

NOTES ON SAMMÂSANKAPPA

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(Right Thought/Intention)

The general ways of thinking:

- a. Random thought (thinking aimlessly or with no purpose)
- b. Discursive thought (thinking by passing rapidly or indiscriminately from subject to subject; or dealing with a wide range of topics; or running hither and thither – here and there).
- c. Scientific thinking or cintamaya-paññâ (thinking in terms of making out meanings, implications, solutions, or facts, etc.)

Two fundamental ways of thinking:

- a. akusala-mûla, thinking about the unwholesome things including bad, evil, negative, destructive, unskillful/unskilled states. Included in the akusala is the prejudicial thought (a thought influenced by like, dislike, delusion/illusion, or fear). In a practical way, one should endeavor NOT to think any akusala things but to let them go at once whenever an akusala thing appears in front of the mind or before the eye (vision) of consciousness.
- b. kusala-mûla, thinking about the wholesome things including good, noble, positive, constructive, creative, and skillful/skilled states.

The practice: As soon as an akusala-mûla arises, let go of it at once and do not allow it to arise again or to take root in the mind (*Endeavor NOT to think any akusala-mûla so that the mind can remain free, empty, and clean*). On the contrary, whenever kusala-mûla appears, increase it, expand it, and bring it to completion. (*Always think the kusala-mûla (s) for filling up the wholesome or skillful/skilled things.*) In this way, full awakening/enlightenment or complete emancipation can be attained.

A Special Note: Let us take note of the meanings of *unwholesome* provided in *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* as follows: *Not conducive to physical, mental, or moral health; not promoting wellbeing; harmful. Such is akusala (unclever, imprudent, unintelligent). As for wholesome, it means Conducive to general wellbeing; promoting mental or moral health; beneficial; prudent, safe; having a sound (physical or moral) constitution; healthy. Such is kusala (Literally, clever, prudent, intelligent).*

Categories of Sammâ-sankappa:

- (1) A thought of freedom from or going beyond sensual pleasures technically known as “kâma” which includes visible objects, audible sounds, olfactory smells, tastes, and tactile objects. (nekkhamma-sankappa).
- (2) A thought as regards non-destructiveness (all the positive, constructive, and creative feelings/emotions, in one word “mettâ”) which is avyâpâda-sankappa.
- (3) A thought as regards non-violence (avihimsa-sankappa).

Opposites to the above-mentioned sankappa(s) are *kâma-sankappa*, *vyâpâda-sankappa*, and *vihimsa-sankappa*.

Details of 10 akusalakamma-patha (s) or domains of unwholesome things, namely: three corrupted/unclean behavior patterns, four corrupted/unclean speeches, and three corrupted/unclean mental states (energy patterns).

Three corrupted/unclean behavior patterns are (1) killing or depriving living beings of their lives, (2) stealing or taking that which is not freely given, and (3) sexual misconduct.

Four corrupted/unclean speeches are (1) telling a lie or not speaking the truth, (2) slandering, (3) using harsh, nasty words, and (4) talking non-sensically or frivolously.

Three corrupted/unclean mental states are (1) looking for a chance to get something that belongs to the other (s), (2) destructive thinking, and (3) adhering to a pernicious, wrong view.

On the contrary, there are 10 kusalakamma-patha or ways and means by which three clean behavior patterns, four clean speeches, and three clean mental states are taken.

Three clean behavior patterns are (1) refraining from killing, instead, having *mettâ* and *karunâ* for all living beings, (2) refraining from stealing but recognizing and respecting all the possessions of the other (s), and (3) refraining from sexual misconduct, that is to honor respectfully the legitimacy of those men and women in their companionships, partnerships, or marriage.

Four clean speeches are (1) refraining from telling a lie, (2) reconciling and harmonizing speech, (3) speaking lovingly, and (4) talking meaningfully.

Three clean mental states are (1) abstaining from looking for a chance to get that which belongs to the other (s), (2) having *mettâ* and well wishes for all living beings, and (3) possessing and embracing thoroughly *sammâ-ditthi* (right understanding or perfect wisdom).

The relationship of *sammâ-sankappa* and *sammâ-vâcâ* (right speech)

*As *sammâ-sankappa* comes first, and therefore it becomes the fundamental cause of *sammâ-vâcâ*. We think before we speak. A good or bad, right or wrong speech depends on what we think and how we think. There is a renowned statement that says: what is in my mind is on my mouth.*

With the complete practice of *sammâ-vâcâ* the fruition of *sotâpanna* can be achieved. The simple reason being that when *sammâ-vâcâ* is fully practiced, *sammâ-sankappa* as a part and parcel of wisdom, paired or teamed up with *sammâ-ditthi*, becomes equally fulfilled.

******Four clean above-described speeches are *sammâ-vâcâ*. ******