

THE PRACTICE OF DHUTANŦGA: ADDITIONAL WAYS TO REMOVE DEFILEMENTS



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ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is to study and synthesize the present ways of practice that remove defilements. Mental purification begins with the challenge of self-understanding and eliminating defilements. For a Buddhists, it is compulsory to learn the method how to relinquish defilements and fermentation. In order to eradicate every defilement, the Buddha skillfully applied the practice of compassion and take it as antidote, the method to emerge from it and vanquish it. By learning these principles and applying them properly, one can gradually wear away the most stubborn inner stains and reach the end of suffering, the “stainless liberation of the mind”.

Keywords: Dhutaṅga, Practice, Removing, Defilements, mind.

INTRODUCTION

In the time of the 6th century B.C.E. in India there were many thinkers and religious leaders who followed the practice based on their respect theories. Although there are so many theories and various practices, most can be divided into two groups: self-indulgence in sensual pleasure (*kāmasukhallikānuyogo*) or self-mortification (*attakilamathānuyogo*)¹. They were practiced by the Buddha Himself before attaining Enlightenment for six years in the Urūvela forest. After that, the Buddha taught that these other practices are wrong ways to liberation, Nibbāna. Even though the Buddha took a pragmatic approach to end suffering², the Buddha laid down a very difficult and intense practice known as the Dhutaṅga³. The concept of Dhutaṅga has not been researched widely and systematically in the modern day and is, for the most part, an untouched area in modern Buddhist studies.

In the Buddha's teaching, the criterion of genuine enlightenment lies precisely in the purity of the mind. The purpose of all insight and enlightened understanding is to liberate the mind from the defilements, and Nibbāna itself, the goal of the teaching, is defined quite clearly as freedom from greed, hatred, and delusion. From the perspectives of the Dhamma, defilement and purity are not mere postulates of a rigid authoritarian moralism but real and solid facts essential to a correct understanding of the human situation in the world. The work of the purification must be undertaken in the same place where the defilements arise, in the mind itself, and the main method the Dhamma offers for removing defilements and purifying the mind is meditation.

DEFILEMENTS

Defilements (*kilesa*) in Buddhism are mental states that cloud the mind and manifest in unwholesome actions. Defilements (*kilesa*) include states of mind such as anxiety, fear, anger, jealousy, desire, depression, etc. Contemporary translators use a variety of English words to translate the term defilement (*kilesa*), such as: afflictions, destructive emotions,

¹ Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, **Vinayapiṭaka: Mahāvagga**, (Thai Version). vol. 4, (Bangkok: Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, 2539), p.p. 22-23.

² PhraBrahmagunaborn (P.A. Payutto), **The Pali Canon What a Buddhist Must Know**, tr. By Dr.Somseen Chanawangsa, 9th Edition, (Bangkok: Pimsuay Publisher, 2549/2006), pp. 9-13.

³ Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, **Vinayapiṭaka: Parivāra**, (Thai Version). vol. 4, (Bangkok: Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, 2539), p. 626.

disturbing emotions, negative emotions, mind poisons, etc. “*Pabhassaramidaṃ, bhikkhave, cittaṃ. Tañca kho āgantukehi upakkilesehi vippamuttanti. Dasamaṃ*”⁴ The mind is inherently luminous; the unwise person can’t even see that it is obscured by defilements. The work of practice to removing defilements and purification must be undertaken in the same place where the defilements arise in the mind.

The first three defilements are known as the “unwholesome roots” (*akusala-mūla*); and, their opposites are the three “wholesome roots” (*kusala-mūla*). The presence of such a wholesome or unwholesome root affects thinking and therefore speech and action, so conditioning future experience (karma).⁵

The lists of defilements in different sources vary, both in content and in the number of items. Sometimes they are considered to be the same as the fetters.

TEN DEFILEMENTS ACCORDING TO THE ABHIDHAMMA

1. Greed (*lobha*)
2. Hate (*dosa*)
3. Delusion (*moha*)
4. Conceit (*māna*)
5. Wrong views (*micchādiṭṭhi*)
6. Doubt (*vicikicchā*)
7. Torpor (*thīnaṃ*)
8. Restlessness (*uddhaccaṃ*)
9. Shamelessness (*ahirikaṃ*)
10. Recklessness (*anottappaṃ*)

⁴Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, *Anguttara-nikāya*, (Thai Version). vol. 20, (Bangkok: Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, 2539), p. 9.

⁵Vbh., 391.

SIXTEEN DEFILEMENTS ACCORDING TO THE SUTTA

From the Vatthupama Sutta : The Simile of the Cloth. ⁶

1. Covetousness and unrighteous greed (*abhiijha-visama-lobha*)
2. Ill will (*byapada*)
3. Anger (*kodha*)
4. Hostility or malice (*upanaha*)
5. Denigration or detraction; contempt (*makka*)
6. Domineering or presumption (*palasa*)
7. Envy (*issa*)
8. Jealousy, or avarice; selfishness (*macchhariya*)
9. Hypocrisy or deceit (*maya*)
10. Fraud (*sathayya*)
11. Obstinacy, obduracy (*thambha*)
12. Presumption or rivalry; impetuosity (*sarambha*)
13. Conceit (*mana*)
14. Arrogance, haughtiness (*atimana*)
15. Vanity or pride (*mada*)
16. Negligence or heedlessness; in social behavior, this leads to lack of consideration (*pamada*).

THE UNWHOLESOME ROOTS⁷ (AKUSALA-MŪLA)

1. Greed (*lobha*),
2. Hate (*dosa*) and
3. Delusion (*moha*).

There opposites are the wholesome roots referred to as.

1. Attraction
2. Aversion
3. Ignorance

⁶M I, 36.

⁷D.III. 275.

THE WHOLESOME ROOTS⁸ (*KUSALA-MŪLA*)

1. Non-greed, or generosity (*alobha*),
2. Non-hate or loving-kindness (*adosa*), and
3. Non-delusion or wisdom (*amoha*).

Non-greed doesn't include a neutral meaning (neither greedy nor generous), but it has a positive meaning or generosity.

THE THREE LAYERS OF DEFILEMENTS⁹

From the inner to the outer layer they are.

1. Layer of Latent Tendency (*anusaya*)
2. Layer of Manifestation (*pariyuṭṭhana*)
3. Layer of Transgression (*vitikkāma*)

Latent tendency is the bottom layer. In this layer, the defilement lies dormant, ready to appear. Because of a stimulus, from the mind or outside, this dormant defilement manifests. For examples "we may be quite happy and feeling loving-kindness when someone or something upsets us". This is possible because the latent level of the defilements, say, self-illusion and aversion, are activated. In the second layer this latent tendency appears as unwise thoughts, emotions and volitions. For examples "we get angry and think, He shouldn't say that to me! He shouldn't get away with that, we decide we have to do something". This is called Manifestation. In Manifestation, sometimes we are aware of these mental events, often we are not. At a higher level of mindfulness, we can catch these thoughts and stop them. If we do not stop them, they lead to transgressions, in speech or action. We exhibit bodily formations, such as an angry face, deep breathing and the like. Also, biochemical changes occur in the body. The transgression may also appear in speech and action. Perhaps we tell the person to 'Get stuffed', or worse, punch him. A normal person might not even realize they have lost their temper until after all this has happened. Sometimes, perhaps often, they feel guilty and ashamed about it. But with practice, a person can stop the process at manifestation.

⁸D.III. 275.

⁹Bhikkhu Bodhi. *The Noble Eightfold Path: The Way to the End of Suffering*, (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 2010), pp. 111-112.

A Buddhist who practice and capable of concentration can catch the manifestation of angry thoughts and feelings, and dissolve them as they occur. In this way such a person who can stop old habits becoming transgressions and prevent new ones by not reacting. But this kind of wisdom is required meditation practice to removing the deep innermost defilements out of Latent Tendency (*anusaya*).

MEDITATION

Meditation, in the Buddhist training, is a method of mental development theoretically precise and practically efficient for attaining inner purity and spiritual freedom. The principal tools of Buddhist meditation are the core wholesome mental factors of energy, mindfulness, concentration, and understanding. But in the systematic practice of meditation, these are strengthened together in a program of self-purification which aims at extirpating the defilements root and branch so that not even the subtlest unwholesome stirrings remain thence the path to release and liberation, is at the same time a discipline aimed at inward cleansing.

Meditation refers to the meditative practices associated with the religion and philosophy of Buddhism. Core meditation techniques have been preserved in ancient Buddhist texts and have proliferated and diversified through teacher-student transmissions. Buddhists pursue meditation as part of the path toward Enlightenment and *Nibbāna*¹⁰. The closest words for meditation in the classical languages of Buddhism are *bhāvanā*¹¹ and *jhāna*¹². Buddhist meditation techniques have become increasingly popular in the wider world, with many non-Buddhists taking them up for a variety of reasons. In its broadest and most universal definition, meditation is a discipline that involves turning the mind and attention inward and focusing on a single thought, image, object or feeling. Meditation is sometimes called attention regulation (or attention training). Various meditation practices can be further defined according to the subjects of meditation.

¹⁰ S.IV 251.

¹¹ AN.II 44.

¹² AN.III 25.

SAMATHA MEDITATION¹³

Samatha meditation refers to the development of mental tranquility with concentration, is accompanied by three benefits; it gives happiness in the present life, a favorable rebirth, and the freedom from mental defilements which is a prerequisite for attainment of insight. In *Samatha* meditation the mind becomes like a still, clear pool completely free from disturbance and agitation, and ready to mirror on its surface the nature of things as they really are, the aspect of them which is hidden from ordinary knowledge by the restlessness of craving. It is the peace and fulfillment which is depicted on the features of the Buddha, investing his images with a significance that impresses even those who have no knowledge of what it means. Such an image of the Buddha can itself be a very suitable object of *Samatha* meditation, and is, in fact, the one that most Buddhists instinctively use. The very sight of the tranquil image can calm and pacify a mind distraught with worldly hopes and fears. It is the certain and visible assurance of *Nibbana*. *Samatha* Meditation practices can be further defined according to the 40 objects of *Samatha* meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*).

40 OBJECTS OF SAMATHA MEDITATION¹⁴

1. *Kasina* (10)
2. *Asubha* (10)
3. *Anussāti* (10)
4. *Brahmavihāra* (4)
5. *Arūpa* (4)
6. *Ahare Paikkulasanna* (1)
7. *Catu-dhatu-vavatthana* (1)

¹³ AN.I. 61.

¹⁴ Vism. 182.

THE TEN SORTS OF KASIṆA ¹⁵

1. Earth *kasiṇa* (*paṭhavī kasiṇa*)
2. Water *kasiṇa* (*āpo kasiṇa*)
3. Fire *kasiṇa* (*tejo kasiṇa*)
4. Wind *kasiṇa* (*vāyo kasiṇa*)
5. Brownish or deep purplish blue *kasiṇa* (*nīla kasiṇa*)
6. Yellow *kasiṇa* (*pīta kasiṇa*)
7. Red *kasiṇa* (*lohita kasiṇa*)
8. White *kasiṇa* (*odāta kasiṇa*)
9. Light *kasiṇa* (*ālokā kasiṇa*)
10. Open air-space, sky *kasiṇa* (*ākāsa kasiṇa*)

THE TEN ASUBHAS ¹⁶

1. Swollen or bloated corpse. (uddhumatakam)
2. A corpse purplish blue with decay (vinilakam)
3. A festering or suppurated corpse (vipubbakam)
4. A corpse splattered half or fissured from decay. (vicchiddakam)
5. A corpse gnawed by animals such as wild dogs.(vikkhayittakam)
6. A corpse scattered in parts, hands, legs, head and body being dispersed (vikkhittakam)
7. A corpse cut and thrown away in parts after killing. (hatavikkhittakam)
8. A bleeding corpse, i.e. with red blood oozing out. (lohitakam)
9. A corpse infested with and eaten by worms. (puluvakam)
10. Remains of a corpse in a heap of bones, i.e. skeleton. (Atthikam)

¹⁵ *Ibid.* 183.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* 183.

THE TEN ANUSSATIS¹⁷.

1. Fixing the mind with attentiveness and reflecting repeatedly on the glorious virtues and attributes of Buddha. (Buddhanussati)
2. Reflecting with serious attentiveness repeatedly on the virtues and qualities of Buddha's teachings and his doctrine. (Dhammanussati)
3. Fixing the mind strongly and repeatedly upon the rare attributes and sanctity of the Sanghas (Sanghanussati)
4. Reflecting seriously and repeatedly on the purification of one's own morality or sila. (Silanussati)
5. Repeatedly reflecting on the mind's purity in the noble act of one's own dana, charitableness and liberality. (Caganussati)
6. Reflecting with serious and repeated attention on one's own complete possession of the qualities of saddha. absolute faith, sila, morality, suta; knowledge, caga, liberality and panna, wisdom or knowledge just as the devas have, to enable one to be reborn in the World of devas. (Devatanussati)
7. Reflecting repeatedly with serious attentiveness on the supreme spiritual blissful state of Nirvana. (Upasamanussati)
8. Recollection of death or reflecting repeatedly on the inevitability of death. (Marananussati)
9. Reflecting earnestly and repeatedly on the impurity of the body which is composed of the detestable 32 constituents such as hair, body hair, nails, teeth, skin, etc. (Kayagatasati)
10. Repeated reflection on the inhaled and exhaled breath. (Anapana-sati)

THE FOUR BRAHRAMMAVIHARA-S.¹⁸

1. Contemplation of loving kindness and goodwill or universal benevolence towards all sentient beings, praying "may all beings be happy." (Metta)
2. Contemplation, of compassion, i.e. pity for and sympathy with those who are suffering praying in mind that "may all beings be free from misery and suffering." (Karuna)

¹⁷ *Ibid.* 184.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* 184.

3. Contemplation of feeling rejoicing with others in their happiness or prosperity praying in mind that they “may continue to be happy and prosperous as at present without diminution. (Mudita)
4. To remain indifferent with a feeling of equanimity to the state of condition of all beings, bearing an impartial attitude that things happen according to one’s own kamma that has been committed. (Upekkha)

THE FOUR *ARŪPAS*.¹⁹

1. Meditation or fixing the mind intently on the realm of infinity of space, sky *pannata*. (*Akasanañcayatanam*)
2. Meditation or fixing the mind intently on the realm of infinity of consciousness, *pathama ruppavinnana*. (*Viññanañcayatanam*)
3. Meditation or dwelling the mind intently on Nothingness, i.e. nothingness, that remains or exists from *pathamaruppavinnana*. (*Akincannayatanam*)
4. Meditation on the realm of Neither-perception nor Non-perception, i.e. semi-conscious state Jhana’s perception Tatiya (third) *ruppavinnana* as “so calm, tranquil and gentle.”

(*Nevasañña-nasaññayatanam*) *Ahare patikulasañña*: means the consciousness or perception of the impurity of material food derived from fixing the mind intently on the food and eatables as being detestable. *Catudhatuvavatthanam*: means contemplation on the existence or composition of the main four elements of *dhatu* in the body, namely, *vayo* (air or wind) and their differences in nature.

AHARE PATIKULASAÑÑA²⁰

Ahare patikulasañña refers to the consciousness or perception of the impurity of material food derived from fixing the mind intently on the food and eatables as being detestable.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* 184.

²⁰ *Ibid.* 185.

CATUDHATUVAVATTHANAM²¹

Catudhatuvavatthanam refers to contemplation on the existence or composition of the main four elements of dhatu in the body, namely, vayo (air or wind) and their differences in nature.

VIPASSĀNA MEDITATION²²

Vipassana meditation is realization of the three signs of being, anicca, dukkha, and anatta, by direct insight. These three characteristics, impermanence, suffering and non-self, can be grasped intellectually, as scientific and philosophical truth, but this is not in itself sufficient to rid the mind of egoism and craving. The final objective lies on a higher level of awareness, the direct to where it is actually experienced as freed from suffering or Nibbana the highest state of consciousness or enlightenment, understanding and connecting to the inner Self, awakening to a higher power, developing and increasing compassion and loving-kindness. However not only the meditations that the Buddha teaching but also another ways of practices for monks and nuns and for the laity to those who wish to much more rapidly or easily reach nibbāna, he also taught a set of ascetic practices which are non-compulsory, which enables to reduce one's needs to the least, thus sparing, the one who adopts these practices, from all defilements, which constitute the main poisons on the path to liberation from suffering or Nibbana.

DHUTAṄGA²³

The period of the Buddha alive there did exist ascetic practices designed for oppressing the body in as variegated as numerous ways. Those who adopted them believed that they would enable them to get liberated from the sorrow any living being. On the other hand, others were convinced that the ultimate goal of existence lied in knowing how to enjoy it to the full and focused all their efforts on best enjoying sensuous pleasures (*kāmasukhallikānuyogo*)²⁴.

²¹ *Ibid.* 185.

²² A.I. 61.

²³ Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, **Vinayapiṭaka- Parivāra**, (Thai Version). vol. 8, (Bangkok: Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, 2539), p. [626]-[628]. (Thai version).

²⁴ SN. V. 421

From the very first teaching of the Buddha he categorically rejected these two paths that he qualified of extreme paths (*attakilamathānuyogo*)²⁵. In his teaching, he explains us that only the moderate path, the middle path, as we can see from mainstream teachings are Samatha and Vipassana meditations the Buddha also keep the *dhutaṅga-s* practices for those who **interesting to practice in this method that** can lead us to the development of wisdom and right knowledge of reality. The two extreme paths develop, on their behalf, attachments and false views, contrary to the moderate path, which enables the lessening of attachments and the development of right view.

THE 13 DHUTAṅGAS²⁶

1. *Pamsukūla* refers to practice of abandoned robes
2. *Tecīvarika* refers to practice of three robes
3. *Piṇḍapāta* refers to practice of collection by means of one's bowl
4. *Sapadānacārika* refers to practice of food collection without skipping houses
5. *Ekāsanika* refers to practice of a single meal
6. *Pattapiṇḍika* refers to practice of everything within the bowl
7. *Khalupacchābhaddika* refers to practice of no longer accepting any extra food after having started to take the meal
8. *Araññika* refers to practice of to remain in the forest
9. *Rukkhamūla* refers to practice of to remain beneath a tree
10. *Abbhokāsika* refers to practice of to remain on the bare earth without shelter
11. *Susānika* refers to practice of to remain among charnels
12. *Yathāsantatika* refers to the practice of sleep at the allotted spot
13. *Nesajjika* refers to practice of to renounce to the lying posture

Dhutaṅga-s are not designed for superior beings, neither for inferior beings. They are beneficial for all those, who are able to put them into practice. A *dhutaṅga* is not an extreme practice; it is a mere practice that enables the mind to be rapidly and easily purified, absolute prerequisite to the development of attention and concentration. It reduces useless impediments, such as excessive food, numerous clothes to look after, the agitation of inhab-

²⁵ *Ibid.* 421.

²⁶ *Vism.* 83.

ited areas, very various attachments. Provided it is conveniently adopted, no *dhutaṅga* does cause to arise any kind of tiredness or oppression of the body or the mind. If a *dhutaṅga* involves a great difficulty or a difficult effort to an individual, he shouldn't practice it, as it would become a practice extreme for himself.

WHO CAN PRACTICE THE *DHUTAṅGAS*²⁷

Everyone is free, according to his capacities and wishes, to adopt one or several *dhutaṅgas*, which each comprises three levels of restriction. The aim of these practices lies in providing an environment as auspicious as possible for renunciation, the practices for monks can be all 13 and nuns are 8 and last 2 for the laity to those who wish to much more easily reach *nibbāna*, removing all defilements, which constitute the main poisons on the path to liberation from suffering or *Nibbāna*.

CONCLUSION

The purposes of this article is to study and present the ways of practice to removing defilements and purification of mind begins with the challenge of self-understanding and to eliminate defilements that Buddhists must first learn to know them, for every defilement the Buddha in his compassion has given us the antidote, the method to emerge from it and vanquish it. By learning these principles and applying them properly, we can gradually wear away the most stubborn inner stains and reach the end of suffering, the “*Stainless liberation of the mind*.”

However, Buddhists in Thailand generally do not study the teachings of the Buddha in great detail. This is why practice of meditation is so important; the common person will not understand deep Buddhist theory. The results from this study suggests that there are additional ways of practice for monks and nuns as well as the laity to practice Dhamma besides intensive study. The Buddha also taught a set of ascetic practices which hold the essence of the Dhamma. These ways of practice remove defilements, which constitute the main poisons of the mind and block the path to the liberation from suffering or Nibbana.

²⁷ *Ibid.* 83.

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