.

What once seemed coherent now breaks apart like water cascading over a waterfall, never assuming any fixed form.

—There is nothing to stand upon.

Nothing to lean against.

No ground.

No handrail.

Only disappearance.

Not emptiness as metaphor,
but as immediate experience.

And within that experience: no fear.
Only transparency.
Only dissolution.—

A World without Ground

With the insight into dissolution, the sense of solidity begins to fade. The world, once experienced as a coherent and stable background, quietly crumbles away.

What remains is a stream of appearing and vanishing phenomena—without core, without structure, without foundation.

No body that is solid.
No mind that endures.
No world that offers refuge.

A feeling of weightlessness may arise, as though everything once familiar has become impossible to grasp.

At times there may be disorientation, or a passing wave of unease, as every tangible point of support quietly withdraws.

The practitioner sees not only the arising of phenomena, but also their inevitable disappearance. What once served as support is revealed to be transparent.

Yet this dissolution is not annihilation. It is neither threat nor loss. It is the quiet unveiling of a reality that has always been so, though never before clearly seen.

The Silence beyond Dissolution

Amid this continual dissolution, a profound silence begins to emerge. Not the silence that comes from the absence of sound, but an existential silence—a silence without observer, without object, without grasping. Only the clarity of what disappears.

No resistance to what vanishes.

No reaching for what remains.

Only silence—not as absence, but as spaciousness.

The practitioner gradually learns to rest within this silence. The need to hold on to the changing forms of experience quietly falls away.

—What disappears takes nothing with it.
What dissolves leaves nothing behind.
And what remains is clarity— not as a thing,
but as openness.
What remains is no foundation.
Only the knowing:
this is dissolving.
This is not mine.
This was never there to be held. —

The practitioner learns to watch dissolution itself—without fear, without resistance, without longing.

Yet it is important to understand that even the most silent or spacious experiences, however subtle they may seem, remain phenomena.

Formlessness, openness, the disappearance of all objects—even these are temporary appearances within the stream of consciousness.

They may closely resemble liberation, yet they are not liberation. They lack the liberating insight that sees through them. Liberation does not arise from abiding in any particular experience, but from clearly seeing whatever arises and passes away—without craving, without grasping, without attachment.

Within this silence, something begins to soften: the pressure to become, to possess, to survive.

What remains is openness. What remains is clarity. Everything arises and passes away effortlessly. Everything appears and disappears without intervention. Everything dissolves, and the practitioner quietly allows himself to dissolve with it.

What remains is the clear knowing of dissolution—the unavoidable disintegration of everything that appears. Here the image of self begins to erode. The grip of "I" and "mine" gradually weakens, as though an ancient, invisible armour were quietly dissolving.

Within *bhaṅga-ñāṇa*, there is no longer any need for points of support. No foundation remains to defend. Only the transparency of a world that was never solid, and therefore could never truly be held.

It is here, within this transparency, that the mind first tastes a freedom no longer sought in conditioned experience.

—Nothing remains.
And that is peace.—



CHAPTER 8 - BHAYA-ÑĀṆA

Bhaya-ñāṇa (bhaya-jñāna) ¹¹⁸ means *insight into fearfulness*—the direct recognition of the insecurity inherent in everything that is impermanent.

When the mind has opened fully to the continual dissolution of everything that appears (bhaṅga-ñāṇa; bhaṅga-jñāna), a deeper insight begins to unfold.

The impermanence that was previously observed with quiet clarity now takes on another dimension. It is no longer merely seen; it is deeply felt. Within that feeling, a stark and inescapable realization begins to emerge: everything I cherish, everything I love, everything I call my own, is subject to disappearance.

—Whatever appears, passes away.
Whatever is dear to me, passes away.
Whatever I love, passes away.
What I call myself, passes away.
I cannot prevent it.
Everything slips away, like water running
through my fingers.—

The Sobering Clarity of Seeing

Until now, the unfolding of insight has remained quiet and spacious: observing change, recognising arising and passing away, and gradually relinquishing attachment.

As attention becomes more refined, however, a deeper and more existential knowing comes to the foreground. Nothing can ultimately be relied upon.

Nothing endures. Nothing can be preserved. Whatever appears disappears. Whatever is cherished fades away. Whatever once seemed to offer stability becomes fluid and impossible to grasp.

The fragrance of fresh flowers drifts away. The warmth of a hand grows cold. The voice that once offered comfort falls silent.

The mind no longer merely sees impermanence; it feels its inescapability.

—Even seeing itself seems to have no ground.
As though I were looking from something
that does not exist.
Everything moves.
Everything fades.
Everything dies.
It is not death that frightens me,
but the realization that everything is dying,
moment after moment,
without my ever truly seeing it.—

At this point a profound awareness of fear (bhaya) begins to arise. This is not emotional fear in the ordinary sense—neither panic nor anxiety. Rather, it is the direct recognition of how deeply unsettling it is to cling to what is continuously passing away.

The practitioner sees that everything once experienced as "home"—body, mind, thoughts, feelings, memories—offers no lasting refuge.

Within that realization, a subtle unease quietly emerges. There is no island, no anchor, no foundation able to withstand the storm of impermanence.

The Unmasking of Certainty

Whatever once provided reassurance now begins to fall away. Beliefs, memories, and dreams alike reveal their fragility. Everything in which the practitioner sought security—relationships, possessions, the body, knowledge—shows itself to be vulnerable, fragile, and ultimately unable to endure.

What is loved will disappear.

What is feared will disappear.

What I call myself will disappear.

Most profoundly, there is nothing that can halt this process. No strength, no strategy, no belief can reverse impermanence. Here saṃsāra reveals itself in its true nature: unstable, uncontrollable, and uncertain.

The apparent certainty with which the world once clothed itself quietly unravels. What remains is an open and vulnerable space—a field in which nothing can be held and nothing can be secured.

—What remains to lean upon? Nothing.

Yet within that nothing another possibility quietly opens:
the freedom of no longer needing to hold on.

No future. No protection. No control.

Only a gentle willingness to be nothing.—

Silence amid Fragility

At first, the practitioner may recoil from this radical vision of impermanence. There may be shock, a sense of vulnerability, or even the feeling of being lost.

Yet bhaya-ñāṇa should never be understood as failure or regression. On the contrary, it marks a deepening of insight, a sign that reality is being seen through ever fewer layers of illusion.

Fear is not the problem; it is the beginning of liberating wisdom. If the practitioner continues to look—without fleeing, without grasping, without resisting—something entirely different begins to emerge: a new silence. Not the silence of reassurance, but the silence of acceptance.

Everything passes away—and this is not wrong. Everything dies—and this is not tragic. Everything lets go—and precisely there freedom begins. Whatever appears disappears, not as punishment and not as destruction, but simply because this is its nature.

The silence that grows from this understanding is not the end of life. It is the beginning of genuine freedom: a freedom that no longer grasps because there is nothing left to grasp.

—This confrontation is raw. Painful. Yet unavoidable.
It shatters the final belief in permanence.
The world cannot sustain us.
What disappears cannot be our refuge.
Everything slips away.
What remains is only seeing.
Only understanding.
And within that silent knowing,
something gentle begins to arise.
The first quiet movement of surrender.—

In this profound recognition of the insecurity inherent in everything conditioned, the mind uncovers its

deepest attachment: the longing to remain, to possess, to become.

And precisely within that unveiling, letting go quietly begins—not as an act of will, but as the natural maturation of insight.

What first appeared to be loss becomes an opening. What seemed a threat becomes a gateway. What passes away quietly opens onto the Unborn.



CHAPTER 9 - ĀDINAVA-ÑĀṆA

Ādinava-ñāṇa (āḍīnava-jñāṇa) ¹¹⁹ means insight into the danger of clinging.

When the mind has fully seen and deeply felt the inevitability of impermanence, insight matures still further.

The fearfulness previously recognised now discloses something deeper: whatever the practitioner clings to becomes a condition for suffering.

—Everything to which I cling—ideas, relationships,
memories, beliefs—gradually begins to lose
its hold on me.

Not because I reject it,
but because I see that it cannot offer
what I once imagined it could.

There is no lasting joy to be found
in what cannot remain.—

The Breakthrough of Insight

The practitioner sees that what is desired changes, what is feared changes, what is cherished changes, and even what is called "myself" changes. Every attempt to find security in what is impermanent inevitably ends in disappointment. Whatever is desired slips away. Whatever is defended begins to crumble. Whatever is held tightly becomes painful the moment it starts to change.

A memory fades. A body grows old. A name is forgotten. A possession is lost. Everything that is built is eventually dismantled. Everything that is grasped ultimately slips away.

What we try to hold on to—body, feelings, thoughts, identities—proves to be not a refuge, but a condition for dukkha (duḥkha).

The practitioner now sees that suffering does not lie in disappearance itself, but in the attempt to deny that everything must disappear.

The Nature of Clinging

Clinging is not an abstract concept. It is the deeply rooted tendency to grasp what we desire and to resist what we fear.

Yet both desire and aversion rest upon the same illusion: the belief that there is something that can be possessed, secured, or held.

As the mind clearly sees that everything changes, that nothing endures, and that nothing can truly be called "mine," clinging gradually loses its apparent self-evidence.

—There is no light in what I crave.
No freedom in what I resist.
Everything I try to possess loses its radiance
and becomes heavy.
Everything I defend becomes a burden.
I see this, and quietly turn away—
not through aversion,
but through understanding.—

What once appeared attractive now reveals its hidden cost. What once seemed desirable shows itself to be fragile, unstable, and unreliable.

Within what I wish to preserve lies loss.
Within what I try to protect lies decay.
Within what I call "myself" lies dissolution.

A quiet weariness begins to arise within the practitioner—a profound exhaustion with repeating the same ancient pattern. The beauty of saṃsāra gradually loses its enchantment. What once fascinated the mind slowly begins to fade.

Insight deepens still further: clinging is not merely futile; it is dangerous. It binds the practitioner to what, by its very nature, can never fulfil the promise upon which the clinging rests.

Like a shipwrecked sailor desperately clinging to a sinking piece of driftwood, we seek support in impermanent phenomena.

The suffering does not lie in the things themselves, but in clinging to what cannot endure. The problem is not the world, but our attempt to make it into a refuge.

The Relief of Letting Go

As the practitioner begins to recognise this danger, there is no trace of cynicism or despair. Instead, a quiet relief begins to emerge: the realization that there is nothing to grasp, nothing to hold on to, nothing to defend.

Whatever appears, appears.
Whatever disappears, disappears.
And within that seeing, spaciousness begins to grow.

—The world remains.
But my belief in it quietly fades.
Not through hatred. Not through resistance.
Simply because I see.
What I wished to possess loses its meaning.
It is no longer needed.
I do not see the danger through fear.
I see it because it is true.
This cannot endure.
This becomes a condition for suffering.
And so I let it go.—

The danger of clinging is never overcome through struggle, but through insight. Through clearly seeing that nothing whatsoever can provide what the practitioner seeks: complete and lasting fulfilment.

What I cling to binds me.
What I release sets me free.

A quiet transformation now takes place: from craving to contentment, from seeking to understanding, from clinging to clarity. That clarity arises precisely when the drawback (ādinava) of clinging is fully seen.

Ādinava-ñāṇa marks the moment at which the practitioner understands that genuine freedom does not lie in finding the right object of desire, but in seeing through desire itself.

Not through denial, nor through suppression, but through quietly seeing that desire is always directed towards what cannot endure.

Within that seeing, the mind gradually loosens itself—moment by moment—from the net of clinging.

—Chapter 9 - Ādinava-Ñāṇa—

—There is nothing I must find.
Nothing I must become.
What I desired disappears.
What I sought proves empty.
And what remains is simplicity.
A quiet knowing:
I am not free through possessing,
but through holding on to nothing.—



CHAPTER 10 - NIBBIDĀ-ÑĀṆA

Nibbidā-ñāṇa (nibbidā-jñāṇa) ¹²⁰ means insight into disenchantment. Nibbidā is the quiet fading of clinging through clear seeing.

When the mind has fully recognised the danger inherent in clinging, insight matures still further. What once seemed attractive gradually loses its radiance. What was once eagerly pursued no longer awakens desire—not through aversion (paṭigha; pratigha) or bitterness, but through the deeply felt understanding that whatever appears cannot offer genuine fulfilment. It simply cannot provide what the practitioner had hoped to find.

—I no longer expect anything from what appears.
I no longer need to improve it, preserve it,
or understand it.
It is enough.
What I was searching for
cannot be found here.
And knowing this
is quietly peaceful.—

The Simplicity of Having Seen Enough ¹²¹

What the mind now experiences is not a dramatic rejection of the world. There is no struggle and no resistance. There is only a quiet and natural sense of having seen enough.

Phenomena continue to arise. Life continues to unfold. Yet the mind simply observes, no longer expecting anything from what it sees.

What the practitioner sought cannot be found here.
What was once desired gradually loses its attraction.
What once seemed indispensable reveals itself to be empty.

What once appeared desirable is now recognised as insubstantial, unsatisfactory, and without lasting value.

At times a quiet disappointment may arise—not only with worldly existence, but even with one's own meditation practice. There may be a simple wish to let everything rest, to stop striving altogether.

—The stream of experience continues to flow.
Bodily sensations, thoughts, moods—
they arise and pass away.
Yet the mind quietly steps back.
No hunger.
No searching.
No self still wanting something
from what appears.—

Nibbidā is not rejection. It is not hostility towards the world. It is the natural withdrawal of the mind from that in which it no longer sees refuge.

Just as a bird rises effortlessly when the air grows lighter, so the mind gently turns away from the weight of clinging, from the endless repetition of longing and disappointment.

No more hunger.
No more thirst.
Only clarity—and peace.

Turning Away without Aversion

This turning away is not aversion, nor is it rejection. It is the quiet understanding that further searching has lost its purpose—not through weariness, but through clear seeing.

Whatever appears passes away.
Whatever is desired gives rise to tension.
Whatever is defended eventually brings loss.

And so the mind turns away—not with force, not in resistance, but with the quiet clarity that comes when something is no longer mistaken for what it can never be.

—It is as though desire itself has grown weary.
As though the grasping hand of self
is slowly losing its strength.
What remains
is a gentle letting go.
And within that letting go,
the mind naturally turns
away from the object
towards the simple knowing
that sees.—

A gentle withdrawal unfolds: away from the pursuit of sensual pleasure; away from grasping at forms, structures, and lineages; away from identification itself.

No aversion.
No judgement.
Only turning away—
born of clear seeing.

The Silence That Remains

With the arising of nibbidā, the mind comes to rest in open awareness. Not as a self that must be protected, but as an open field of knowing in which nothing more needs to be pursued.

What remains is silence—not the silence of exhaustion, but the silence of contentment. A silence that seeks nothing, wants nothing, and needs nothing.

There is nothing the practitioner still longs for.
Nothing that still needs to be feared.
Only this open space—free, clear, unbound.

At this stage the mind relaxes into its own transparency. There is no "I" that still has to achieve something. No path that must still be completed.

There is only the simple presence of what is—without clinging, without desire, without resistance.

—What I sought, I did not find here.
What I hoped to hold proved empty.
What I believed I needed dissolved away.
And now only one longing remains:
to be free from every longing.—

What cannot provide fulfilment is naturally released. What has no foundation is no longer carried. What remains is a profound stillness—and with it, the possibility of liberation.

Within that stillness, a quiet movement begins to mature: no hunger, no searching, only a gentle inclin-

ation towards freedom. Not to acquire anything new,
but to let fall whatever still binds the heart.



CHAPTER 11 - MUÑCITUKAMYATĀ-ÑĀṆA

Muñcitukamyatā-ñāṇa (muñcitukāmyatā-jñāṇa) ¹²² is the insight in which the longing for liberation naturally arises—the quiet wish to be completely free from attachment and becoming (*bhava*; id.), born from direct insight into the nature of all phenomena.

When the yogi has seen enough and turned away from what once captivated the heart, a new movement quietly begins. No longer the search for worldly pleasure. No longer the pursuit of fleeting happiness. Only a deep and silent longing: to be free.

—I see how everything that appears passes away.
How everything I hold on to binds me.
How everything I crave leads me away from freedom.
And a quiet longing arises,
not to attain something,
but to be released
from everything
that binds.—

This is muñcitukamyatā-ñāṇa—the insight in which the wish arises to relinquish every bond.

The Pure Longing

Unlike the desires that once propelled the mind—the longing for possessions, success, recognition, or identity—this longing is transparent, free from greed and free from resistance.

It does not move towards acquiring something, but towards releasing everything that still holds the heart captive. Not the desire for more, but the willingness to let everything go.

The practitioner longs for freedom as a bird longs for the open sky, as a river naturally finds its way to the sea—not out of dissatisfaction, but because such movement belongs to its very nature.

—Whatever binds me, I long to release.
Whatever still clings, I long to let go.
Whatever obscures the heart,
I long to see through.
Not in order to become something,
but so that nothing need any longer be.
Only freedom within the stream of the Unborn.

At this stage, *saṃsāra* is no longer understood as a doctrine or philosophical concept. It is recognised as immediate experience. The endless arising and passing away of conditioned existence, the ceaseless movement of becoming and dissolution, is no longer merely contemplated—it is lived from within.

Whatever still binds, the practitioner naturally wishes to release. Whatever still clings, naturally falls away. Whatever still holds, is quietly relinquished.

This longing is not restless. It is not another form of craving. Rather, it is the quiet ripening of wisdom—the recognition that genuine peace can be found only where nothing whatsoever is held on to.

There comes a moment when the practitioner simply knows: Enough. Not out of discouragement. Not out of despair. But because insight has become unmistakably clear. There is no longer any wish to participate in what perpetuates suffering. The yogi does not turn away in aversion. He turns away with quiet certainty. Letting go has become entirely natural.

—Nothing more to pursue.
Nothing more to defend.
Nothing more to add.
Only this quiet knowing:
The movement of desire has grown still.
What remains is the willingness to let everything go—
without expectation,
without looking back.—

The Maturity of the Path

Muñcitukamyatā marks a profound stage of maturity along the inner path.

The practitioner no longer seeks Awakening as an ideal to be attained, a trophy to be won, or an achievement to be claimed. The mind simply longs to let go of everything that has been held on to—everything that is still regarded as "me" or "mine."

No longer searching for another world. No longer defending an identity. Only allowing the freedom that reveals itself when attachment falls away.

The mind does not turn away in bitterness. It lets go through clear seeing. What is left behind is not a sacrifice, but the natural consequence of seeing reality as it truly is.

Gradually, a quiet resolve matures: to become nothing more, to hold on to nothing more, to protect nothing more.

No path remains to be followed. No destination remains to be reached. Only the longing to relinquish

everything—not in order to gain something, but because nothing more needs to be acquired.

—I need add nothing more.
I need hold on to nothing anymore.
There is no self left to protect.
No experience left to pursue.
Only this simplicity:
The longing to be free.
The longing to be nothing.—

The longing grows to relinquish everything and to open completely to the Unborn (ajāta; id.), the Unconditioned (asaṅkhata; asaṃskṛta)—the longing for that ultimate freedom beyond all conditions.

The Silence of Letting Go

At this stage, the path becomes narrow and quiet. The yogi turns inward—not as an escape from the world, but as a return home. There is no longer any thirst for outward appearances, no hope that lasting peace can be found in anything external.

Whatever appears is no longer desired.
Whatever disappears is no longer mourned.
What remains is the silence of a longing that seeks nothing except freedom from seeking itself.

The longing to let go is the practitioner's final subtle movement before complete equanimity comes into view.

There is no longer any struggle against existence. No refusal of the natural flow of things. Only the quiet surrender of non-grasping, within which the ever-

present freedom quietly reveals itself. No longer striving for liberation. Simply allowing liberation to reveal itself.

—Nothing remains to be protected.
No self remains to be defended.
Only the longing to let go.
Not as a goal, but as a quiet calling.
Not as striving, but as ripening.
And within that ripening:
The silence of insight.
The willingness to let everything
that arises come and go,
exactly as it is. —



CHAPTER 12 - PAṬISAṆKHĀ-ÑĀṆA

Paṭisaṅkhā-ñāṇa (pratisaṅkhyā-jñāna) ¹²³ is the insight of careful contemplation, profound investigation, and discerning reflection.

When the longing for liberation has fully matured, the yogi becomes quiet and deeply attentive. No longer driven by seeking or desire, the mind now turns inward with calm and penetrating inquiry: What still holds me? What still obscures freedom?

—Is there still attachment? Is there still illusion?
Where does subtle identification remain?
What is still being protected?
Where is there still grasping,
still hoping,
still seeking?
And above all:
Can even this be let go?—

The Subtlety of Investigation

At this stage, the practitioner has become inwardly precise and unclouded. No longer carried away by the movements of craving and aversion, there remains only a quiet, impartial attention that carefully investigates whatever appears.

A thought arises—where has it come from?
A feeling appears—what sustains it?
A memory returns—does it still bind?

The yogi does not investigate through analysis or reasoning, but through direct insight. Whatever arises is seen in relation to the conditions that give rise to it. Every phenomenon is quietly examined: Does this

lead to clinging (upādāna; id.), or to letting go (vossagga; visarga)? Is there still attachment? Is there still identification? Whatever appears is carefully investigated. Whatever binds is recognised. Whatever remains is simply seen.

—A thought arises. I see it.
I feel its movement.
I notice what follows in its wake.
And I quietly ask:
Is this necessary?
Is this true?
Is this free?
Again and again: letting go.
Again and again: looking more deeply.
Again and again: trusting more completely. —

The practitioner now looks back upon the path already travelled—from the first discernment of nāma-rūpa to the longing for liberation.

This renewed investigation (paṭisaṅkhā; pratisaṅkhyā) is not a repetition, but a deeper establishment in wisdom. Just as a musician carefully tunes an instrument until every note rings true, so the yogi now refines the attention to perceive the subtlest movements of the mind: grasping nothing, rejecting nothing, simply remaining clearly present.

The Silence of Clear Inquiry

This investigation is not restless. It is not a search for faults or shortcomings. It is a quiet and careful inquiry—clear, sober, and entirely free from prejudice.

Where does the practitioner still cling? Where do subtle dreams still linger? Where does hope still seek a future fulfilment?

The mind asks these questions not in order to obtain answers, but to uncover the remaining roots of attachment. Not as an act of self-judgement, but as an expression of clear seeing.

Is this thought free? Does this emotion still bind? Upon what does this movement of desire still depend?

In this way, insight becomes ever more refined, more penetrating, more transparent. Whatever attachment still remains is no longer defended or denied. It is simply seen—seen directly in the light of clear awareness—and, through being seen, it gradually loses its power. Whatever is fully understood as it truly is can no longer maintain its hold.

—The practitioner does not rest—

not out of restlessness, but out of diligence.

Like a skilled surgeon, the practitioner carefully cuts through illusion, through habit, through conditioning. Not in order to destroy, but to liberate.

Whatever still clings is gently released.—

At this stage, the yogi understands that no hidden passage remains. There is no secret door to liberation, no shortcut that can replace the work of direct seeing. No imagined future in which peace will finally be found.

Nor is there any escape. Not into experiences. Not into memories. Not into ideas about Awakening.

Whatever presents itself as an escape is immediately recognised as yet another subtle form of concealment—another echo of the old movement of craving.

Even the hope of finding peace somewhere beyond this present moment is recognised as a quiet deception. There is nowhere else to abide but here. There is no other moment in which Awakening can unfold but now.

Every step contains the whole path. Every breath is the path. Not as poetry, nor as metaphor, but as lived reality. The whole of the Dhamma is present within this very breath, within this seeing, within this simple non-grasping.

The Natural Letting Go

Through this unwavering investigation, the yogi gradually releases every remaining attachment. Not through struggle. Not through suppression.

But through the quiet and impartial seeing of the impermanent, unsatisfactory, and selfless nature of everything that appears.

Whatever is impermanent is naturally relinquished. Whatever is unsatisfactory is allowed to fall away. Whatever is without self is no longer held as “mine.”

Meditation becomes ever simpler, yet at the same time ever more refined. Just as a flower quietly opens to the morning light, so the yogi opens to liberation without the slightest trace of striving. What was previously seen is now understood more deeply. What

was once deliberately relinquished now falls away of its own accord.

This stage is like removing the last remaining roots from a carefully cultivated field. There is no violence. No haste. Only attentive presence, clear insight, and a quiet devotion to what is true (sacca; satya).¹²⁴

—Nothing may remain concealed.

Nothing may escape the light of insight.

For whatever continues to cling will continue to give rise to suffering. And so—with gentleness, with steadfastness, with careful attention: letting go, letting go, letting go.—

Whatever still remains may now disappear. Whatever endures is held in freedom.

In paṭisaṅkhā-ñāṇa, the work of purification quietly reaches its completion. What remains is a quiet readiness—a gentle willingness to grasp nothing, to preserve nothing, to defend nothing. In this way, the practitioner's mind gradually ripens towards complete equanimity.

No more striving. No more seeking. Only readiness—the quiet readiness to let everything go.



CHAPTER 13 - SAṆKHĀRUPEKKHĀ-ÑĀṆA

Saṅkhārupekkhā-ñāṇa (saṅskāropekṣā-jñāna) ¹²⁵ is the insight of equanimity towards all conditioned phenomena.

When, through careful investigation, the yogi has clearly seen what still binds the heart, and quietly relinquished whatever could be relinquished, the silence deepens into this insight. Nothing remains that grasps. Nothing remains that pushes or pulls.

Whatever appears, appears. Whatever disappears, disappears. The yogi simply sees—clearly, equanimously, undisturbed.

— The breath comes. The breath goes.
A thought flashes into awareness.
A feeling passes through the body.
A memory drifts by, and quietly disappears again.
The yogi sees.
Still.
Equanimous.
Not cold, but calm.
Not distant, but free. —

The Silence of Equanimity

There is no longer any wish to change what appears, nor any impulse to hold on to what disappears. There is only a quiet and deeply rooted acceptance of the process exactly as it is: arising and passing away, appearing and dissolving—without beginning, without end.

A thought appears—and is seen. A feeling arises—and is released. A sensation comes into being—and is simply known.

The mind no longer reaches for joy, nor does it push sorrow away. There is only a calm openness in which everything is free to come and go.

Without choice.

Without preference.

Without interference.

—There is nothing to become.

Nothing to preserve.

Nothing to improve.

Only this: the flowing of experience.

And within that flowing the mind comes to rest.

Not through complacency, but through wisdom.

Not through indifference, but through freedom.—

It is precisely within this stillness that something even more subtle becomes visible—not only what appears, but also how the mind quietly assigns meaning to what appears.

Now that grasping has fallen away, even the process of naming becomes visible. The yogi begins to see how the mind still subtly shapes experience, even as it lets it go—and how, within that very seeing, emptiness begins to reveal itself.

Whatever appears, appears within awareness.

As the yogi settles into stillness and observes with open attention—first the movements of the mind itself, then the forms that continually present them-

selves—something remarkably simple becomes evident: things appear exactly as they are, untouched by judgement or story.

Form, sound, scent, thought—they are simply experienced. Every experience is immediate and direct.¹²⁶ Yet what the yogi does with experience—how they are named, interpreted, or held onto—is what is conditioned.

The meaning the practitioner assigns to experience is a conceptual designation (*paññatti*; *prajñapti*),¹²⁷ arising through perception (*saññā*; *saṃjñā*),¹²⁸ which recognizes—or believes it recognizes—compares, and names on the basis of memory, desire, and fear.

As this distinction becomes increasingly clear, the practitioner catches a first glimpse of emptiness (*suññatā*; *śūnyatā*).¹²⁹

It is seen that things are "empty" of any fixed or inherent meaning. They possess no independent existence apart from the awareness in which they appear.

In other words, things are not inherently "this" or "that." They become "this" or "that" only when the mind intervenes—naming, interpreting, and holding them as something.

And it is precisely in that seeing, in that stillness before thought begins to shape experience, that the yogi awakens—not tomorrow, not somewhere else, but here and now, in the innocence of pure awareness.

Seeing Through the Saṅkhāras

Saṅkhāra (Skt. saṃskāra) refers to all conditioned phenomena—everything that has arisen through causes and conditions and is therefore subject to change and dissolution.

At this stage, every saṅkhāra is seen exactly as it is: impermanent, unsatisfactory, and without an enduring self. Confusion has disappeared.

Whatever arises does so through a multitude of causes and conditions. The same is true of whatever passes away.

The yogi simply observes—without grasping, without resisting, without losing himself.

Just as waves arise and subside upon the ocean, just as clouds drift across an open sky, so everything that is conditioned quietly passes by. The mind, firmly established in equanimity, simply observes what comes and goes.

—Even this stillness has arisen.
Even this clarity is conditioned.
And yet there is no haste.
No seeking.
No resistance.
The yogi knows:
as long as anything continues to arise,
there is still saṃsāra.
Yet no attachment remains.
What remains is simply seeing.
Simply being.—

Even the most tranquil awareness—the most open field of experience—arises and passes away. It comes into being and dissolves.

Only when the heart no longer holds on to anything—not even to the experience of stillness itself—does genuine freedom become possible. Not by abiding in awareness, but by seeing through every form of attachment. ¹³⁰

The Calm Before the Breakthrough

In saṅkhārupekkhā-ñāṇa, the mind reaches a profoundly refined state of calm and clarity. There is no longer any struggle with life as it unfolds—no resistance to what arises and passes away. No pursuit of experiences. No opposition to the impermanent nature of things. The mind is like a clear mirror: everything is reflected, nothing is retained. There is only presence—quiet, lucid, and free.

Whatever comes is free to come.

Whatever goes is free to go.

Only this remains certain: whatever wishes to remain cannot remain.

It is precisely within this quiet equanimity that the yogi prepares for the great turning, the silent shift, the movement towards liberation—not as an achievement, but as the natural consequence of seeing without grasping.

Within this calm openness, the final tendencies towards attachment gradually fade away. What remains is silence. A silence that asks for nothing, seeks nothing, and wishes to preserve nothing.

—This is the silence that asks for nothing.
No answer. No direction. No form.
Only the openness in which everything disappears, and
nothing needs to remain.—

The practitioner's mind rests in its own clarity. And within that stillness, a gate quietly opens—not dramatic, not extraordinary, but completely open.

Quiet Perseverance

At this stage, meditation has become both utterly simple and profoundly refined. The practitioner lives in quiet perseverance—not through craving (lobha; id.), but through wholesome intention (chanda; id.).

There is no longer any pursuit of extraordinary states of consciousness. No attachment to meditative experiences. The mind has learned to trust the unfolding of the path and understands that liberation does not arise through doing, but through letting go.

What remains is a calm clarity that no longer seeks confirmation. A deep confidence in the Unconditioned (asaṅkhata; asaṃskṛta).

—Nothing imposes itself. Nothing is rejected.
Everything is free to come.
Everything is free to go.
What remains is clarity.
And silence.
And the quiet knowing:
This is the threshold of liberation.—



CHAPTER 14 - ANULOMA-ÑĀṆA

Anuloma-ñāṇa (anuloma-jñāna) ¹³¹ is the insight that has come into complete harmony with the Dhamma.

When craving, aversion, and attachment have completely fallen away, and the yogi remains quietly present with the arising and passing of phenomena, a subtle and silent turning takes place.

— Nothing remains that resists.
No doubt.
No expectation.
No hesitation.
The mind has become still,
transparent.
What comes, comes.
What goes, goes.
And everything moves,
of itself,
towards letting go. —

There is nothing left to struggle against. Nothing remains to improve. The yogi's mind now moves effortlessly in harmony (anuloma; id.) with the current of the Dhamma.

Quiet Surrender

Anuloma means "in the same direction", "in harmony", or "in accordance". The yogi is no longer experienced as a separate centre of willing or striving.

Resistance to the natural movement of arising and passing away has quietly come to an end.

Like a leaf carried gently downstream, like a cloud moving without resistance across the sky, so the yogi now abides in complete harmony with reality.

There is no longer the thought, "I must let go." Nor, "I must attain something." Letting go unfolds naturally—effortlessly, without intention.

What appears, appears.
What disappears, disappears.
And the mind rests—clear, still, open.

The Falling Away of the Final Veils

Anuloma-ñāṇa marks the moment at which every preparation has been completed. The Five Hindrances (*pañca nīvaraṇāni*; id.) have disappeared. The ten fetters (*saṃyojanāni*; id.) have been exposed completely and have lost their hold.

What remains is transparent clarity—a mind that no longer places anything between itself and reality.

—The mind knows
that nothing more needs to be done.
Nothing remains to attain.
Nothing remains to understand.
Nothing remains to desire.
Everything has been seen.
Everything has been relinquished.
What remains is silence.
And within that silence,
understanding abides.—

There is no fear.
No hope.
No expectation.

Everything that once appeared desirable, everything that once inspired fear, everything that was once clung to, has become transparent—like morning dew beneath the rising sun.

The mind is still, without rigidity. Open, without expectation. Present, without purpose. And this quiet, effortless presence opens the way towards the Unborn (ajāta; id.).

Natural Readiness

Anuloma-ñāṇa is not something the yogi produces. It is not the result of effort. It unfolds as the natural ripening of insight.

The mind has become like an open field, where nothing more is sown, nothing more defended, nothing more desired. No self remains that seeks. No self remains that strives to become. Only openness.

Within that openness, nothing happens. And precisely because nothing is made to happen, insight is free to unfold.

—No more effort. No more searching. No more waiting.
Only quiet surrender to the Dhamma.
And within that surrender: readiness.
Not as an achievement,
but as complete receptivity.
Whatever comes, may come.—

The gate stands open.
The threshold has been reached.

The yogi is ready to leave behind the current of becoming itself. What follows is not another experience, not an achievement, not a goal attained.

What follows is the quiet turning of being itself—out of the stream of the conditioned and into the open expanse of the Unborn.

Unshakable Alignment

At this stage, a profound sense of coherence emerges. What previously appeared fragmented or difficult quietly comes to rest as one whole.

Meditation is no longer something practised. It has become natural.

Like a mountaineer who, after a long ascent, reaches the summit and catches sight of the valley beyond, the mind senses the nearness of liberation.

Although liberation has not yet been fully realised, its presence is unmistakably close, supported by quiet clarity and a deep, unwavering confidence.

The yogi no longer lives in expectation. He lives in the quiet certainty that liberation is near.



PART III - THE BREAKTHROUGH TO THE UNBORN

When insight has reached maturity, when attachment, craving, and aversion have lost their hold, and the yogi rests in profound equanimity with whatever arises and passes away, the path begins to unfold.

—Nothing remains to desire. Nothing remains to resist.
Only this silence—
ready to break,
without anyone
to break it.—

This third phase is no longer concerned with observing saṅkhāra—the conditioned—but with relinquishing it.

—No wave rising. No wave breaking.
Only the ocean forgetting itself.—

What unfolds here lies beyond the stream of arising and passing away. It no longer concerns experience, but transformation—a quiet turning of being itself.

The veil that has obscured the direct seeing of the Dhamma is now pierced. Not as theory. Not as a meditative state. But as immediate realization.

Here the Unborn, the Unconditioned, is directly realised.

In the Tatiya Nibbāna Sutta ¹³² the Buddha declares:

• *Atthi, bhikkhave, ajātaṃ abhūtaṃ akataṃ asaṅkhatam... — There is, bhikkhus, the unborn, the unbecome, the unmade, the unconditioned...⁹*

This phase is no longer a path in the ordinary sense. Nothing further remains to be developed. There is only complete receptivity to the breakthrough in which the Unconditioned is directly realised. Here the work of the yogi comes to its end.

What now remains is surrender to the timeless.

— No hand that grasps. No mind that seeks.
Only the space where nothing more
is required. —

Here the final four insights unfold.

Gotrabhū-ñāṇa (gotrabhū-jñāna)—the turning of the mind away from the conditioned and towards the supramundane (*lokuttara*). The threshold of the Path has been reached.

Magga-ñāṇa (mārga-jñāna)—knowledge of the Path (*magga*). The moment of breakthrough. The Four Noble Truths are directly penetrated. The corresponding fetters are cut through. The stream is entered.

Phala-ñāṇa (phala-jñāna)—knowledge of the Fruit (*phala*), of what naturally unfolds. A profound peace becomes evident. The Unconditioned is realized: clear, free, and still.

Paccavekkhaṇa-ñāṇa (pratyavekṣaṇa-jñāna)—knowledge of review (*paccavekkhaṇa*; *pratyavekṣaṇa*). The yogi reflects. What has been relinquished? What has been realized? What remains?

When the yogi's mind has come to complete equanimity, a quiet ripening takes place.

—No striving. No becoming.
Only the fading away of striving and becoming.—

No longer drawn towards what appears, no longer attached to the arising and passing of phenomena, the mind naturally inclines towards that which neither arises nor passes away.

Here the current of the conditioned ¹³³ comes to an end. Here the openness of the Unborn reveals itself—not as an experience, not as an object, but as the complete stilling of every movement towards becoming (bhava; id.). ¹³⁴

This is the cessation of becoming (bhava-nirodha; bhava-nirodhaḥ), which the Buddha points to as synonymous with nibbāna (nirvāṇa).

The Buddha declares in the Kosambī Sutta: ¹³⁵

• *Tasmātiha te, bhikkhu, evaṃ sikkhitabbaṃ: “Bhava-nirodhā nibbānaṃ, bhavanirodhā nibbānaṃ”ti. — Therefore, bhikkhu, you should train yourself thus: “With the cessation of becoming, there is nibbāna.”* •

The remaining fetters (saṃyojanāni; id.) dissolve into a silence that bears no name. ¹³⁶

Release occurs, not through effort, but through the complete relinquishment of resistance (vossagga; visarga). ¹³⁷

—As morning dew quietly disappears
at the first light of dawn,
without struggle, without hesitation,
so the contracted sense of "I"
dissolves into the silent knowing
of liberation, of nibbāna.
No action. No grasping.
Only the quiet disappearance
of what was never truly fixed. —

What remains is not emptiness, but openness. Not a lifeless silence, but the living absence of clinging, grasping, and holding.

This is the threshold.

No longer between past and future. No longer between here and there. But the threshold of that which has never arisen—and can therefore never pass away.

—Even wisdom can become a veil
when it gives rise to attachment. —

The Subtle Trap of Attachment to the Dhamma

As the practitioner arrives at this threshold, equanimity deepens not only towards sensory impressions and mental processes, but also towards the most subtle layers of attachment.

The quiet feeling, "I am one who knows." "I possess insight." "I represent the Dhamma." may itself become the final veil that prevents the complete relinquishment of every construction of self.

Even the thought that one has progressed "further" or "higher" than others on the path is simply māna in its most refined form—the lingering shadow of an "I" that, though greatly weakened by insight, has not yet entirely disappeared.

The Buddha warned that attachment even to the Dhamma itself—when regarded as my teaching or my truth—becomes an obstacle to complete liberation. Whoever constructs a self around the Dhamma has not yet fully understood it.

Within this context, the following contemplation may help the practitioner relinquish even these subtle forms of conceit (māna; id.)¹³⁸ and ignorance (avijjā; avidyā).¹³⁹

The Buddha taught that conceit—the subtle tendency to measure oneself as superior, equal, or inferior—is itself an expression of attachment to a self-image.

It is a refined form of clinging to "I," "me," and "mine," and a refusal to recognise the selfless nature (anattā; anātman) of all phenomena.

To present oneself as a representative of the Dhamma is therefore a subtle yet profound expression of ignorance (avijjā; avidyā), especially when accompanied by a lack of wisdom (paññā; prajñā)¹⁴⁰ and humility (nīcamānī; nīcāmatī).¹⁴¹

The Dhamma, though taught in words (desanā),¹⁴² is not a possession. It is not a mark of distinction, nor a banner to be carried by an individual or a group. The

Dhamma is a means of liberation, never an object of attachment.

The Dhamma is not something to possess. It points beyond itself towards the Unborn, the Unconditioned (asaṅkhata (P.); asaṃskṛta (Skt.)). ¹⁴³

The true nature of the Dhamma is revealed not to those who seek to possess it, but to those who quietly awaken to it through relinquishment (vossagga; visarga). ¹⁴⁴

In the Alagaddūpama Sutta, ¹⁴⁵ the Buddha warns that whoever clings to the Dhamma as my teaching or my truth has not yet truly understood it. The teaching is like a raft: intended for crossing over, not for carrying once the far shore has been reached.

This sutta makes it clear that attachment to the Dhamma—whether as doctrine or as concept—is itself a form of clinging, and that constructing a self through the Dhamma can never lead to liberation.

The true practitioner sees and knows (janāmi passāmi; janāmi paśyāmi) ¹⁴⁶ that the Dhamma does not need to be defended.

The Dhamma is lived—in simplicity, in clarity, and in the quiet presence of direct insight. Without possession. Without claim. Without conceit.

—Like a flower that blossoms
without ever giving itself a name.—

Although the Dhamma finds expression in outward forms that support the path—such as the Vinaya ¹⁴⁷

for monks and nuns—it lays no claim to prestige or worldly representation.

It cannot be reduced to political or ideological positions, confined within institutions, or claimed as the authority of any individual or group. Nor does its truth depend upon polemics or defence. ¹⁴⁸

The Dhamma simply invites us to investigate ignorance—in all its forms and manifestations—with careful attention and wise reflection (*yoniso manasikāra*; *yuktimāna-manaskāra*). ¹⁴⁹

The Dhamma is taught in words, yet its essence is beyond words. It waits quietly to be recognised through the silence of direct insight.

When even this final veil of subtle attachment has been seen through and relinquished, the mind becomes so transparent that it effortlessly follows the natural unfolding of causality until liberation reveals itself. ¹⁵⁰

This relinquishment does not arise through suppression, but through the natural fading away of identification once its underlying mechanism has been deeply understood.

That is the quiet power of *vipassanā*.



CHAPTER 15 - GOTRABHŪ-ÑĀṆA

Gotrabhū-ñāṇa (gotrabhū-jñāṇa) ¹⁵¹ refers to the moment of insight at which the mind turns completely away from saṃsāra and inclines towards the Unconditioned. It is the threshold immediately preceding the breakthrough into the supramundane Path.

It is the final mundane (lokiya; laukika) moment of insight, arising immediately before the supramundane (lokuttara; lokottara) Path (magga; mārga).

It is therefore a moment of transition—a turning away, a crossing beyond saṃsāra. The actual crossing beyond saṃsāra occurs only with magga-ñāṇa (mārga-jñāṇa), when the stream is entered (sotāpatti; srotāpatti).

When the yogi's mind has become fully attuned to the current of the Dhamma, it ripens into a decisive turning point: a complete relinquishment of the world of arising and passing away, and a silent orientation towards the Unborn.

—As though a door opens, though no one opens it.
As though something disappears
that was never truly there.
No more perceiving.
No more reacting.
No more doing.
Only the turning itself.
And silence.
Not as a state,
but as the absence
of every state.—

Nothing remains to be held onto. Nothing remains to be pursued. Every expectation has fallen away. Only silence remains—a silence that marks the boundary between the conditioned and the Unconditioned.

The Threshold of Liberation

The word gotrabhū literally means one who crosses the boundary of the lineage—the boundary separating the lineage of the ordinary worldling (puthujjana; pṛthagjana) from that of the Noble Ones (ariya-pudgala; ārya-pudgala).

Up to this point, the yogi has still been carried along by the river of becoming (bhava; id.). From here, that movement comes to rest. What unfolds is not a new experience. Not ecstasy. Not a vision.

It is an inner transformation in which the mind ceases to incline towards saṃsāra. It no longer turns towards what arises and passes away.

Instead, it quietly, gently, and irreversibly turns away from the conditioned, inclining towards the Unborn. There is no "I" that turns. No self that decides. Only the stilling of movement.

The Fetters Loosen

With gotrabhū-ñāṇa, the final subtle fascination with conditioned existence falls away. There is no longer any desire to become. No longer any desire not to become.

There is only clear seeing of the structure of conditioned arising—and the complete relinquishment of clinging.

What was once held is released.
What was once sought is abandoned.
What was once feared is left behind.

The yogi's mind turns completely inward—not towards a new centre, nor towards another identity, but towards the silent absence of attachment. Within that absence, an openness reveals itself.

—No thought sustains this.
No perception can portray it.
Only the absence
of every familiar movement.
And within that:
An inexplicable clarity.
This is not a result.
This is not an experience.
This is the threshold.—

It is an openness in which the Unborn is no longer sought, because every search has fallen silent. Here the path of becoming comes to an end. Here the movement of becoming comes to an end.

No Turning Back

Gotrabhū-ñāṇa marks the threshold of irreversibility. From here, the mind can no longer return to blindness. It cannot again become entirely immersed in the currents of ignorance, craving, and aversion.

Behind lies the world of conditioned phenomena—the endless play of arising and passing away: saṃsāra (id.).

Ahead lies the Unborn—not as something that can be grasped or known conceptually, but as the complete absence of clinging.

The mind no longer comes to rest upon phenomena. It no longer seeks support in anything that arises and passes away.

The Buddha described the decisive breakthrough as sotāpatti (srotāpatti)—the entering of the stream that inevitably leads to liberation.

Yet what occurs here is not an entering in the ordinary sense. It is a letting go. A becoming still. The quiet disappearance of the one who once searched, hoped, and feared.

What remains is silence.
And within that silence: Liberation.
An Unspoken Transition

Gotrabhū-ñāṇa is not an experience that can be preserved or adequately described. It is the pure turning of awareness towards the Unconditioned (asaṅkhata; asaṃskṛta).

Just as a bird released from a ship does not return once it has found land, so the yogi's mind no longer turns back towards saṃsāra, but inclines naturally towards Nibbāna (nirvāṇa)—not as an idea, but as the natural consummation of insight.

No uncertainty remains.

No return is possible.

The riverbed of saṃsāra has been left behind.

The yogi's mind no longer moves within the cycle of arising and passing away, but rests in the open freedom of liberation.



CHAPTER 16 - MAGGA-ÑĀṆA

Magga-ñāṇa (mārga-jñāna) ¹⁵² is the liberating insight of the Path.

When the yogi has relinquished the world of becoming, when the mind has turned away from the conditioned and inclines towards the Unconditioned, it stands ready for the silent breakthrough.

No more striving.

No more effort.

No more waiting.

The Awakening of the Path

The word magga means way or path. Here, however, it does not refer to a process, a sequence of stages, or a method to be followed.

It refers to a single timeless moment—the moment in which the yogi, without mediation and without transition, directly realizes the truth, and liberation unfolds.

—No movement. No self. Only a flash of clarity that leaves nothing behind—and requires nothing.

No birth. No death. No self.

No world.

Only ending.—

Not as the result of effort. Not as the reward for perseverance. But as a sudden reversal: the direct seeing of what has always been present, though hidden by ignorance.

Within this single, luminous moment, the deepest roots of ignorance (avijjā; avidyā), craving (taṇhā; trṣṇā), and clinging (upādāna; id.) are cut through.

The yogi does not discover something new. He simply sees, with perfect clarity, what has always been—free from distortion, free from concealment.

—There is no "I" that sees.
There is only seeing.
Clear.
Still.—

The Liberating Transformation

With magga-ñāṇa, everything that bound the mind falls away. The fetters (saṃyojanāni; id.) are cut through.

The veil of delusion is lifted.
The movement of craving is broken.
Whatever has arisen comes to an end.
Whatever has been sustained falls away.
Whatever once clung releases its hold.
Not because the mind accomplishes something.
Not because it attains something.
But because, in the clarity of direct seeing, the last obstructions fall away of themselves.

—There is nothing to grasp.
Nothing to know.
Nothing to become.
And within that nothing—not emptiness, but liberation.
Not an experience, but cessation.
Not a distance, but the disappearance of distance itself.—

The Buddha described this as the extinguishing of the fires of greed, hatred, and delusion: Nibbāna (nirvāṇa). Not as annihilation. Nor as the extinction of being. But as the ending of becoming.

The Path as Silence

What magga-ñāṇa reveals is not an object. Not a perception. Not an experience.

It reveals silence—not as the absence of sound, but as the complete absence of clinging.

The yogi comes to rest—not upon something, but in the absence of seeking. Nothing remains to be grasped, nothing remains to be resisted, nothing remains to be changed.

What appears is free.

What disappears is free.

What remains is free.

The Path is not a destination.

The Path is the absence of striving.

The absence of concealment.

The absence of division.

What remains is simplicity: an open space in which nothing is grasped and nothing is rejected.

No birth.

No death.

No "I" between the two.

Magga-ñāṇa is unique. It arises only once at each stage of liberation. ¹⁵³ It is not an enduring state, but a single flash of awakening—a timeless moment that changes everything.

—What appears no longer appears for me.
What disappears disappears without remainder.
What I believed myself to be is seen never to have arisen.
What I feared losing was never truly there. —

The stream is entered (sotāpatti; srotāpatti).
There is no turning back.

Yet nothing spectacular has taken place.

It is quiet. Natural. Simple. Like a leaf falling from a tree when the season is complete.

Everything that had to ripen has ripened. Everything that had to be relinquished has been relinquished.

What remains is a clear and natural opening into liberation.



CHAPTER 17 - PHALA-ÑĀṆA

Phala-ñāṇa (phala-jñāna) ¹⁵⁴ is the insight into the Fruition of the Path.

Following the silent breakthrough of the Path, when the fires of craving, aversion, and ignorance have been extinguished, nothing remains that can bind the yogi's mind. Phala-ñāṇa is the immediate fruition of the Path moment—without falling back, without seeking, like the silence that follows the flash.

No further movement.
No new experience.
No new identity.

The Silence of Fruition

The word phala means fruit. Yet this fruit is not something that is harvested, nor something that is attained. It is the natural consequence of the ending of striving—the quiet stilness of what can no longer be named. It is the silence that remains when everything that obscured direct seeing has fallen away.

—No burden. No striving.
No movement towards anything.
What was bound is released.
What was obscured is clear.
What I believed myself to be
has fallen silent. —

No more waiting.
No more becoming.
Only presence—clear, open, and uncontrived.

Within this fruition there is no longer an "I" that possesses. No mind that guards itself. There is only openness, in which nothing is held onto and nothing is sought—a peace that is not created, but reveals itself when every bond has been relinquished.

Silence.

Openness.

Groundless freedom.

The Taste of Liberation

The Buddha spoke of this as vimutti (vimukti): liberation. Not as a condition in which everything has disappeared, but as one in which nothing needs to be held onto any longer.

The world remains the world.

Forms continue to arise and pass away.

Thoughts continue to come and go.

But the mind no longer grasps.

No longer resists.

No longer identifies.

Everything comes.

Everything goes.

And nothing needs to be otherwise.

—Experience has not changed.

But the response has.

What I see no longer needs to be mine.

What I feel no longer needs to be preserved.

Nothing remains that moves as resistance within me. —

The taste of liberation is neither sensational nor ecstatic, neither dramatic nor esoteric.

It is simple.
Gentle.
Unassuming.
Like a lake that has become still because the wind
has ceased.
No ripples.
No waves.
Only clear water—transparent and still.

Living Without Weight

With phala-ñāṇa, the stream of life continues.
The body breathes.
The senses continue to function.
Thoughts arise.
Actions are performed.
Yet everything has become light.
Nothing carries weight.
Nothing clings.

There is life—without burden.
There is movement—without resistance.
There is existence—without an owner.

The yogi lives without becoming bound.
Experiences without becoming lost.
Acts without attachment to the fruits of action.
Free and fully present.

—What I was is gone.
What I am is not new.
It feels like coming home,
yet there is no home.
Only the wind. Only the light.
Only the quiet knowing:
This is enough.—

This is the fruit: the quiet, simple presence in which freedom is no longer sought, but naturally reveals itself.



CHAPTER 18 - PACCAVEKKHAṆA-ÑĀṆA

Paccavekkhaṇa-ñāṇa (pratyavekṣaṇa-jñāṇa) ¹⁵⁵ is the quiet reflection that follows liberation. It is not so much a new insight as a gentle looking back at what has been relinquished.

When the yogi has come to complete stillness, when liberation flows quietly through life as an uncontrived presence, the mind turns back—gently, without seeking, without desire.

Not out of memory.

Not out of need.

But out of clarity.

The Quiet Contemplation of the Path

The word paccavekkhaṇa means reflection, review, or contemplation. Yet it is not a matter of mentally revisiting the past or recounting what has taken place. It is the quiet and lucid contemplation of the Path as it has naturally unfolded.

Without ownership.

Without pride.

Without regret.

The yogi looks—not as one who has attained something, but as one for whom nothing remains to be attained.

—I look—not as one who has achieved something,
but as one who no longer needs to hold on to anything.
What has disappeared leaves no emptiness behind.
What has been relinquished asks for no replacement.

Only this peace, which is not mine.
Only this knowing, to which nothing needs to be added.—

What has disappeared is known as having disappeared.
What has been relinquished is known as having been relinquished.
What has come to an end is known as having come to an end.

There is no need to glorify the Path. No desire to preserve liberation. Only a quiet and untroubled gaze upon the way that has been walked—and upon the openness that now lies before it.

The Simplicity of Freedom

Paccavekkhaṇa-ñāṇa brings no new insight, no fresh revelation. It brings only the quiet confirmation that suffering has been fully understood, the fetters have been broken, and freedom has been tasted.

Without words.
Without stories.
Without attachment.

The yogi sees:
What had to be abandoned has been abandoned.
What had to be relinquished has been relinquished.
What had to be seen has been seen.
Nothing remains.
Nothing needs to remain.

—The stream has been crossed.
Its direction has changed.
What appears, still appears—

Yet I no longer become with it.
What moves, still moves—
Yet it no longer carries me away.
I know:
this path is true.
This freedom is true.—

The freedom that remains is simple. Not an exalted state. Not an ecstatic condition. Only a transparent and silent presence—a life sustained by insight.

Living in the World, Yet Not of the World

After liberation, the yogi remains in the world. He eats. He walks. He speaks. He is silent. Yet nothing takes hold of him any longer. Nothing adheres.

He lives—not as an ordinary worldling grasping after pleasure or fleeing from pain, but as one who clearly sees: whatever arises passes away; whatever appears disappears.

There is no rejection of the world. No denial of experience. Only the direct seeing of things as they are—impermanent, unsatisfactory, and without self.

Just as the lotus grows from the mud without being stained by it, so the liberated yogi lives in the world without being burdened by it.

Within the stream, yet not swept away.
Within time, yet not imprisoned by it.

And so the mind returns—quiet, clear, and open—to the simplicity of being.

Not as someone, but as an open space in which life
unfolds without clinging.

—There is no triumph.
No desire to say anything.
Only the quiet clarity of a mind
set free from seeking.
And within that freedom:
not forgetfulness,
but attentiveness.
Not indifference,
but silent receptivity. —

Seeing.
Knowing.
Being free.



AFTERWORD

There is a silence deeper than the silence of words. A space that precedes thought, intention, and knowing. A clarity that is not created but simply revealed—when grasping comes to an end, when the search falls away, when the yogi comes home to himself: empty, simple, and free.

The sixteen vipassanā-ñāṇas (vipaśyanā-jñānas) described in this book are neither a technique nor a formula, nor a ladder to be climbed. They form a map of inner dismantling—a quiet path of seeing, of letting go, of awakening to what has always been present. Genuine practice ultimately transcends technique and form. ¹⁵⁶

It is seeing that constitutes the Path.

It is not sitting that matters, but seeing. At the heart of the practice, what matters is not the posture of the body (apart from an upright spine), nor schools, traditions, lineages, structures, or forms, but the clarity of awareness itself.

Sitting can certainly be helpful, providing a stable setting in which the mind may settle. But the moment form is mistaken for essence, the heart of the practice is lost.

The Dhamma is neither ritual nor technique. Nor is it a system or a structure. It is an invitation to meet reality directly, without self-centred intention, without expectation, without ego.

The danger is that practice itself becomes another identity: the quiet meditator, the seeker with a path, a goal, and something to attain. Yet the moment practice becomes another way of confirming the self, the yogi is caught once again in the very trap from which he sought to be liberated.

The Buddha did not point to postures, rituals, or structures. He pointed to insight. He taught the contemplation of impermanence, the relinquishment of attachment, and the direct realization of not-self, so that the yogi might be liberated from dukkha.

Seeing—that is what matters. Seeing how everything arises and passes away. Seeing how thought moves, how perceptions and feelings arise and disappear again, without wanting to hold on to anything. Without grasping. Without rejecting. Seeing without resistance, without interference, without the need to make things different from what they are.

True meditation is formless. Once the mind has become clear, meditation transcends every technique. It is no longer a matter of sitting, standing, walking, or lying down; nor of methods or systems, but of open awareness in this moment—in every moment. Whether you are walking, washing the dishes, sitting, or lying down, wherever there is clarity, there is practice. Only where there is seeing can liberation unfold.

Therefore, it is not sitting that liberates, but the insight that arises when we relinquish what we believed we had to do, to be, or to attain.

Where outward forms fall away, truth is free to reveal itself—not as something new, but as that which has always been present, unseen beneath the surface.

Truth has no need of structures, rituals, or words to confirm itself. It asks for no form, only openness. Clarity. Silence. Liberation.

Nothing more is required. Only the willingness to look.

Not a single step along this path requires belief. Nor any structure. Nor the worship of a god. No stage demands another life, another world, or another existence.

Whoever abides in this silence does not discover a new world, but quietly leaves the old one behind—the world of grasping and clinging, of resistance, seeking and avoidance, of becoming and losing.

Everything that is needed is already here—in this body, in this mind, in this very moment.

The breath comes and goes. Thoughts appear and disappear. Feelings arise and pass away. Everything moves—and dissolves again within the open space of awareness.

Nothing described in these pages is new. It is the ancient Dhamma (dhammo sanantano)—the timeless lawfulness of arising and passing away, the silence in which life continually unfolds and subsides, without beginning and without end.

Therein lies the simplicity of this teaching: nothing is acquired, nothing is invented—only remembered.

The Buddha gave us nothing we did not already possess. He simply pointed—gently, simply, and clearly—to what had never been lost, only forgotten through conditioning: the possibility of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, feeling, and thinking without craving; of living without aversion, without attachment—free, simple, and open, as the yogi is when no longer conditioned by the impulse towards becoming (bhava; id.).

Whoever learns to enter this silence discovers no new world, but leaves the old one behind—the world of grasping and clinging, of aversive resistance, of seeking and avoidance, of becoming and losing.

What remains is not emptiness. What remains is openness. What remains is a presence that belongs to no "I", yet extends in every direction—like light without a source, like space without boundaries.

No beginning.

No end.

No movement.

No ladder. No steps. Only the disappearance of the step, the dissolution of the boundary, and the open space of what has always been free.

The Buddha declares in the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta: ¹⁵⁷

• *Yaṃ kiñci samudayadhammaṃ sabbaṃ taṃ nirodhadhammaṃ. — Whatever is subject to arising is subject to cessation.* •

And in the deep realization of this simple, yet profoundly liberating truth:

Silence.

Peace.

Liberation.



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Guy Eugène Dubois (1947) has devoted much of his life to the study, translation, and clarification of the early Dhamma. As an independent author, translator, and contemplative practitioner, he has written extensively on early Buddhism, meditation, insight, and liberation.

His work is characterised by a sustained interest in the earliest strata of Buddhist teaching and by a commitment to direct investigation rather than dogmatic interpretation.

Over the years, he has translated and commented on a number of early Buddhist texts from the Pāli Canon, including the *Dhammapada*, *Itivuttaka*, *Udāna*, *Khuddakapāṭha*, the *Khaggavisāṇa Sutta*, and the *Parāyanavagga*. He is also the author of numerous works on early Buddhist meditation and insight, including studies of the *Satipaṭṭhāna*, the *jhānas*, and the Sixteen Vipassanā-Ñāṇas. In addition, he has translated and explored several contemplative works from the Sanskrit tradition.

Although deeply influenced by the Buddha's teaching, Dubois does not align himself with any particular school, lineage, or institutional tradition. He approaches the Dhamma in a spirit of independent inquiry, placing direct investigation above belief and personal verification above tradition.

His approach is experiential, contemplative, and grounded in the spirit of *dharmavicaya*—the careful investigation of reality through direct observation.

His books are written with the intention of making the early Dhamma accessible without compromising its depth. Rather than presenting fixed doctrines or philosophical systems, they invite readers into a process of direct observation, careful inquiry, and personal verification. Throughout his work, clarity is valued above complexity, and seeing above believing.

In the spirit of the early Dhamma, he regards himself as "homeless," not in an external sense but inwardly: unwilling to take up permanent residence in fixed beliefs, doctrines, or identities. This perspective informs both his practice and his writing.

His writings are made freely available through Yatha-Bhuta—a multilingual Dhamma website offering English, Spanish, French, and Dutch editions. Through this platform, readers from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds are invited to explore the Dhamma through direct study and contemplation.

His books have found readers among practitioners and independent students of the Dhamma worldwide who are drawn to a direct, contemplative, and non-sectarian approach to the Buddhist path.

His writings have appeared on numerous international Buddhist websites and platforms, including Sutta-Central, Boeddhistisch Dagblad, The Universal Sangha, Buddhism Without Borders, Buddhism Stack Exchange, and many others.

The Sixteen Vipassanā-Ñāṇas – From Impermanence to Liberation reflects this lifelong exploration of the path from conditioned existence to liberation. Drawing upon the earliest Buddhist teachings, it invites

readers into a direct contemplative inquiry into their own experience.

In accordance with the Buddha's teaching that the Dhamma is the highest gift, the author makes his writings freely available and encourages their free, non-commercial distribution and sharing.



FOOTNOTES

¹ *Tathāgata* (P. & Skt.): A title the Buddha used when referring to himself. It is commonly translated as "the Thus-Come One" or "the Thus-Gone One."

In the earliest Buddhist texts, the term refers to one who lives in complete accord with reality (*tathatā*; *id.*) and who, free from all attachment and from the illusion of a permanent self, passes through the world without leaving a trace—like the wind itself.

² Time and space refer in the earliest Buddhist texts to the conditioned world of arising and passing away (*saṅkhata*; *saṃskṛta*). The Unconditioned (*asaṅkhata*; *asaṃskṛta*)—namely *Nibbāna* (*nirvāṇa*)—lies beyond time and space: it is unborn, imperishable, unlocalised, and cannot be understood in terms of "before" and "after," or "here" and "there."

- Time: *kāla* (P. & Skt.) refers to the dimension of arising, existence, and passing away. Everything subject to *kāla* is impermanent and ever-changing—a characteristic of the conditioned.

- Space: *okāsa* (P.); *avakāśa* (Skt.) refers to location, extension, and spatial orientation. Like time, space belongs to the conditioned realm and is transcended in the Unconditioned, which is free from all location and limitation

³ *Dhammapada*, *Gāthā* 93

⁴ The Buddha never identified any particular posture as sacred or essential. What truly matters is the cultivation of mindfulness (*sati*; *smṛti*), concentration (*samādhi*; *id.*), and wisdom (*paññā*; *prajñā*), regardless of the posture or form the practice may take.

⁵ Confusing form with essence reflects attachment to rites and rituals (*sīlabbataparāmāsa*; *śīlavrataparāmarśa*)—one of the first three fetters (*saṃyojanāni*; *id.*) abandoned upon entering the stream (*sotāpatti*; *srotāpatti*).

⁶ This may seem a subtle point, but it is fundamental: nowhere in the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* is meditation (*bhāvanā*; *id.*) reduced to a particular posture or technique. Its essence lies in mindfulness (*sati*; *smṛti*) and wisdom (*paññā*; *prajñā*). There its liberating power unfolds.

⁷ Clarity refers here to clear knowing (*pajānāti*; *prajānāti*): the direct, mindful awareness of whatever arises in body and mind—without conceptualisation or projection. The term *pajānāti* occurs frequently in the earliest Buddhist texts and refers to the direct seeing of reality as it truly is: impermanent (*anicca*; *anitya*), unsatisfactory (*dukkha*; *duḥkha*), and without a permanent self (*anattā*; *anātman*). It denotes an immediate clarity that is not based on thought or reasoning, but on direct insight arising from silent presence. As such, *pajānāti* is an essential aspect of mindfulness (*sati*; *smṛti*) and forms the foundation of liberating wisdom (*paññā*; *prajñā*).

⁸ *Nibbāna* (*nirvāṇa*) is realised through insight (*vipassanā*; *vipaśyanā*), not through concentration (*samādhi*; *id.*) alone, nor through ritual observance. The earliest Buddhist texts repeatedly emphasise that liberation arises through the direct realisation of the three characteristics of existence (*tilakkhaṇa*; *trilakṣaṇa*). Concentration offers an essential foundation—a state of tranquillity in which the mind is freed from distraction and attachment. Without clear insight, however, concentration remains conditioned and impermanent. Likewise, moral discipline (*sīla*; *id.*), though indispensable, was never intended as an end in itself. The Buddha repeatedly warned against attachment to rites, rituals, and religious observances (*sīlabbataparāmāsa*; *śīlavrataparāmarśa*). Liberation arises only where insight matures. There, in that seeing, grasping comes to an end.

⁹ *Vimutti* (P); *vimukti* (Skt.) literally means "liberation" or "release." In Buddhism, it refers to the liberation of the mind from the fetters of ignorance (*avijjā*; *avidyā*), craving (*taṇhā*; *trṣṇā*), and clinging (*upādāna*; *id.*). This liberation is not the result of external forms or rituals, but of seeing reality as it truly is: impermanent (*anicca*; *anitya*), unsatisfactory (*dukkha*; *duḥkha*), and without a permanent self (*anattā*; *anātman*).

Vimutti is the direct fruit of insight (*vipassanā*; *vipaśyanā*) and is understood as the realisation of *Nibbāna* (*nirvāṇa*): complete liberation from suffering and from the cycle of birth and death (*saṃsāra*; *id.*). It does not arise through effort alone, but through the falling away of every illusion—precisely where insight dawns.

¹⁰ This refers to the relinquishment of every form of becoming and non-becoming. The Buddha distinguished three forms of craving: *kāma-taṇhā* (*kāma-trṣṇā*), the craving for sensual pleasure; *bhava-taṇhā* (*bhava-trṣṇā*), the craving for existence—for becoming or continuing to be; and *vibhava-taṇhā* (*vibhava-trṣṇā*), the craving for non-existence—for annihilation or cessation of being. All three are expressions of attachment to self and to existence, and each constitutes a profound obstacle to insight and liberation.

¹¹ *Dhammatā* (P); *dharmatā* (Skt.) literally means "the nature of the Dhamma" or "the true nature of things." In Buddhist teaching, it refers to the inherent order of reality—the way things truly are, independent of preference, belief, or conceptualisation. It denotes the lawful order of existence: that all phenomena arise, change, and cease in dependence upon conditions (*paṭicca-samuppāda*; *pratītya-samutpāda*).

Dhammatā is not the creation of a god or any other entity, but the natural order in which impermanence (*anicca*; *anitya*), unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha*; *duḥkha*), and not-self (*anattā*; *anātman*) reveal themselves.

¹² *The Buddha consistently points to direct realisation through insight (vipassanā; vipaśyanā), rather than to faith in rituals or attachment to religious observances (sīlabbata-parāmāsa; sīlavrataparāmarśa). Likewise, attachment to lineages or doctrines is not regarded as conducive to liberation, but as an obstacle to it.*

See, for example, the Kālāma Sutta (Aṅguttara Nikāya 3.65), in which the Buddha cautions against accepting teachings solely on the basis of tradition, authority, or received belief.

In the teaching on the ten fetters (saṃyojanāni; id.), attachment to rites, rituals, and conventional religious practices is explicitly identified as a fetter to be abandoned.

¹³ *Openness is a central term in this book, yet in Buddhist thought it carries a richer significance. Neither Pāli nor Sanskrit contains a single term that corresponds exactly to our ordinary understanding of openness. Instead, several related concepts express different aspects of the experience intended here: appaṭigha (apratigha), freedom from resistance or aversion; anālaya (id.), non-abiding, free from attachment and fixation; suññatā (śūnyatā), emptiness—empty of self and possession; and pasāda (prasāda), inner clarity, serene confidence, and trust.*

¹⁴ *Bhava (P. & Skt.) literally means "becoming," "existence," or "continued existence." In Buddhist doctrine, it refers to the tendency to become—the impulse to establish an identity, a state, or a mode of existence within the cycle of birth and death (saṃsāra; id.). This is not a neutral concept, but one that arises from craving (taṇhā; tṛṣṇā), most explicitly in the form of bhava-taṇhā (bhava-tṛṣṇā)—the craving for existence, becoming, or continued being. Letting go of bhava means seeing through and bringing to an end this subtle tendency to be or become "someone." This is essential to liberation (vimutti; vimukti).*

¹⁵ *Dhammacakkavattana Sutta, Saṃyutta Nikāya 56.11*

¹⁶ Krishnamurti, Jiddu, (2011), *Explorations and Insights*; Krishnamurti Foundation, India

¹⁷ 'When the mind understands itself' refers to insight (*vipassanā*; *vipaśyanā*) into its own mental processes, especially the clear recognition of attachment, craving, and identification. This understanding is not the result of discursive analysis, but of a direct, mindful contemplation of reality as it presents itself.

It closely corresponds to what the early Buddhist texts describe as wise attention (*yoniso manasikāra*; *yoniso manaskāra*): a careful and penetrating way of attending that directs the mind towards the deeper causes of suffering.

This lies at the heart of the cultivation of insight (*vipassanā-bhāvanā*; *vipaśyanā-bhāvanā*) and opens the way to the inward relinquishment of attachment—not through turning away or avoidance, but simply through clear seeing.

¹⁸ *Paṭivedha* (P.); *prativedha* (Skt.): literally "penetration", "direct seeing", or "direct realization." In Buddhist doctrine, the term refers to the immediate realization of the Dhamma, beyond mere intellectual understanding (*pariyatti*; *paryāpti*) and even beyond practice itself (*paṭipatti*; *prati-patti*).

It is the direct personal realization of truth, in which insight is no longer conceptual but shines forth as liberating clarity.

¹⁹ 'Deeper dimensions of being and knowing' refers to the direct realization of the three characteristics of existence (*tilakkhaṇa*; *trilakṣaṇa*): impermanence (*anicca*; *anitya*), unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha*; *duḥkha*), and not-self (*anattā*; *anātman*). This realization goes beyond conceptual thought and touches the profound clarity in which reality is seen as it truly is.

²⁰ 'Natural wisdom' refers to insight (*paññā*; *prajñā*) that ripens spontaneously through direct experience, without dependence on acquired knowledge (*pariyatti*; *paryāpti*) or conceptual reasoning. It is a wisdom that arises from clear awareness rather than from intellectual constructions.

²¹ *Asaṅkhata* (P.); *asaṃskṛta* (Skt.): literally "the Unconditioned" or "the Unconstructed." In Buddhist doctrine, the term refers to that which has not arisen through causes and conditions: the Unconditioned, namely *Nibbāna* (*nirvāṇa*).

Asaṅkhata denotes complete freedom from the cycle of arising and passing away (*saṃsāra*; *id.*). It is a reality beyond impermanence, suffering, and the illusion of a permanent self.

²² *Pabhassara-citta* (P.); *prabhāsvara-citta* (Skt.): literally "the luminous mind", "the radiant mind", or "the naturally luminous mind". In the Buddhist tradition, the term refers to the mind's intrinsic luminosity—a fundamental quality that is always present, though often obscured by temporary defilements (*kilesa*; *kleśa*) such as greed, hatred, and delusion.

The image of the sun hidden behind clouds is frequently used to illustrate this. The clouds conceal the light, but they do not alter the nature of the sun. Likewise, *pabhassara-citta* is not a state to be created, but a reality that becomes apparent when the veils of confusion and attachment fall away.

Pabhassara-citta does not refer to a metaphysical self or enduring essence, but to the mind when it is free from obscuration—clear, unobstructed, and luminous. The direct realization of this luminosity forms an important foundation for liberation.

²³ What is commonly called love is often another name for attachment—a longing for another, for oneself, or for some imagined fulfilment. Yet when attachment falls away, when the sense of "I" dissolves, nothing remains that belongs to anyone. Love is then no longer grasping or clinging, but an openness that needs nothing and no one in order to be complete. Such love does not have to be relinquished. It is relinquishment itself.

²⁴ *Suññatā-vihāra* literally means "dwelling in emptiness" or "the abiding in emptiness." In the earliest Buddhist texts, the term refers to a direct meditative realization in which the yogi directly realizes the emptiness (*suññatā*; *śūnyatā*) of all phenomena, free from attachment to forms, self-images, and conceptual constructions.

In the *Cūḷasuññata Sutta* (*Majjhima Nikāya* 121), the Buddha describes this as a sublime abiding capable of leading the mind to complete liberation.

The central passage of this discourse may be rendered as follows: "Furthermore, Ānanda, the Tathāgata teaches that a noble disciple dwells in emptiness (*suññatā-vihāra*), free from attachment to any phenomenon. In this way, the mind is liberated." (free translation)

²⁵ 'Where the *vipassanā-nāṇas* take root and mature' refers to the fact that these moments of insight (*nāṇa*; *jñāna*) do not arise through theory or will-power, but unfold naturally through direct contemplative experience. They are not conceptual constructions, but the natural maturation of insight (*vipassanā*; *vipaśyanā*), becoming ever more refined as the mind grows clearer, purer, and more receptive.

In the Pāli Canon, this direct realization is expressed by the term *paññavedha* (Sanskrit: *pratiavedha*): the direct penetration of truth as it truly is, beyond mere learning (*pariyatti*; *pariyāpti*) and practice (*paññapatti*; *pratiṭṭipatti*).

²⁶ 'Just as a flower does not force itself to bloom' is a metaphor for the natural, unforced maturation of insight.

In the earliest Buddhist tradition, this gradual process is reflected in the principle of *anupubbikathā* (P); *anupūrvikathā* (Skt.), a term composed of *anu* ("gradually", "successively"), *pubba* ("preceding", "earlier"), and *kathā* ("teaching" or "discourse").

The expression may be freely rendered as "a gradual exposition" or "a progressively unfolding teaching." It illustrates the way insight itself matures—not through force or striving, but by unfolding as the necessary conditions ripen, in stillness and clear seeing.

²⁷ *The Vimuttimaggā*—literally *The Path of Liberation*—attributed to the monk *Upatissa* (first–second century CE), is one of the oldest surviving meditation manuals in the Buddhist tradition.

The work is simpler in structure than *Buddhaghosa's* later *Visuddhimaggā* (*The Path of Purification*; fifth century CE). It is less systematic, yet more directly concerned with the practical cultivation of meditation and insight.

Free from the elaborate scholasticism of later treatises, the *Vimuttimaggā* embodies the spirit of a living contemplative tradition: clear, experiential, and directed towards liberation through insight.

²⁸ *The Paṭisambhidāmaggā*—literally *The Path of Analytical Discernment*—is a canonical text of the *Khuddaka Nikāya* that offers a profound exposition of insight (*ñāṇa*; *jñāna*) as it develops through meditative practice. It describes how the various forms of insight gradually mature, unfolding as an increasingly refined expression of wisdom along the path to liberation.

²⁹ *The Visuddhimagga—The Path of Purification—is a systematic manual of meditation and Buddhist psychology, compiled by Buddhaghosa during the fifth century CE.*

In Chapter XXI (Paññābhūmi-niddesa), the sixteen stages of insight (vipassanā-ñāṇas) are presented in detail within the broader framework of ethical conduct (sīla; id.), concentration (samādhi; id.), and wisdom (paññā; prajñā).

This synthesis remains, to this day, one of the principal reference works for insight meditation within the Theravāda tradition.

³⁰ *‘A gentle guide along the path of inner liberation’ refers to the way the vipassanā-ñāṇas are understood within the Theravāda tradition.*

They are not regarded as dogmas, but simply as points of recognition (nimitta)—orientations that help practitioners recognize and deepen the natural maturation of insight.

They are never ends in themselves, but quiet companions to direct realization (paññā), which always takes precedence over learning or belief. What matters is not interpretation, but direct seeing.

³¹ *‘Not to attain something, but to make space for what has awaited discovery all along’ points to the very heart of vipassanā (vipaśyanā).*

It is not a path of striving, nor of becoming (bhava; id.), but of quiet receptivity to whatever reveals itself when attachment is relinquished.

Insight does not grow by adding anything, but by making space for what has always been present, yet remained unnoticed beneath the veils of obscurations.

³² *Yoniso manasikāra* (P.); *yuktiso manaskāra* (Skt.) literally means "attention (*manasikāra*) directed towards the source (*yonī*; *yukti*)."

The word *yonī* literally means "womb" or "source" and is used here metaphorically to denote the deepest origin or essential nature of things.

The Sanskrit term *yukti* likewise conveys the sense of fundamental insight, inner coherence, or the underlying principle that reveals the true nature of experience.

Within Buddhist meditation practice, *yoniso manasikāra* refers to a way of attending that is neither superficial nor distracted, but penetrates to the very root of experience. It is a contemplative mode of attention that carefully investigates the arising, the passing away, and the true nature of phenomena.

Yoniso manasikāra is an indispensable condition for the maturation of insight (*vipassanā*; *vipaśyanā*) and for the direct realization of the three characteristics of existence (*tilakkhaṇa*; *trilakṣaṇa*): impermanence (*anicca*; *anitya*), unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha*; *duḥkha*), and not-self (*anattā*; *anātman*).

³³ *Udayabbaya* (P.); *utpādayaya* (Skt.): literally "arising and passing away." This insight refers to the direct and immediate awareness of the arising and passing away of bodily and mental phenomena—a clear seeing of the continuous process of arising, persisting, and ceasing, without anything permanent or unchanging underlying it.

In Buddhist meditation practice, this insight is regarded as a pivotal stage on the path, marking the transition from mindful observation to a profound realization of impermanence (*anicca*; *anitya*).

³⁴ *Upādāna* (P. & Skt.): literally "grasping", "clinging", or "attachment." In Buddhist doctrine, the term refers to attachment to the five *khandhas* (aggregates)—form, feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness—and, more broadly, to the tendency to appropriate phenomena as "I", "me", or "mine."

According to the Buddha, *upādāna* is one of the principal conditions (*paccayā*; *pratyayāḥ*) sustaining becoming (*bhava*; *id.*) and perpetuating the cycle of birth and death (*saṃsāra*; *id.*). The relinquishment of this attachment is therefore an indispensable condition for the ending of suffering (*dukkha*; *duḥkha*) and opens the way to liberation (*vimutti*; *vimukti*).

³⁵ See the many passages in which the Buddha declines to answer metaphysical questions—*avyākata* (Sanskrit: *avyākṛta*). The term literally means "undeclared", "undetermined", or "left unanswered". In the Pāli Canon, *avyākata* refers to a number of speculative questions that the Buddha deliberately left unanswered because they do not lead to liberation (*vimutti*; *vimukti*). These include questions such as: "Is the universe eternal or not?" and "Does the Tathāgata exist after death or not?" Such questions remain unanswered not because they are unimportant in themselves, but because they do not contribute to the direct realization that leads to liberation. They remain confined to conceptual speculation and offer no insight into suffering (*dukkha*; *duḥkha*), its origin, its cessation, or the path leading to its cessation.

Again and again, the Buddha emphasizes that the purpose of his teaching is not to explain the cosmos, but to liberate the heart. The Dhamma is not a philosophical system, but an invitation to direct realization—to seeing things as they truly are (*yathābhūta-nāṇadassana*; *yathābhūta-jñānadarśana*). It is not abstract answers that liberate the mind, but direct awareness of present experience. For this reason, the Dhamma places insight (*vipassanā*; *vipaśyanā*) above philosophical speculation.

³⁶ *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*, *Saṃyutta Nikāya* 56.11

³⁷ *Paccanubhūta* (P.); *pratyanubhūta* (Skt.): literally "personally experienced", "directly realized", or "known through one's own experience." In the Buddhist tradition, the term refers to insight that arises not from reasoning or received tradition, but from direct personal realization. It is not something merely thought about, but something directly known—immediate, unmediated, and incapable of being transferred from one person to another. In the suttas, *paccanubhūta* emphasizes that the Dhamma is not a system of belief but something to be realized and verified through one's own experience.

³⁸ In the Theravāda tradition, insight gradually deepens through the progressive maturation of the *vipassanā-ñāṇas*, becoming ever subtler and more penetrating until the full realization of *anicca*, *dukkha*, and *anattā*.

³⁹ *Paṭisambhidāmagga* (P.); *Pratisaṃvidmārga* (Skt.): literally *The Path of Analytical Discernment*. A canonical work of the Pāli Canon, the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* offers a profound exploration of analytical knowledge (*paṭisambhidā*), distinguishing four complementary forms of discernment: the meaning (*attha*), the Dhamma (*dhamma*), language (*nirutti*), and inspired understanding (*paṭibhāna*). At the same time, it presents a refined exposition of the various forms of meditative insight (*ñāṇa*; *jñāna*). By bringing together direct contemplative experience and analytical understanding, the work systematically explores the progressive maturation of insight. In this respect, it occupies an important place in the historical development of the framework of the *vipassanā-ñāṇas*. The *Paṭisambhidāmagga* is remarkable in that it does not merely describe meditative experience but seeks to reveal its inner coherence and gradual unfolding. It is widely regarded as one of the earliest systematic attempts to articulate the progressive development of insight and stands as an important precursor to later works such as *Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga*.

⁴⁰ *Visuddhimagga (P)*: literally *The Path of Purification*. This seminal work of the Theravāda tradition was compiled by the monk Buddhaghosa during the fifth century CE. It is widely regarded as the most authoritative manual of meditation and Buddhist doctrine within the classical Theravāda tradition. The *Visuddhimagga* presents a refined, systematic exposition of the path to liberation, structured around the threefold training: ethical conduct (*sīla*; *id.*), concentration (*samādhi*; *id.*), and wisdom (*paññā*; *prajñā*). Within this framework, the sixteen stages of insight (*vipassanā-ñāṇas*) are described as the progressive deepening of the direct realization of impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and not-self.

Although firmly grounded in earlier sources, including the *Vimuttimagga* and the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, the *Visuddhimagga* brings these elements together into a comprehensive and systematic synthesis—a blueprint of the path to liberation as it came to be understood within the later Theravāda tradition.

⁴¹ *Anupubba-paṭipadā (P)*; *anupūrva-pratipad (Skt.)*: literally "the gradual path" or "progressive development." In Buddhist teaching, the term refers to the natural and gradual unfolding of the path to liberation. Insight does not arise all at once, but matures progressively through the relinquishment of the hindrances and the deepening of mindfulness and wisdom.

Again and again, the Buddha emphasizes that genuine liberation is neither forced nor abrupt. Just as a flower does not open because someone pulls at its petals, but blossoms naturally when the sun has risen high enough in the sky, so too insight unfolds when the necessary conditions are present: inner stillness, wise attention (*yoniso manasikāra*; *yoniso manaskāra*), and sustained cultivation (*bhāvanā*; *id.*). This gradual approach reflects the profound wisdom of trusting the unfolding of the path—without haste, without force.

⁴² *The metaphor of the raft: Alagaddūpama Sutta, Majjhima Nikāya 22. In this well-known discourse, the Buddha compares the Dhamma to a raft used for crossing a river. Once the Further Shore has been reached, the raft is no longer carried on one's shoulders but left behind. In the same way, the teachings are to be used as skilful means leading to liberation, not as objects of attachment.*

⁴³ *Soul: In Buddhist teaching, this refers to the belief in a permanent, unchanging essence (attā; ātman)—an enduring core thought to exist independently of impermanence and change.*

The Buddha regarded this belief as a fundamental delusion that gives rise to attachment, suffering, and continued re-birth (saṃsāra; id.).

Insight (vipassanā; vipaśyanā) reveals that everything which arises is subject to arising and passing away, and therefore possesses no independent or enduring identity.

Liberation (Nibbāna; nirvāṇa) consists in the relinquishment of this deeply rooted illusion of a separate and enduring self —not through the destruction of something that truly exists, but through the clear realization that no such permanent essence has ever been present. What was taken to be a "self" is seen, upon careful investigation, to be nothing more than a continuously changing stream of conditioned processes.

⁴⁴ The *Satipaṭṭhāna Suttas* (*Majjhima Nikāya* 10 and *Dīgha Nikāya* 22) repeatedly describe how the cultivation of mindfulness (*sati*; *smṛti*) leads to direct insight (*vipassanā*; *vipaśyanā*) and, ultimately, to liberation (*vimutti*; *vimukti*), always within an attitude of non-clinging (*anupādāna*; *id.*).

The emphasis is not on striving for results, but on the direct and impartial observation of body, feelings, mind, and dhammas, expressed in the recurring formula: "...*ātāpī sampajāno satimā, vineyya loke abhijjhā-domanassaṃ*..." — "...ardent, clearly comprehending, mindful, having put aside craving and distress with regard to the world."

Although the discourses never explicitly advocate striving for attainment, they consistently present a mode of practice grounded in mindful observation, free from grasping, expectation, and attachment to results.

⁴⁵ *Samudaya* (*P. & Skt.*): literally "arising", "origin", or "coming into being." Within the framework of the Four Noble Truths, the term refers to the arising of suffering (*dukkha*; *duḥkha*), primarily through craving (*taṇhā*; *trṣṇā*), clinging (*upādāna*; *id.*), and ignorance (*avijjā*; *avidyā*).

Nirodha (*P. & Skt.*): literally "cessation", "ending", or "bringing to an end." It refers to the cessation of suffering—not through suppression, but through the fading away of its causes. It is the realization of a state in which craving, clinging, and identification no longer arise.

Together, *samudaya* and *nirodha* constitute the Second and Third Noble Truths taught by the Buddha.

They express the profound insight that liberation is not attained by adding anything to experience, but by the gradual relinquishment of whatever sustains suffering.

⁴⁶ Within the Theravāda tradition, *vipassanā* is understood not as a technique for attaining something, but as a process of direct knowing—a sustained clarity of seeing grounded in mindfulness (*sati*; *smṛti*) and wise discernment (*pañisaṅkhā*; *pratisaṃkhyā*). The *Satipaṭṭhāna Suttas* place the emphasis not on the attainment of particular meditative states or experiences, but on the honest and open observation of phenomena exactly as they arise.

The heart of the practice lies not in forcing insight, but in cultivating a receptive mind in which the path unfolds naturally—in stillness, step by step.

⁴⁷ This image closely reflects the principle of *idappaccayatā* (Sanskrit: *idampratrayatā*): the lawful conditionality and interdependence of phenomena. Nothing arises arbitrarily, but only in dependence upon specific causes and conditions—without any permanent, independent essence or self. In Buddhist teaching, *idappaccayatā* expresses one of the fundamental characteristics of reality: all phenomena arise, change, and cease in dependence upon conditions. When the necessary conditions have matured, whatever is ready to unfold does so naturally—without force, without interference. Just as a flower opens in the warmth of the sun, not through any act of will.

⁴⁸ *Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta* (*Saṃyutta Nikāya* 22.59). In this discourse, the Buddha unfolds the teaching of *anattā* (not-self) through the recurring formula: "N'etaṃ mama, n'es-o'ham asmi, na meso attā." — "This is not mine; this I am not; this is not my self." The formula is systematically applied to each of the five *khandhas* (aggregates)—form, feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness—to demonstrate that no aspect of the stream of experience can rightly be regarded as "I", "me", or "mine." Whatever is subject to arising, change, and cessation cannot be regarded as self. This teaching thus provides a direct key to the liberating realization that no enduring core or permanent essence can be found within the conditioned processes of existence.

⁴⁹ 'This insight is not the fruit of thought or reasoning, but of clear seeing...' In the Pāli Canon, insight (*vipassanā*; *vīpaśyanā*) is repeatedly presented as the direct, non-conceptual realization of reality as it truly is (*yathābhūta-ñāṇadassana*; *yathābhūta-jñānadarśana*). It is an immediate knowing that does not arise from discursive thought (*vitakka*; *vitarka*) or analytical reflection (*vicāra*; *id.*), but from open, penetrating awareness.

In this context, the *Satipaṭṭhāna Suttas* repeatedly employ the term *anupassanā* (*anupaśyanā*): sustained contemplative observation—without projection, without distortion—through which phenomena are directly seen in terms of impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and not-self.

Vipassanā is therefore not a mental construction, but a quiet receptivity in which reality reveals itself.

⁵⁰ *Nibbāna* (Sanskrit: *nirvāṇa*) is not presented in the earliest Buddhist texts as a created state or as the product of mental activity. It is described as *akataṃ* (*akṛta*)—"the Unmade"—and *asaṅkhata* (*asaṃskṛta*)—"the Unconditioned": that which has not arisen through causes and conditions.

It is not something added to the mind, but what remains when all conditioning has come to an end. It is the stillness that becomes evident when becoming (*bhava*; *id.*)—the drive to be or to become—has ceased (*bhava-nirodha*). With the cessation of becoming comes the cessation of suffering (*dukkha-nirodha*; *duḥkha-nirodha*).

What is revealed is not another state, but a liberated openness—free from striving, free from any centre of appropriation, that is, from any fixation upon a self or an experiencing subject. This is not emptiness in the sense of absence, but the openness of the Unconditioned, in which nothing is grasped, claimed, or appropriated. It is intimately connected with the realization of not-self (*anattā*; *anātman*) and the Unconditioned (*asaṅkhata*; *asaṃskṛta*).

⁵¹ *Gāha* (P.); *grāha* (Skt.): literally "grasping," "seizing," or "holding on." In the Buddhist context, the term refers to the mind's habitual tendency to seize upon phenomena—forms, thoughts, feelings, and perceptions—as though they were permanent or belonged to a self. Such grasping is not primarily physical but mental: a subtle movement of fixation and appropriation directed towards what is, in reality, impermanent and beyond control. Insight (*vipassanā*; *vipaśyanā*) begins precisely where this grasping is relinquished.

⁵² *Vipassanā* (P.); *vipaśyanā* (Skt.): literally "clear seeing," "insight," or "seeing things as they truly are." In Buddhist teaching, the term refers to the direct, non-conceptual realization of the three characteristics of existence: impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and not-self. *Vipassanā* is not thinking about reality, but opening silently to reality as it reveals itself from moment to moment. This insight matures through mindful presence and careful attention, not through analysis or reasoning.

⁵³ *Bāhira* (P.); *bāhya* (Skt.): literally "external," "outside," or "outward." In Buddhist teaching, the term refers to external objects of experience—forms, sounds, smells, tastes, tactile sensations, and mental objects—that become the focus of attention and, through craving and clinging, the occasion for attachment. The early Buddhist texts do not suggest that external phenomena are themselves the cause of suffering. Rather, they point to the mind's tendency to become fascinated by, attached to, and identified with them. For this reason, the practitioner is encouraged to turn attention inward (*ajjhata*; *adhyātma*), not by withdrawing from the world or denying experience, but by directly observing how contact, feeling, craving, and clinging arise within immediate experience. As attention settles upon the unfolding processes of body, feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness, it becomes increasingly clear how identification and attachment arise—and how they may come to an end through insight into impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and not-self.

⁵⁴ *Ajjhatta* (P); *adhyātma* (Skt.): literally "inward," "internal," or "within." In Buddhist teaching, the term refers to the direct experience of body, feeling (*vedanā*; *vedanā*), perception (*saññā*; *saṃjñā*), mental formations (*saṅkhāra*; *saṃskāra*), and consciousness (*viññāṇa*; *vijñāna*). It points to the inward dimension in which liberating insight arises—not through analysing external phenomena, but through directly observing the unfolding stream of experience.

Ajjhatta does not refer to an isolated or inner self. Rather, it denotes the careful and intimate observation of those very processes that are mistakenly taken to be "I," "me," or "mine." As insight deepens, this misidentification gradually falls away, revealing the impermanent, conditioned, and selfless nature of experience.

⁵⁵ *Ajjhattikā sati* (P); *ādhyātmikī smṛti* (Skt.): literally "inward mindfulness" or "mindfulness directed within." In Buddhist teaching, the term refers to the clear and attentive awareness of internal experience, including the breath, bodily sensations, feeling (*vedanā*; *id.*), mental states, and the movements of consciousness.

In the practice of the *Satipaṭṭhāna*, this inward mindfulness forms one of the essential foundations of contemplation. The immediate experience of body and mind becomes the field (*gocara*; *id.*) in which insight is cultivated through careful observation. By cultivating *ajjhikkā sati*, the practitioner learns to observe without identification, to listen without grasping, and to remain present without distraction. In this way, the subtle movements of craving, clinging, and the construction of self gradually become visible.

Inward mindfulness is not psychological introspection or self-analysis. It is an open, non-judging clarity that allows every experience to reveal its conditioned nature as impermanent (*anicca*; *anitya*), unsatisfactory (*dukkha*; *duḥkha*), and without a permanent self (*anattā*; *anātman*).

⁵⁶ *Ajjhatta-nimitta* (P.); *ādhyātmika nimitta* (Skt.): literally "an inward sign," "an inward mark," or "an inward object of attention." In Buddhist meditation, the term refers to an aspect of immediate internal experience—such as the body, feeling (*vedanā*; id.), perception (*saññā*; *saṃjñā*), mental formations (*saṅkhāra*; *saṃskāra*), or consciousness (*viññāṇa*; *vijñāna*)—that becomes the focus of careful observation. In the early Buddhist texts, *nimitta* denotes more than an object.

It refers to the sign, characteristic, or appearance through which a phenomenon becomes known. When attention is directed towards an inward *nimitta*, the practitioner observes not merely the object itself, but the way it continually arises, changes, and passes away. Thus, *ajjhata-nimitta* is not an external image or sensory impression, but an inwardly observed phenomenon encountered directly within experience.

By remaining steadily attentive to its changing nature, external distractions (*bāhira-gocara*; *bāhya-gocara*) gradually lose their hold, and insight (*vipassanā*; *vipaśyanā*) into impermanence (*anicca*; *anitya*), unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha*; *duḥkha*), and not-self (*anattā*; *anātman*) naturally deepens.

The inward *nimitta* is therefore never regarded as something substantial or enduring. It serves as a skilful means (*upāya*; *upāyaḥ*): not an end in itself, but an ever-changing phenomenon whose impermanence reveals its empty and selfless nature.

⁵⁷ "Not with doing, but with letting go." This expression points to the spirit in which the Dhamma is practised. In the earliest Buddhist texts, *paṭipatti* (Sanskrit: *pratipatti*) refers not to striving for attainment, but to the living practice of the path through direct observation and understanding.

The practice is therefore not one of controlling, manipulating, or producing experience. Rather, it is the gradual relinquishment of craving, clinging, and becoming, allowing reality to reveal itself as it truly is. Within such open and non-grasping awareness, insight into impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and not-self matures naturally.

In this sense, "letting" does not imply passivity or indifference. It is an alert, receptive presence that neither resists nor appropriates experience. Such openness lies at the heart of the contemplative path leading to liberation.

⁵⁸ "At the beginning of the path, the ground is prepared—not through effort or determination, but through simplicity." In the earliest Buddhist teaching, ethical conduct (*sīla*; *id.*) is understood as the natural foundation of the path. It is not a system of moral repression or obedience, but the gradual refinement of conduct, speech, and intention. As these become purified, the mind naturally grows calmer, providing the fertile ground in which concentration (*samādhi*; *id.*) and wisdom (*paññā*; *prajñā*) may gradually mature.

⁵⁹ Ethical conduct (*sīla*; *id.*), concentration (*samādhi*; *id.*), and wisdom (*paññā*; *prajñā*) together constitute the classical threefold training (*tisso sikkhā*; *trisikṣā*) of the Buddhist path. Ethical conduct prepares the ground by bringing harmony to speech, action, and intention. Concentration steadies and quietens the mind. Upon this foundation, wisdom gradually matures through the direct realisation of reality as it truly is. Although these three trainings continually support and deepen one another, wisdom (*paññā*) is regarded as the liberating factor, for it is through insight into impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and not-self that liberation is realised.

⁶⁰ "Only within such lucid simplicity can insight take root." In the Buddhist path, insight (*vipassanā*; *vipaśyanā*) does not arise through striving or force, but when the mind has become settled, clear, and free from agitation. As greed, aversion, and delusion gradually subside, wisdom is able to mature naturally.

Like a still lake reflecting the moon without distortion, a quiet mind reveals reality as it truly is.

⁶¹ The Buddha points not to a fixed route, but to a process of maturation. Insight does not arise in a straight line, but in waves—through renewed recognition, letting go, and increasing refinement. The path unfolds not according to a predetermined plan, but through the very act of walking: not as a route laid out in advance, but as a trail that gradually reveals itself with every step.

⁶² The mind is impermanent (*anicca*; *anitya*) and without any enduring core (*anattā*; *anātman*). Insight does not develop according to fixed structures, but unfolds organically—just as water finds its own course. The stages of insight reflect a rhythm of deepening rather than a mechanical sequence of steps.

⁶³ Although the *Visuddhimagga* presents the *ñāṇas* in a systematic sequence, Buddhaghosa explicitly acknowledges that their unfolding may differ from one practitioner to another in order, duration, and intensity. They are therefore best understood as points of orientation rather than prescriptions.

⁶⁴ The stages of insight (*vipassanā-ñāṇas*) were not devised as a theoretical system, but emerged from repeated observation of lived experience. The ancient masters carefully observed the unfolding of inner development in those who walked the path, gradually discerning recurring patterns—not as prescriptions, but as points of recognition.

⁶⁵ *Insight does not arise through force, but matures as a natural process (dhammatā; dharmatā). When the necessary conditions are present, it unfolds of its own accord—just as fruit ripens naturally on a quiet tree.*

⁶⁶ *Appaṇihita-ceto-vimutti (P.); apraṇihita-citta-vimukti (Skt.): literally, "liberation of the mind through the absence of directed desire." This form of liberation refers to a state in which every inclination to strive has naturally fallen away. There is no object to attain, no direction to follow, nothing left to grasp, reject, or become. The mind no longer projects itself towards a future fulfilment, nor does it seek security in any conditioned state. Instead, it rests in complete openness, free from intention, expectation, and volitional movement.*

In the Pāli Canon, appaṇihita is associated with the highest inner freedom: silent, uncontrived, and entirely free from all volition. It is not the result of passivity or indifference, but the natural consequence of profound insight, when craving has come to an end and nothing further remains to be pursued.

⁶⁷ *Dhamma-savana (P.); dharma-śravaṇa (Skt.): literally, "listening to the Dhamma." In the classical Buddhist tradition, this refers not merely to hearing with the ears, but to an open and receptive attitude of mind—a listening with the heart. It is a way of receiving the teaching without immediately analysing, judging, or comparing it with previously held views. Instead, the words are allowed to settle quietly, inviting reflection and direct investigation. Dhamma-savana is regarded as one of the first unfoldings of the path: the moment when the truth of the teaching begins to touch the heart through listening, reading, and contemplative reflection. Properly received, the Dhamma does not remain intellectual knowledge, but gradually matures into confidence (saddhā), careful investigation (dhammavicaya), and eventually direct realization (paññedha). In this sense, genuine listening is already the beginning of practice, for it opens the mind to the possibility of seeing things as they truly are.*

⁶⁸ *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*, *Saṃyutta Nikāya* 56.11

⁶⁹ *Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta*, *Saṃyutta Nikāya* 22.59

⁷⁰ *Arūpa* (P. & Skt.): literally, "formlessness." In Buddhist meditation practice, this refers to subtle spheres of consciousness in which no material forms or sensory objects are present—such as the sphere of infinite space or the sphere of infinite consciousness. These experiences may feel refined, spacious, and deeply peaceful, yet they are not free from arising and passing away. They remain part of *saṃsāra*: conditioned, impermanent, and not truly free. When the mind clings to such states as a formless refuge, a subtle form of attachment arises—attachment to silence, to spaciousness, to being. True liberation (*vimutti*; *vimukti*) does not arise from abiding in such states, but from seeing through them clearly: seeing that these, too, arise and pass away, and therefore are not *Nibbāna* (*nirvāṇa*)—not the Unborn, the Deathless, or the Unconditioned.

⁷¹ *Ajāta* (P. & Skt.): literally, "the Unborn." That which has never arisen has no need to pass away. In the Pāli Canon, the term refers to the Unconditioned—*Nibbāna*—free from birth, change, and ending.

⁷² *Amata* (P.); *amṛta* (Skt.): literally, "the Deathless." In the early texts, this is one of the traditional designations for the Unconditioned (*asaṅkhata*): that which is free from arising and passing away, beyond birth, ageing, and death. It refers to *Nibbāna*, not as a place, a heavenly realm, or a form of eternal existence, but as the cessation of all conditioned becoming. It is called the Deathless because it is not subject to the cycle of origination and dissolution that characterizes all conditioned phenomena. In this sense, it does not die because it was never born. Rather than describing a metaphysical entity, the term points to the complete ending of greed, hatred, and delusion, and thus to the timeless freedom realized through Awakening.

⁷³ *Saraṇa* (P); *śaraṇa* (Skt.): literally, "refuge" or "protection." In Buddhism, the term refers to consciously turning the heart towards the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Saṅgha—not as a source of external salvation, but as an inner orientation. To take refuge is not to flee, but to become grounded in confidence. In this context, "the heart" does not refer to an emotional centre, but to the deepest orientation of one's inner life—where confidence, clarity, and intention come together. It is the quiet place within us where the understanding gradually matures that liberation is found not in grasping at what seems permanent, but in seeing through what is impermanent. The heart is that which opens to truth, that which turns towards liberation—not as something to be believed, but as something to be trusted.

"Not something to be believed" refers to relinquishing dogmatic thinking and accepting truths on authority alone. "Something to be trusted" refers to the gradual maturation of insight into the nature of reality.

⁷⁴ *Paṭicca-samuppāda Sutta*, *Samyutta Nikāya* 12.20

⁷⁵ *Dhammanuvatti* (P); *dharmānupratipanna* (Skt.): one who lives in accordance with the Dhamma (Dharma), not merely through intellectual understanding, but through direct experience and the application of the Dhamma in everyday life—a life in which the teaching is not merely thought about, but lived. Not imitation, but embodiment.

⁷⁶ *Sāmaññaphala Sutta*, *Dīgha Nikāya* 2. In this early Buddhist discourse, the Buddha describes the fruits of the monastic life as a gradual process of maturation: from ethical integrity (*sīla*; id.), through concentration (*saṃādhi*; id.) and insight (*vipassanā*; *vipaśyanā*), to the realization of the four *jhānas* (*jhāna*; *dhyāna*) and liberation (*vimutti*; *mokṣa*).

This sutta presents the natural unfolding of inner development, not as something achieved through striving, but as the natural fruit of simplicity and wholehearted dedication.

⁷⁷ *Ahiṃsā* (P. & Skt.): non-violence; non-harming. *Ahiṃsā* refers to the principle of refraining from harming living beings, a fundamental aspect of Buddhist ethics closely associated with loving-kindness (*mettā*; *maitrī*) and compassion (*karuṇā*; *id.*).

A vegetarian or vegan way of life may naturally arise from this understanding, not as a rigid rule, but as an expression of refined ethical sensitivity and compassionate action.

⁷⁸ Moral conscience (*hiri*; *hrī*) and moral caution (*ottappa*; *apatrāpya*) are described by the Buddha as "the two guardians of the world" (*lokapāla*; *id.*), because they protect the mind from going astray.

⁷⁹ A reference to the Five Precepts (*pañca-sīla*; *id.*), which form the foundation of ethical conduct for lay followers. They are:

- Refraining from taking the life of living beings (*pāṇātipātā veramaṇī*).
- Refraining from taking what is not given (*adinnādānā veramaṇī*).
- Refraining from sexual misconduct (*kāmesu micchācārā veramaṇī*).
- Refraining from false speech (*musāvādā veramaṇī*).
- Refraining from intoxicants that cloud the mind (*surāmeraya-majja-pamādaṭṭhānā veramaṇī*).

⁸⁰ In the earliest Buddhist texts, *sīla* is not presented as an imposed rule, but as the natural expression of insight into dependent arising (*paṭicca-samuppāda*; *pratītyasamutpāda*).

Whoever sees clearly that all phenomena arise in dependence upon conditions, and that no separate or enduring self can be found, naturally lives with compassion, respect, and non-harming.

Ethical integrity arises from insight, not from obedience.

⁸¹ See the *Sāmaññaphala Sutta*, *Dīgha Nikāya* 2, in which the Buddha describes the fruits of a life devoted to inner cultivation. This discourse shows how ethical integrity (*sīla*; *id.*), a simple way of life, and dedication to inner stillness naturally culminate in the four *jhānas*—deep meditative absorptions, each marked by an increasing refinement of joy (*pīti*; *prīti*), happiness (*sukha*; *id.*), inner tranquillity, and equanimity (*upekkhā*; *upekṣā*).

These *jhānas* are not presented as an end in themselves, but as the natural maturation of a mind that has become purified and serene. From this, liberating insight (*ñāṇa-dassana*; *jñāna-darśana*) arises, transcending the conditioned.

The gradual path outlined here—from *sīla* through *samādhi* (*id.*) to *paññā* (*prajñā*)—is consistently presented throughout the Pāli Canon as the fundamental path leading to liberation.

⁸² *Vikkhambhana* (P); *vikṣepapraśamana* (Skt.): in Buddhist psychology (*Abhidhamma*), *vikkhambhana* refers to the temporary suppression of unwholesome mental states such as craving (*taṇhā*; *tṛṣṇā*), hatred (*dosa*; *dveṣa*), and ignorance (*avijjā*; *avidyā*), without their being permanently eradicated (*samuccheda*)—traditionally illustrated as the roots not yet having been cut.

In deep *samādhi*, the Five Hindrances (*nīvaraṇāni*; *id.*) are temporarily suppressed through concentration. Yet they may reappear when concentration weakens, because the underlying latent tendencies (*anusayā*; *anuśaya*) remain present.

For this reason, insight (*vipassanā*; *vipaśyanā*) is indispensable. Only wisdom (*paññā*; *prajñā*) can eradicate these underlying roots. Until they have been cut off through insight, they remain capable of arising again whenever concentration subsides.

⁸³ *Pahāna* (P.); *prahāṇa* (Skt.): abandonment, relinquishment, or letting go. In Buddhist psychology, *pahāna* refers to the complete eradication of the mental defilements (*kilesā*; *kleśā*), not through suppression, but through clear insight and wisdom (*paññā*; *prajñā*).

The distinction from *vikkhambhana* is fundamental. *Vikkhambhana* refers to the temporary suppression of the defilements through concentration (*samādhi*; *id.*); *pahāna* refers to their complete abandonment through insight.

⁸⁴ *Udayabbaya* (P.); *udayavyaya* (Skt.): arising and passing away. This term refers to the direct contemplative observation of the arising and ceasing of phenomena—a fundamental insight in the development of *vipassanā* (*vipaśyanā*).

⁸⁵ *Santati* (P.); *saṃtati* (Skt.): continuity, succession, or an unbroken stream. *Santati* refers to the continuous succession of mental and physical phenomena that gives rise to the appearance of a living being, without there being any enduring core or underlying substance. A traditional simile is that of a flame passed from one candle to another: it continues to burn, yet it is never the same flame.

⁸⁶ *Vipassanā* is not discursive thought or logical reasoning, but a direct and lucid awareness of whatever presents itself—without mental mediation, without naming, without conceptualization.

Unlike *vitakka* and *vicāra*—the initial and sustained application of thought characteristic of the first *jhāna*—*vipassanā* does not investigate or analyse experience through thinking. It is an open, non-conceptual way of seeing, in which phenomena are observed as they arise and pass away, without grasping or naming them.

Just as the eye sees a landscape without describing it, so wisdom sees reality without constructing a story.

⁸⁷ *Chanda* (P. & Skt.): intention, aspiration, or desire. In Buddhist psychology, *chanda* refers to the motivating force behind an action. Depending on the underlying mental factors, it may be either wholesome or unwholesome. Unlike craving (*taṇhā*; *trṣṇā*), *chanda* does not necessarily imply attachment. It is an intention or aspiration directed towards an object or activity, which may be either liberating or binding, depending on the state of mind from which it arises.

⁸⁸ *Insight* (*vipassanā*; *vipaśyanā*) does not unfold at random, but when the necessary conditions have matured. This reflects the principle of conditionality: *idappaccayatā* (P.) — "when this is, that comes to be"—and, more broadly, dependent arising (*paṭicca-samuppāda*; *pratītyasamutpāda*).

Insight arises when ethical integrity (*sīla*; *id.*), concentration (*samādhi*; *id.*), mindfulness (*sati*; *smṛti*), and wise attention (*yoniso manasikāra*; *yoniso manaskāra*) come together in a receptive mind. Just as fire can arise only when wood, air, and a spark come together, so insight can ignite only when stillness, clarity, and inner purity are present.

⁸⁹ *Sīla* → *samādhi* → *paññā*: this classical triad—ethical integrity, concentration, and wisdom—forms the fundamental structure of the path to liberation. Ethical integrity (*sīla*; *id.*) purifies conduct, concentration (*samādhi*; *id.*) steadies and quietens the mind, and only within that quiet clarity can wisdom (*paññā*; *prajñā*) naturally arise. Each prepares the ground for the next, just as a flame arises when dry wood, air, and a spark come together.

⁹⁰ *Insight* and liberation are not something that can be manufactured. They unfold only when the necessary causes and conditions have fully matured. They arise not through intention, but through letting go; not through striving, but through stillness. Just as fragrance is released when a flower naturally opens, so wisdom reveals itself when nothing obstructs its unfolding.

⁹¹ The term *nāmarūpa-pariccheda-ñāṇa* (*nāmarūpa-pariccheda-jñāna*) is etymologically composed of four elements: *nāma* ("mind"), referring to mental processes such as feeling, perception, intention, and attention; *rūpa* ("form"), referring to the physical body and material phenomena; *pariccheda*, meaning discernment, distinction, or clear differentiation; and *ñāṇa*, meaning knowledge or insight. Taken together, *nāmarūpa-pariccheda-ñāṇa* refers to the insight that body and mind do not constitute a single, indivisible self, but are distinct processes—dependently arisen, impermanent, and without an enduring core. This marks the first loosening of the deeply rooted belief in an enduring "I". It is not a matter of theoretical understanding, but of direct insight: a clear seeing that arises when the whole field of experience is observed without the veil of identification.

⁹² "Without discernment" refers to the absence of insight into experience. Body (*rūpa*; *id.*) and the mental processes (*nāma*; *id.*) are experienced as a single, continuous stream, without recognising their distinct yet interrelated nature.

"Without transparency" means that the conditioned and dependent nature of these phenomena is not yet seen. Within this apparent unity—illusory, yet experienced as entirely self-evident—ignorance (*avijjā*; *avidyā*) and clinging (*upādāna*; *id.*) arise naturally, just as darkness appears in the absence of light.

⁹³ *Sampajañña* (*saṃprajanya*) is often translated as "clear comprehension" or "clear knowing". It is the refined quality of presence that not only knows that something has arisen (*sati*; *smṛti*), but also clearly discerns what is present, how it is experienced, and how it relates to the unfolding of experience.

Within the stillness of practice, this clear knowing makes it possible to discern body and mind directly—not through analysis or conceptual thought, but through immediate seeing.

⁹⁴ *Yathābhūta-nāṇadassana* (*yathābhūta-jñānadarśana*), literally "seeing and knowing things as they truly are", is a recurring expression in the Pāli Canon. It refers to the direct, non-conceptual realization of the three characteristics of existence: impermanence (*anicca*; *anitya*), unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha*; *duḥkha*), and not-self (*anattā*; *anātman*).

It is not ordinary, worldly knowing (*lokiya*; *laukika*), nor the accumulation of knowledge, but a clear seeing in which conceptual thought falls silent and insight naturally reveals itself through direct experience.

⁹⁵ Jotika Hermesen frequently quoted this expression in his Dhamma teachings.

⁹⁶ *Sīla-visuddhi* (P); *śīla-viśuddhi* (Skt.): the purification of conduct through ethical integrity and the abandonment of unwholesome actions of body and speech. It is the first stage of purification on the path of insight, laying the foundation for inner tranquillity and clarity.

⁹⁷ *Citta-visuddhi* (P); *citta-viśuddhi* (Skt.): the purification of mind through collectedness (*saṁādhi*; *id.*). As the mind becomes clear, calm, and unified, it naturally becomes receptive to profound insight.

⁹⁸ *Paccaya-pariggaha-nāṇa* (P); *paccaya-pariggaha-jñāna* (Skt.): *Paccaya* means condition, or supporting factor, referring to the conditional relationships through which phenomena arise, as expressed in the principle of dependent arising (*paṭicca-samuppāda*; *pratītya-samutpāda*). *Pariggaha* means discernment, comprehensive understanding, or clear recognition, indicating the direct seeing of how these conditions are related.

Nāṇa means insight, knowledge, or direct knowing. Together, *paccaya-pariggaha-nāṇa* denotes the insight that clearly sees how phenomena arise in dependence upon conditions—not as isolated or self-existing entities, but within a web of causes and conditions.

⁹⁹ *Hetu* (P.); *hetuḥ* (Skt.); plurals: *hetū*, *hetavaḥ*: literally “cause” or “motive.” The term denotes an underlying or root cause from which phenomena arise. In Buddhist psychology (*Abhidhamma*), the three unwholesome roots (*akusala-mūla*)—greed (*lobha*; *id.*), aversion (*dosa*; *id.*), and delusion (*moha*; *id.*)—are classic examples of *hetū*: underlying causes that condition behaviour and experience.

¹⁰⁰ *Paccaya* (P.); *pratyaya* (Skt.); plurals: *paccayā*, *pratyayāḥ*: means “condition” or “supporting factor.” The term refers broadly to that upon which the arising, continuation, or cessation of a phenomenon depends. In later analytical usage, it may be distinguished from *hetu*, which more specifically denotes an underlying or root cause. A *paccaya* is therefore a contributing condition within the web of conditionality, supporting, sustaining, or facilitating a process.

¹⁰¹ *Paṭicca-samuppāda* (P.); *pratītya-samutpāda* (Skt.): dependent arising, or conditional arising. This central principle of the Buddha’s teaching describes how conditioned phenomena arise in dependence upon causes (*hetū*; *hetavaḥ*) and conditions (*paccaya*; *pratyayāḥ*). Nothing arises independently or exists in isolation; whatever comes into being does so because the necessary causes and conditions are present.

Likewise, when those causes and conditions cease, the phenomena that depend upon them also come to an end. In this way, reality is understood not as a collection of separate and self-existing entities, but as a dynamic and interdependent process of arising and ceasing.

Seeing this conditional nature of experience is one of the key insights on the path to liberation, for it reveals the absence of any permanent, independent self and undermines the craving and clinging that sustain *dukkha*.

¹⁰² *Saṅkhata* (P.); *saṃskṛta* (Skt.): conditioned, compounded, or constructed; arisen through causes and conditions. The term refers to all conditioned phenomena—whatever is subject to arising, change, and cessation, and is therefore impermanent (*anicca*; *anitya*), unsatisfactory (*dukkha*; *duḥkha*), and without an enduring self (*anattā*; *anātman*).

Saṅkhata stands in contrast to *asaṅkhata* (*asaṃskṛta*): the Unconditioned—free from arising, change, and cessation (*Nibbāna*; *nirvāṇa*).

Seeing the conditioned nature of phenomena is one of the central insights on the path to liberation, for through this direct seeing the three characteristics (*tilakkhaṇa*; *trilakṣaṇa*)—impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and not-self—become unmistakably clear.

¹⁰³ *Anupādāna* (P. & Skt.): literally "non-clinging" or "non-appropriation." The term derives from *upādāna*, meaning clinging, attachment, or appropriation—the tendency to take phenomena as "mine," "I," or "my self." As insight into conditionality deepens, it becomes clear that there is nothing that needs to be appropriated or identified with. *Anupādāna* is therefore the natural freedom from clinging that arises through direct seeing.

¹⁰⁴ *Anurodha-paṭivirodha-virahita* (P.); *anurodha-pratipakṣa-vigata* (Skt.): *Anurodha* means attraction, attachment, or inclination towards; *paṭivirodha* (Skt. *pratipakṣa*) means aversion, opposition, or rejection; *virahita* (Skt. *vigata*) means free from or devoid of. Together, the expression describes a mind that is free from both attraction and aversion—a mind that sees clearly without preference or resistance.

It is the traditional description of a mind established in *vipassanā*: neither grasping nor rejecting, but simply seeing. Free from clinging to what is pleasant and resisting what is unpleasant, it remains open, undisturbed, and responsive rather than reactive.

¹⁰⁵ 'Sammāsana-ñāṇa' (P.; Skt. *saṃmāśana-jñāna*) derives from *sammāsana*, meaning careful examination, thorough investigation, reflective contemplation, or systematic scrutiny. It refers to a sustained and attentive contemplation through which insight gradually matures. *Ñāṇa* (*jñāna*) means knowledge, insight, or direct knowing. *Sammāsana-ñāṇa* is therefore the insight that arises through the repeated and careful contemplation of the three characteristics of all conditioned phenomena. At this stage, the yogi systematically contemplates impermanence (*anicca*), unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha*), and not-self (*anattā*) in every experience. This is not an intellectual analysis, but a clear and direct insight born of quiet, concentrated observation. *Sammāsana-ñāṇa* marks the transition from conceptual understanding to experiential insight.

¹⁰⁶ The expression "not an analysis of experience" is used deliberately. It echoes the classical Buddhist warning against *papañca* (Skt. *prapañca*)—conceptual proliferation—the mind's tendency to elaborate upon immediate experience through interpretation, association, judgement, and self-reference. What begins as a simple perception gradually becomes entangled in stories, opinions, memories, and assumptions, obscuring the direct clarity of seeing.

In the *Madhupiṇḍika Sutta*, *Majjhima Nikāya* 18, the Buddha traces this proliferation to the arising of conceptual construction around experience. According to the commentarial tradition, it is closely associated with craving (*taṇhā*; *tṛṣṇā*), views (*diṭṭhi*; *dṛṣṭi*), and conceit (*māna*; *id.*)—the subtle tendency to construct and defend a sense of self.

In the practice of *vipassanā*, *papañca* is precisely what obscures direct insight into impermanence (*anicca*), unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha*), and not-self (*anattā*). The phrase "not an analysis of experience" therefore invites the practitioner to remain with the immediacy of what is present, allowing phenomena to reveal themselves without conceptual elaboration or appropriation as "I," "me," or "mine."

¹⁰⁷ 'Sabhāva' (P.); *svabhāva* (Skt.) literally means "distinctive nature" or "intrinsic characteristic." In the Theravāda tradition, however, the term does not refer to an enduring essence or independent reality. Rather, it denotes the distinctive characteristic by which a particular phenomenon (*dhamma*) is recognised in direct experience.

Each phenomenon unfolds according to its own nature—that is, according to the specific causes and conditions that give rise to it. It appears, performs its function, and passes away in accordance with dependent origination (*paṭicca-samuppāda*; *pratītya-samutpāda*). In this sense, every phenomenon is impermanent (*anicca*), unsatisfactory (*dukkha*), and not-self (*anattā*), without the need for a permanent self or controlling agent behind it.

¹⁰⁸ 'Dhammaniyāmatā' (P.); *dharmaniyāmatā* (Skt.) literally means "the lawful order of phenomena" or "the natural order of the Dhamma." It refers to the insight that all conditioned phenomena arise, change, and cease in dependence upon causes and conditions. Their unfolding is neither random nor governed by a permanent self, but follows a lawful and dependable order in accordance with dependent origination (*paṭicca-samuppāda*; *pratītya-samutpāda*).

As this lawful nature becomes increasingly clear, letting go no longer arises through intention or the effort to relinquish experience. It becomes the natural consequence of seeing that phenomena unfold according to their own conditions, without the need for ownership, control, or interference. Confidence gradually replaces the impulse to grasp, and the mind learns to trust the way things are.

¹⁰⁹ *Alagaddūpama Sutta*, *Majjhima Nikāya* 22 — • Pubbe cāhaṃ, bhikkhave, etarahi ca dukkhañceva paññāpemi, dukkhassa ca nirodhaṃ. — Formerly, as now, I teach only dukkha and the ending of dukkha. •

¹¹⁰ *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*, *Saṃyutta Nikāya* 56.11

¹¹¹ *Anattālakkaṇa Sutta, Saṃyutta Nikāya 22.59*

¹¹² 'Udayabbaya-ñāṇa (P.); udayavyaya-jñāna (Skt.) is composed of three elements: udaya (P. & Skt.), "arising"; vaya (P.) /vyaya (Skt.), "passing away"; and ñāṇa (P.)/jñāna (Skt.), "knowledge" or "insight."

The term refers to the direct insight into the arising (udaya) and passing away (vaya/vyaya) of all conditioned phenomena. Its emphasis is not on conceptual understanding, but on the immediate, experiential seeing of impermanence as it reveals itself throughout body and mind.

¹¹³ *Pīti (P.); prīti (Skt.): joyful rapture, delight, or uplifting interest that may arise naturally as meditation deepens.*

In Buddhist contemplative practice, pīti does not refer to sensory pleasure or emotional excitement, but to a subtle, uplifting quality of mind that supports collectedness and clarity. It may be experienced as bodily lightness, gentle tingling, or an expansive sense of well-being, and is traditionally understood as a natural factor in the deepening of concentration (samādhi; id.).

¹¹⁴ *Dassana (P.); darśana (Skt.): literally "seeing" or "beholding." In the Buddhist context, the term refers not merely to sensory perception, but to clear and direct seeing—the immediate recognition of reality as it truly is (yathābhūta). In the early Dhamma, dassana marks the arising of liberating insight and plays a central role in the process of Awakening.*

¹¹⁵ *The gradual refinement of insight into impermanence described here corresponds to the development of insight outlined in the Paṭisambhidāmagga and, more systematically, in Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga.*

¹¹⁶ "Sabbe saṅkhārā aniccā" (P.); "sarve saṃskārā anityāḥ" (Skt.): "All conditioned phenomena are impermanent." One of the Buddha's most frequently repeated statements, expressing that whatever arises in dependence upon causes and conditions is inevitably subject to change and passing away.

¹¹⁷ 'Bhaṅga-ñāṇa' (P.); 'bhaṅga-jñāna' (Skt.) literally means "insight into dissolution" or "insight into disintegration." The term *bhaṅga* means dissolution, breaking apart, or disintegration; *ñāṇa/jñāna* means insight or direct knowing.

Together, *bhaṅga-ñāṇa* refers to the meditative insight that all phenomena begin to dissolve the very moment they arise—without a lasting core, without anything enduring to hold on to.

It represents a natural deepening of the preceding insight, *udayabbaya-ñāṇa*, in which both arising and passing away are clearly perceived.

In *bhaṅga-ñāṇa*, attention becomes almost exclusively attuned to dissolution. The yogi directly—and sometimes with considerable intensity—experiences the fragile, insubstantial, and ungraspable nature of all phenomena. Nothing remains. Even the knowing of impermanence is itself seen to be impermanent.

It is precisely this profound penetration of impermanence that often gives rise to an existential shock: a deep sense of vulnerability, insecurity, or fear (*bhaya*).

This emergence of fear signals the unfolding of the next insight: *bhaya-ñāṇa*, the knowledge of fearfulness.

¹¹⁸ 'Bhaya-ñāṇa' (P); 'bhaya-jñāna' (Skt.): from bhaya, meaning fear, danger, or insecurity, and ñāṇa/jñāna, meaning insight or direct knowing. It refers to the stage at which the yogi no longer merely perceives impermanence (anicca; anitya), but directly recognizes the profound insecurity of everything that is conditioned. Whatever arises passes away; consequently, nothing can provide lasting refuge or security.

This is not emotional fear or panic, but the clear realization that all conditioned phenomena (saṅkhata; saṃskṛta) are inherently fragile, unstable, and incapable of providing lasting happiness. Bhaya-ñāṇa marks an important turning point in the maturation of insight, as the practitioner begins to relinquish the search for security in what is by nature impermanent.

The ancient meditation masters regarded this insight into fearfulness not as an obstacle, but as an essential step towards liberation.

¹¹⁹ 'Ādinava-ñāṇa' (P); 'ādīnava-jñāna' (Skt.): from ādinava, meaning danger, drawback, peril, or inherent disadvantage, and ñāṇa/jñāna, meaning insight or direct knowing. Literally, the term means "insight into the danger" or "insight into the drawback."

In the context of vipassanā, ādinava-ñāṇa refers to the direct realization that whatever the mind clings to—however attractive, reassuring, or familiar it may seem—inevitably becomes a condition for dukkha (duḥkha). Because all conditioned phenomena are impermanent (anicca; anitya), devoid of an enduring self (anattā; anātman), and incapable of providing lasting refuge, every object of clinging ultimately proves unreliable.

This insight is neither a moral judgement nor a rejection of the world. Rather, it is the quiet recognition of the inherent danger in clinging itself—the clear seeing that attachment to what cannot endure inevitably gives rise to suffering.

¹²⁰ 'Nibbidā-ñāṇa' (P); 'nibbidā-jñāna' (Skt.): from nibbidā, meaning disenchantment, disillusionment, or the quiet turning away from what has been seen to be incapable of providing lasting fulfilment, and ñāṇa/jñāna, meaning insight or direct knowing.

Literally, the term may be understood as "insight into disenchantment" or "the insight that gives rise to turning away from what cannot truly satisfy."

The translation disenchantment has been chosen deliberately because it most closely reflects the experience denoted by nibbidā. It does not suggest aversion, pessimism, or rejection of the world. Rather, it describes the gradual fading of the fascination that conditioned phenomena exert upon the mind.

As that enchantment quietly falls away, a natural release from clinging begins to unfold.

In the context of vipassanā, nibbidā-ñāṇa marks the stage at which the practitioner no longer seeks refuge, pleasure, or fulfilment in conditioned phenomena. It is not rejection born of aversion, but a natural release born of clear seeing.

Through direct insight, the mind recognises that nothing which arises and passes away can provide the lasting satisfaction it once sought.

¹²¹ *For this section heading, I have deliberately chosen the phrase "The Simplicity of Having Seen Enough". The Pāli term nibbidā does not imply fulfilment, but the gradual fading of the mind's fascination with conditioned phenomena.*

As that fascination quietly falls away, a natural release from clinging begins to unfold.

¹²² *Muñcitukamyatā-nāṇa* (P); 'muñcitukāmyatā-jñāna' (Skt.) is composed of three elements: *muñcitu*—to release, to free, to let go; *kamyatā*—longing, inclination, or inward orientation; and *nāṇa* / *jñāna*—insight, direct knowing.

Taken together, *muñcitukamyatā-nāṇa* denotes the insight in which the deeply human longing for liberation naturally arises—the quiet awakening of the wish to become free from every form of attachment and conditioning, born from the clear recognition that nothing within the conditioned world (*saṅkhata*) can offer lasting fulfilment.

At this stage, the yogi naturally turns away from the conditioned and impermanent, and towards the Unconditioned (*asaṅkhata*): the Unborn. The Deathless. This movement is not driven by craving for another state, but arises as the quiet fruit of mature insight: "This is no longer something I wish to hold on to." The heart turns inward—not in aversion, but through a deep and gentle inclination towards liberation, towards that which neither arises nor passes away.

¹²³ *Paṭisaṅkhā-nāṇa* (P); 'pratisaṅkhyā-jñāna' (Skt.) is composed of two elements: *paṭisaṅkhā* / *pratisaṅkhyā* — careful investigation, discerning reflection, or contemplative re-examination; and *nāṇa* / *jñāna* — insight, direct knowing.

Taken together, *paṭisaṅkhā-nāṇa* denotes the insight that arises through careful and repeated contemplation—the quiet, discerning investigation that reveals what still binds the mind and, above all, what leads to liberation.

At this stage, the yogi no longer investigates through discursive thought or philosophical analysis, but through direct insight. Whatever arises is carefully examined in the light of wisdom: Does this lead to clinging or to letting go?

Whatever still gives rise to attachment is recognised with increasing clarity, while the mind naturally inclines towards relinquishment. In this way, insight becomes ever more refined, preparing the ground for complete equanimity.

¹²⁴ 'Sacca' (P); 'satya' (Skt.) means truth—not as an abstract concept, but as the direct reality that reveals itself when things are seen as they truly are.

Within the Theravāda tradition, sacca refers to experiential truth: the clear realization of impermanence (anicca; anitya), unsatisfactoriness (dukkha; duḥkha), and not-self (anattā; anātman). It is not a truth to be possessed, but a reality to be directly known—a quiet openness in which liberation naturally reveals itself.

¹²⁵ 'Saṅkhārupekkhā-ñāṇa' (P); 'saṅskāropekṣā-jñāna' (Skt.) is composed of three elements: saṅkhāra/saṃskāra—conditioned or constructed phenomena; upekkhā/upekṣā—equanimity, impartial observation, or serene balance; and ñāṇa/jñāna—insight, direct knowing.

Taken together, saṅkhārupekkhā-ñāṇa denotes the insight of equanimity towards all conditioned phenomena. At this stage, every saṅkhāra is seen clearly as impermanent (anicca; anitya), unsatisfactory (dukkha; duḥkha), and not-self (anattā; anātman). Nothing is grasped, nothing is resisted. Whatever arises is allowed to arise; whatever passes away is allowed to pass away. The mind rests in profound equanimity, seeing things exactly as they are.

¹²⁶ The phrase "Every experience is immediate and direct" refers to the fundamental nature of experience as understood in the practice of vipassanā (vipaśyanā): clear awareness before the mind assigns meaning, interpretation, or conceptual form.

Within the practice of insight meditation, the yogi gradually learns to recognise that experience itself is never the problem. Suffering arises through the conditioned movements of craving (taṇhā), aversion (dosa), and ignorance (avijjā). Every moment of clear, uncoloured awareness offers a direct opening to liberation.

¹²⁷ 'Paññatti' (P.); 'prajñapti' (Skt.) refers to a conceptual designation or conventional expression. It does not point to an ultimately existing entity, but to the names and concepts through which the mind identifies, distinguishes, and interprets experience. Within the practice of insight, the practitioner gradually learns to distinguish between direct experience and the conceptual overlay through which the mind gives that experience meaning.

¹²⁸ Saññā' (P.); 'saṃjñā' (Skt.) means perception or recognition. It is the mental function that recognizes, distinguishes, and labels experience on the basis of previous impressions and memory. As one of the five khandhas (aggregates), it plays a central role in the conditioned process through which experience is organized and understood.

¹²⁹ 'Suññatā' (P.); 'śūnyatā' (Skt.) means emptiness. It refers to the absence of any permanent, independent, or inherent essence in phenomena. Whatever arises does so in dependence upon causes and conditions, and therefore possesses no enduring core or self of its own. In the practice of insight, this is realised not as a philosophical idea, but as the direct recognition that experience is empty of anything that can ultimately be grasped as "I," "me," or "mine."

¹³⁰ "Not abiding, but seeing through": Within the context of vipassanā, "not abiding" refers to relinquishing attachment to pleasant or subtle meditative experiences, even when they are perceived as peaceful, empty, or formless. "Seeing through" refers to the direct realization of the impermanence (anicca; anitya), unsatisfactoriness (dukkha; duḥkha), and not-self (anattā; anātman) of all phenomena, including the most refined meditative states. Whereas abiding seeks to preserve an experience, seeing through allows it to be fully understood and relinquished. Liberation lies not in remaining within any experience, however sublime, but in seeing through it completely.

¹³¹ "Anuloma-ñāṇa" (P.); anuloma-jñāna (Skt.) consists of two elements: anuloma, meaning "in harmony", "in accordance with", "flowing naturally", or "without resistance"; and ñāṇa/jñāna, meaning insight or direct knowing.

In this context, anuloma-ñāṇa refers to the insight that has become fully aligned with the reality to which the Dhamma points. It signifies a mature and unobstructed understanding of the liberating path, immediately preceding the breakthrough to the Unconditioned.

¹³² Tatiya Nibbāna Sutta, Udāna 8.3

¹³³ This refers to the transcendence of the conditioned (saṅkhata; saṃskṛta) and is central to the description of nibbāna as the Unconditioned (asaṅkhata-dhamma; asaṃskṛta-dharma).

¹³⁴ "Bhava" refers to the process of becoming which, within the twelve links of Dependent Origination (paṭicca-samuppāda; pratītyasamutpāda), culminates in birth (jāti). The stilling of bhava is precisely what the Buddha points to as the ending of this cycle.

¹³⁵ Kosambi Sutta, Saṃyutta Nikāya 12.68

¹³⁶ "The silence that bears no name" refers to the complete relinquishment of all self-identification. It points to the direct realization of anattā—the absence of anything that can truly be regarded as "I," "me," or "mine."

¹³⁷ "Vossagga" (P.); visarga (Skt.), meaning relinquishment or complete letting go, is the key through which the final stages of the Path unfold. Deliberate striving has fulfilled its purpose; all that remains is effortless surrender.

¹³⁸ "Māna" (P. & Skt.) is commonly translated as conceit, pride, or arrogance. More precisely, however, it refers to the deeply rooted tendency to measure oneself against others—as superior, equal, or inferior. This threefold comparison is rooted in attachment to an underlying sense of self and constitutes one of the final forms of identification that obscures liberating insight.

¹³⁹ "Avijjā" (P.); *avidyā* (Skt.) refers to fundamental ignorance: not merely a lack of knowledge, but a failure or unwillingness to see the true nature of reality—especially impermanence (*anicca*; *anitya*), unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha*; *duḥkha*), and not-self (*anattā*; *anātman*).

¹⁴⁰ "Paññā" (P.); *prajñā* (Skt.) means wisdom or insight: the clear and direct understanding of the true nature of phenomena.

¹⁴¹ "Nīcamānī" (P.); *nīcāmati* (Skt.) refers to humility: the quiet absence of self-importance, expressed as openness, modesty, and freedom from conceit.

¹⁴² "Desanā" (P. & Skt.) means teaching or exposition: the systematic presentation of the Dhamma by the Buddha or an awakened teacher. It refers to the communication of liberating insight in a form that invites direct understanding and realization.

¹⁴³ "Asaṅkhata" (P.); *asaṃskṛta* (Skt.) means the Unconditioned: a designation for *nibbāna*, which is free from arising and passing away and is not subject to dependent origination.

¹⁴⁴ "Vossagga" (P.); *visarga* (Skt.) means relinquishment or complete letting go: the complete abandonment of attachment, a central aspect of liberation in the early Dhamma.

¹⁴⁵ *Alagaddūpama Sutta*, *Majjhima Nikāya* 22

¹⁴⁶ "Janāmi passāmi" (P); *janāmi paśyāmi* (Skt.) means "I know and I see": an expression of direct realization through one's own seeing, rather than through belief, speculation, or learning.

¹⁴⁷ "Vinaya" (P. & Skt.) means discipline: the body of monastic training and conduct established by the Buddha to guide and protect the life of monks and nuns. Together, the Dhamma and the Vinaya constitute the foundation of the Buddha's teaching.

In the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*, *Dīgha Nikāya* 16, the Buddha tells his followers that, after his passing away, they should regard the Dhamma-Vinaya as their teacher: "Yo vo mayā dhammo ca vinayo ca desito paññatto, so vo mamaccayena satthā. — The Dhamma and the Vinaya that I have taught and laid down for you shall, after my passing, be your Teacher."

¹⁴⁸ The Buddha repeatedly warned against attachment even to the Dhamma itself. In the *Alagaddūpama Sutta*, *Majjhima Nikāya* 22, he compares the teaching to a raft: a means for crossing over, not something to be carried once the far shore has been reached. Likewise, the *Kaccānagotta Sutta*, *Saṃyutta Nikāya* 12.15, points beyond attachment to all fixed views, directing the practitioner instead towards the direct understanding of dependent origination.

Together, these discourses remind us that the Dhamma is a means to liberation, never an object of possession or self-identification. It is truly honoured not by defending it, but by understanding it, practising it, and allowing it to transform one's life.

¹⁴⁹ "Yoniso manasikāra" (P); *yuktimāna-manaskāra* (Skt.) means wise attention: the careful and discerning investigation of direct experience, undertaken in a way that leads to liberating insight.

¹⁵⁰ During this stage, subtle attachment may still arise towards meditative experiences such as clarity, tranquillity, joy, or inner light. In the commentarial tradition, these are known as *vipassanūpakkilesā* (P); *vipaśyanopakleśa* (Skt.)—the "imperfections of insight." Although they may appear refined and wholesome, they can mislead the practitioner if they are mistaken for the goal itself.

¹⁵¹ "Gotrabhū-ñāṇa" (P); "gotrabhū-jñāna" (Skt.) consists of two elements: *gotrabhū*, meaning change of spiritual lineage or crossing into a new lineage; and *ñāṇa/jñāna*, meaning insight or direct knowing.

In the Buddhist tradition, *gotrabhū* refers to the decisive turning point at which an ordinary worldling (*puthujjana*; *pṛthagjana*) passes into the lineage of the Noble Ones (*ariya-puggala*; *ārya-pudgala*). It denotes the inner transformation in which the mind irrevocably turns away from the conditioned (*saṅkhata*; *saṃskṛta*) and inclines towards the Unconditioned (*asaṅkhata*; *asaṃskṛta*). It is the insight immediately preceding stream-entry (*sotāpatti*; *srotāpatti*).

¹⁵² 'Magga-ñāṇa' (P); 'mārga-jñāna' (Skt.) literally means insight into the Path. In the context of the four supramundane Paths (*lokuttara-magga*; *lokottara-mārga*), it refers to the liberating insight that, at the moment of realization, cuts through the fetters (*saṃyojanāni*; *id.*) appropriate to that stage of Awakening and marks the direct breakthrough to Nibbāna (*nirvāṇa*). This realization occurs in a single moment of profound insight—a single instant (*khaṇa*; *kṣaṇa*)—in which the Path is directly realized.

On the basis of this breakthrough, four stages of Noble Persons (*ariya-puggala*; *ārya-pudgala*) are distinguished, each corresponding to a progressively deeper realization of liberation: the Stream-enterer (*sotāpanna*; *śrotāpanna*), the Once-returner (*sakadāgāmi*; *sakṛdāgāmin*), the Non-returner (*anāgāmi*; *anāgāmin*), and the fully liberated Arahant (*arhat*).

¹⁵³ There are four moments of Path insights (*magga-ñāṇa*; *mārga-jñāna*), one corresponding to each stage of liberation:

- the Path of Stream-entry (*sotāpatti-magga*; *śrotāpatti-mārga*)
- the Path of Once-returning (*sakadāgāmi-magga*; *sakṛdāgāmin-mārga*)
- the Path of Non-returning (*anāgāmi-magga*; *anāgāmin-mārga*)
- the Path of Arahantship (*arahatta-magga*; *arhatta-mārga*)

Each consists of a single moment (*khaṇa*; *kṣaṇa*) of liberating insight, during which the fetters (*saṃyojanāni*; *id.*) appropriate to that stage are cut through, giving rise immediately to the corresponding fruition (*phala*; *id.*).

¹⁵⁴ '*Phala-ñāṇa*' (P); '*phala-jñāna*' (Skt.) consists of two elements: *phala*, meaning fruit, fruition, or the natural ripening of a process; and *ñāṇa/jñāna*, meaning insight or direct knowing. In the context of liberation, this term refers to the immediate insight that follows the breakthrough of *magga-ñāṇa* (*mārga-jñāna*), when the mind abides in the freedom opened by the Path. It is not a new attainment, but the natural unfolding of what was already realized in the Path moment itself. Here, *phala* does not signify a result in the sense of something newly acquired, but the natural fruition of liberation—the immediate realization of *Nibbāna* (*nirvāṇa*) following the realization of the Path.

¹⁵⁵ '*Paccavekkhaṇa-ñāṇa*' (P); '*pratyaवेक्षणा-jñāna*' (Skt.) consists of two elements: *paccavekkhaṇa/pratyaवेक्षणा*, meaning reviewing, looking back, or contemplative reflection; and *ñāṇa/jñāna*, meaning insight or direct knowing. *Paccavekkhaṇa-ñāṇa* literally means the insight of review. Within the Buddhist tradition, it refers to the contemplative reflection that follows liberation: a quiet review of the Path, its fruition, the fetters that have been abandoned, and the freedom that has been realized. It is not a new insight, but a lucid recognition of what has already been realised.

¹⁵⁶ When reference is made here to a "map of inner dismantling," this should not be understood as a merely symbolic scheme or theoretical model. Within the living tradition of *vipassanā*, as taught by teachers such as Mahāsi Sayadaw, these sixteen stages of insight are regarded as genuine experiential processes that may unfold in the mind of the yogi. They do not constitute a rigid framework, but describe the natural unfolding of insight as it proceeds, step by step, in direct experience. Each stage points to a subtle shift in seeing—not as something to be pursued, but as something that may become apparent when the mind is still and remains fully present.

¹⁵⁷ *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*, *Saṃyutta Nikāya* 56:11

This book does not begin with doctrine. It begins with experience. Before there are ideas, there is seeing. Before there are answers, there is looking. It returns to the earliest Dhamma, where practice begins not with belief, philosophy, or metaphysical speculation, but with the simple invitation to observe experience as it is. It traces the gradual unfolding of insight through the sixteen vipassanā-ñāṇas, from the first clear seeing of impermanence to the possibility of liberation.

Again and again, the Buddha's teaching points in one direction: away from concepts and towards direct seeing. The teachings are not presented as truths to be accepted, but as invitations to investigate for oneself. This book follows that same movement. It does not ask you to adopt a philosophy, defend a tradition, or embrace a new set of beliefs.

It asks only for the willingness to look carefully, to see directly, and to discover what becomes visible when nothing is added to experience.

Everything begins with seeing. Nothing more is asked than the willingness to look.



Dhamma Books

Wisdom for the Heart