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What Meditation Implies

Acariya Buddharakkhita



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By

Acariya Buddharakkhita

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Meditation in Modern Life



A

characteristic of the modern world is “mass-civilisation,” with its end-product of mass hysteria, brainwashing, standardisation, and atrophied individuality. Man is being de-humanised by an over-emphasis on material development. He has become a mere cog in a complex machine. The craze for specialisation has led man to know too much about too little. Uniformity has led to labeled thinking. There is not only a standardisation of products but also ways of living.

The result is the loss of individual self-expression. Man is deprived of his wholeness in an endeavour to be part of a group. The assembly-line technique has invaded his personal life at the cost of his humanism.

The real tragedy, however, is the destruction of values. Morality, that inward rhythm leading to the unfolding of a higher potential in man, is the first casualty. Under the tyranny of practical results, the noblest of impulses have to yield to that mentality which measures and calculates, that is, to increasing

commercialisation. Even a small gift must be under the aegis of an aid-programme, an advertisement. In such conditions of cheerless materialism, the only hope lies in the culture of the mind and its potential.

Education, that noble instrument for values, has become an end in itself, such that it is to be purchased and given only for the empirical motivation of gain. It is no longer the ladder leading to the fruits of a munificent tree; in fact, the fruit itself has turned bitter. Man has become intelligent, but in the bargain has lost wisdom. He has acquired tremendous power, but without the wisdom to use it. He has usurped nature's treasures, but without the skill to use them.

This is not meant to paint a gloomy picture, but to present a fact of essential importance. Technological progress with its corollary, material prosperity, has not necessarily brought out a parallel change in the culture and personality of man. This is evident from the conflicts, depravities, and struggles in the technologically-advanced societies.

This is not the first time that the world is facing such a situation. Parapsychological research and the supernatural knowledge of clairvoyance have unearthed information of similar conditions in the past, as well as the consequences of such conditions. References about the technologically-advanced

civilisation of Atlantis, in that stretch of land connecting Africa with America but now submerged under the Atlantic ocean, are being taken seriously even by the most sceptical of scientific researchers, particularly in view of the recent developments in space technology. The references prove that a purely materialistic development and its product (a pleasure-loving civilisation) lead to self-destruction, like a piece of iron that is eaten up by the rust arising therefrom, to quote the Buddha.

The Buddha uses two words of tremendous psychological import and therefore very significant in the modern context of one-sided development. They are "sight" and "insight."

Sight with insight is wisdom. It is the bridge that connects one's life with reality. Insight means wisdom, that piercing knowledge which sees through things and "sees more" than is evident to others. It is also the ability to discriminate right from wrong, true from the false, the good from the bad, and to stick to the right, true, and good by overpowering the contrary. When one sees more than what appears to be, one becomes the master of the situation and is no longer a captive. The world is satisfied with a superficial look at things and is carried away by appearance, by the external gloss, because of an inward unrest produced by the tempo, the noise, the artificiality, and the

mechanisation of modern existence. “To see more” is much needed now in the political, economic, and moral chaos, in which men are staggering. It is needed to detect the foolishness of trying to build a new world with the rotten materials of the old one. Hence, the tremendous importance of meditation in modern life. For meditation will give man that wisdom which will make all of his activities purposeful, and provide direction to all his scientific and technological quests.

What Is Meditation?

This word is used to denote such a variety of activities, often mutually conflicting, that it is essential to know the exact import and relate it to one’s own experience. For meditation essentially is a pragmatic experience rather than an intellectual concept. The Buddha used several words to define it precisely, such as *bhāvanā*, mental development or culture of mind; *citta visuddhi*, purification of the mind; *samatha*, tranquility or calming down of the mind; *ekaggata*, concentration of the mind and the mental faculties; and *samādhi*, the

unification of the various mental powers which unfold one's dormant potential.

Bhāvanā

Development or culture of mind can best be exemplified by the analogy of a piece of land. A piece of land which remains undeveloped or uncultivated is not only useless and unproductive, but is positively dangerous because of the weeds which grow wild and the reptiles and scorpions which it harbours. Similarly, an undeveloped mind is not only unproductive spiritually, but is positively dangerous to society because it harbours the reptiles and scorpions of greed, hatred, and delusion. *Bhāvanā* is derived from the word "*bhu*" which means "to become." By meditation, one sets in motion a creative process, i.e., becoming one with reality or truth. Life becomes a constant becoming, but a becoming that more and more leads to disentanglement from karma.

Citta Visuddhi

The analogy of a pool describes *citta-visuddhi* beautifully. If there is a pool which is turbid and disturbed by passion, ego, hate, etc., not only will man's self-knowledge be distorted, but he will not be

able to rightly know anything about the objective world. On the other hand, through meditation, as one brings about the purification of the mind, one not only gains self-knowledge but also gains an insight into the reality of the world around.

Samatha

Meditation is an act of “calming down” or tranquillisation of the mind. As one meditates regularly one brings about an inner stillness and silence whereby one’s perceptions and discernment grow progressively clearer, and life becomes a veritable adventure. For one can remain immovable and impervious to all the dichotomies intrinsic in day-to-day life. One can be even-minded under all circumstances whether it is loss or gain, blame or praise, happiness or misery. This means achieving an in-depth mastery of the mind. Here the analogy of a breaker is very apt. By building a wall in the sea, the otherwise turbulent and disturbing waves are broken and the harbour is made calm. Likewise, when through meditation one builds a breaker within, one is able to maintain equipoise under all circumstances. And can anything be more useful in this world of turmoil?

Ekaggata

There is a difference between intellectual concentration and meditative concentration. While intellectual concentration can be partial, meditative concentration is total and all-embracing. The story of Newton is illustrative. Isaac Newton often remained forgetful in the intensity of his intellectual pursuit. For instance, one morning when his landlady gave him two eggs, his usual breakfast, to boil and eat, he boiled his watch instead! In meditative concentration, such an aberration cannot exist. The mind is fully awake with all the faculties so integrated that it becomes a powerful instrument leading to the transmudane states. Concentration is power, and meditative concentration is power *par excellence*.

Samādhi

Samādhi, or absorption, refers to the state of synthesis of all the various faculties of the mind.

Translated as “unification,” it is significant in the sense that it creates a new entity out of the otherwise disorganised and separated parts. Meditation transports one to a new dimension which unfolds all the dormant potential, leading to self-transformation.

Meditation is essentially a method of self-culture

leading to self-transformation, and thus has tremendous practical advantages in our day-to-day life. This self-culture brings about a unique breakthrough, viz. breaking through the intellectual crust, it opens up the mind to the light of wisdom, the influx of which brings about transmutation of the personality.

Meditation And Mind Control

Development or Degeneration

The role of meditation in effecting the total development of the personality—intellectual, ethical and spiritual—has been beautifully expressed in that famous world classic, the *Dhammapada*, in these words:

*Yoga ve jayati bhuri,
Ayoga bhuri sankhayo.
Evam dvedhapatham ñatva
Bhavaya vibhavaya ca*

*Tathattanam niveseyya
Yatha bhuri pavaddhati.*

The faculty of intuition which frees one from all bondages, is activated only when the mind is yoked to meditation. This faculty remains inactive, indeed is even atrophied, when the mind is not cultivated by meditation.

There are only two paths, of progress and degeneration. After clearly understanding this, let a man so commit himself that his intuitive wisdom may mature.

This remarkable statement of the Buddha spells out clearly that there is no third path, no neutrality or “sitting-on-the-fence” in matters spiritual. You either advance with all vigour or just degenerate. An uncommitted position such as that of the secularist is untenable and negative. Just as both barrenness and non-cultivation signify unproductivity, so is the uncommitted attitude barren of positive spiritual results.

Since meditation activates the potential power in man, it has been construed by the Buddha as the quintessential core of his teachings. The Master uses the picturesque analogy of turning a piece of barren land into a verdant garden to describe what happens

to the mind of one who meditates.

Culture of Mind

Meditation is culture of mind. I am using the word “culture” in the sense it is used in agriculture, that is, cultivating the mind and developing its possibilities to the peak of transcendental perfection. And mind-control forms an integral part of the meditative process, even as various control measures form the inevitable operations of agriculture. Mind, said the Buddha, is like a field: if it is kept uncultivated, it remains arid and unproductive, brings forth weeds all through the year causing soil infertility, rendering it positively dangerous by harbouring reptiles, scorpions, etc. An analogous situation obtains in the mind. If the mind is not cultivated, not only does it remain unproductive of salutary results, but it brings forth mental weeds in the form of wrong and pernicious thoughts. Greed, hatred, and delusion, render the mind dangerous.

On the other hand, when through systematic cultivation the mind is developed, its intrinsic powers are unfolded. And mental culture is not merely an hour or two of actual meditation but a process of development which, throughout the waking hours, maintains a tempo of inner progress.

In practice, meditation amounts to exercising the mind through a variety of contemplative techniques. Just as by physical culture is meant exercising the body in various ways, even so by mental culture is meant a variety of methods whereby the mind is exercised to develop the specifics of mindfulness, concentration, and insight. Just as through physical culture one develops strength, overcomes debility, adds to one's personality and health, even so through mental culture one overcomes the various mental limitations and weaknesses, builds up positive qualities against evils and temptations, and adds to the layers of spiritual perfections that ultimately occasion freedom from all worldly bondages.

Mind Control

It is to be emphasized that mind control does not mean inhibition of any kind nor does it imply any suppression or repression of natural mental urges. It is essentially a process of self-transcendence. In fact, without a measure of mind control life will become intractable. Hence the unambiguous testimony of the Enlightened One:

“Bhikkhus, I know not of any other single thing so unmanageable as the uncontrolled mind. The uncontrolled mind is indeed a thing

intractable.

“Bhikkhus, I know not of any other single things so manageable as the mind controlled. The controlled mind is indeed a thing tractable.

“Bhikkhus, I know not of any other single thing so conducive to great loss as the uncontrolled mind. The untamed mind indeed conduces to great loss.

“Bhikkhus, I know not of any other single thing that brings such misery as the mind that is untamed, uncontrolled, unguarded, and unrestrained. Such a mind indeed brings great suffering.

“Bhikkhus, I know not of any other single thing that brings such happiness as the mind that is tamed, controlled, guarded, and restrained. Such a mind indeed brings great bliss.”

Gradual, Not Sudden

Self-transcendence results not so much from an intellectual effort as from a rebirth of the whole personality, i.e. of the outlook and attitude, the emotions and the will, and the entire conduct of life. But this total change does not come about, indeed it

cannot, all of a sudden. It is a progressive path and a gradual development. Discipline over habits of the body, the change of outlook, the re-patterning of intellectual and volitional activities, and the self-purification resulting from them all, must necessarily be based on a methodology that is precise and reliable.

Ganaka Moggallana, the famous mathematician of the time, went to the Buddha and asked him, “Venerable Sir, in the case of various vocations, there is always a gradual training, a gradual doing, and a gradual practice. Is it possible, Lord Gotama, to lay down a similar gradual training and a progressive development in respect of the disciplines of spiritual life?”

Said the Buddha, “It is possible, learned devotee, to lay down a gradual training, in respect of spiritual life. Even as a skilled trainer of horses, trains the horse by getting it used to various modes of training, even so the Tathagata, the Truth-Finder [i.e., referring to himself in the third person], having taken on a man to be spiritually tamed, disciplines him through a graduated method.

“He is told first, ‘Come, disciple, be of moral habit through a code of moral purification, live controlled by voluntarily undertaking moral obligations, be endowed with right behaviour,

stick to your pasture of morality, see danger in any compromise and defilement of your undertaking, and delight in training yourself in rules of moral conduct.'

"And as this disciple trains himself this way, the Tathagata disciplines him further, saying, 'Come, be guarded as to the sense-faculties; be master of your senses. By seeing an object with the eye, do not be entranced by its appearance, but dwell self-controlled. If you do not control your senses, then sensual attractions, frustrations, and other evil states of mind, will flow in. So fare along controlling and guarding your senses: the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue, the body, and the mind.'

"And as the disciple fares on controlling the sense faculties including the mind, he is told 'Come, be moderate in eating; you should take food reflecting carefully that the purpose of eating is not fun or indulgence or even to get physical charm or beauty, but to keep the body going so that it will assist the spiritual life and enable one to abide in comfort and blamelessness.'

The Tathagata further disciplines him saying, 'Now dwell intent on vigilance, cultivate

mindfulness and clear comprehension. Turn every action—physical, verbal, and mental—into a meditational exercise enabling you to remain mindful, clearly alert, watching over the body, feelings, thoughts and all mental drives, and thus cleanse the mind of obstructive mental states.’

“As soon as the disciple is enabled to remain mindful and discriminative under all situations, whether walking or sitting, standing or lying, or doing any work, throughout the waking hours, he is further trained through meditation to have complete control over the mind: ‘Come now, disciple, train your mind to overcome all wrong thoughts which render the mind uncontrolled. Get rid of the taint of desire and ill-will, and dwell generous, benevolent, and compassionate. Get rid of laziness and laxity and dwell vigorous, unrelenting, full of energy. Get rid of restlessness and worry, and dwell in inward tranquillity and calm. Get rid of doubt and perplexity, and dwell with a mind filled with faith and conviction.’”

When the disciple is thus enabled to be controlled in mind, he is further instructed in the various techniques of meditation, leading to the higher stages

of *samādhi*, which is higher consciousness born of meditative absorption.

Samādhi

Samādhi brings about a synthesis, a total unification and integration, binding together a number of sublime mental states, which not only completely cleanse the mind and keep it one-pointed and steady (like the flame of a lamp in the absence of wind), but cause that inward illumination, called wisdom, which permits contact with reality, banishing all delusions and folly, ignorance and self-deception. With the emergence of this intuitional power, the path leading to spiritual liberation is both illuminated and opened.

Self-transcendence also implies the pursuit of excellence which has been declared again by this great Master-Mind of India, the Buddha, as the most purposive venture in life. Pursuit of knowledge has been the pre-occupation of our time. Knowledge, *per se*, cannot be an exalted virtue though it could be a power and often a destructive one. Excellence, *per contra*, is that higher virtue and inward light that brings about transformation and self-mastery, and therewith true happiness and well-being.

Life in modern society is a strange paradox. While knowledge has increased many-fold, so have troubles.

The evils of modern society seem to have increased in direct proportion to the increase of knowledge. Today, humanity's fund of knowledge is fantastic, and so is human bondage.

Unified Code

"A tamed mind brings true happiness," said the Buddha. To tame the mind, it is essential to follow a unified code of morals, which entails the increasing refinement of mind, outlook, and behaviour. *Pañca-sila*, the Buddha's unified code, consists of the voluntary renunciation of acts of violence and dishonesty, immorality and untruthfulness, and the eschewing of all alcoholic and drug addictions. In positive terms, these precepts envisage a life dedicated to humanism, charity, purity, contentment, and rectitude. A life so designed will have no need for any form of escapism expressed through acquisitiveness, wealth and power, indulgence in sensuality, drugs, and drink. The social implications of such a code are even more significant, since it not only avoids crime but builds a very cultured humanity, for which the need for excellence becomes a vital necessity. Today, humanity, moving as it does at such great speed, is threatened not only with a loss of direction but is dogged by constant anxiety and uncertainty. A mind

which gets disoriented and confused becomes like a boat without a rudder. The culture of mind as envisaged by the Supremely Enlightened Buddha constitutes the panacea for ailing humanity. Here is the validation of the Master's method of mind-training by Dantika, a Buddhist nun in the time of the Buddha:

Coming from noonday rest on Vulture's Peak,
I saw an elephant, his bathing done,
Forth from the river issue.

And a man

Taking his goad, bade the great creature stretch
His foot.

"Give me thy foot."

The elephant obeyed, and to his neck the driver
sprang.

I saw the untamed tamed, I saw him bend

To master's will; and marking inwardly,

I passed into the forest depths and there in faith

I trained and ordered all my heart.

Meditation and the Householder

It is not uncommon to hear people say that meditation and household life are mutually contradictory, since the former is supposed to make one detached, insensitive, and cool to obligations, while the latter is believed to be based on warmth and a zest for existence.

It is argued that the householder has countless obligations, i.e., towards himself, his family, community, society, and country. If through meditation he becomes indifferent to these obligations how can meditation, they ask, fit into the household life?

Is it true?

If by meditation is meant “escapism,” then it is true; and if an “escape”, it is not. Escapism is a wrong and unwholesome attitude. It means running away from responsibilities, not facing realities. It is a tendency rooted in delusion like that of an ostrich. Escape, on the contrary, is that wholesome approach whereby one outgrows the mental contradictions and limitations, overcomes passions and other mental corruptions, and thereby gets out of, and escapes from, the bonds posed by them.

If in the name of meditation one shirks one’s responsibilities and becomes a fugitive within the four walls of selfishness and conceit, then meditation,

being only a masquerade for an egocentric propensity, is escapism and therefore undesirable. But if meditation means freedom from greed, hatred, and delusion, an escape from the imprisonment of passions, hate, and ignorance, then it is not only desirable but is the only panacea for all the ills that dog the householder.

The householder has two obligations: one at the behest of egoism, and the other of altruism. The former is in fulfilment of self-interest and the latter of others' interest. Self-interest need not be limited to oneself; it could be extended to a whole society or country. In essence, it means one's empirical associations. By "other's interest" is envisaged spiritual requirements and responsibilities.

The wise householder strikes a balance between these two obligations. The ability to bring about an equilibrium between empirical and spiritual obligations arises from that wonderful spiritual faculty called sagacity. The sole purpose of meditation is to develop this quality.

Meditation removes the mental strains and stains, cleanses and composes the mind, brings about unification of all the faculties, and develops the potential with which the mind is endowed. For mind is a mine; and if one knows how to exploit this

treasure-house of inner wealth, there is nothing that one cannot achieve. What else but meditation can unlock this inexhaustible repository?

Far from being escapism, meditation is, therefore, the most positive step in the direction of freedom and perfection, beauty and knowledge, wisdom and compassion.

The question of fusing empirical interests with spiritual practices appears to have been uppermost in the minds of our forbears, as evident in the sacred Pali Canon.

Dighajanu, a leader of society, goes to see Buddha and asks, "We, Lord, are laymen who enjoy worldly pleasure. We lead a life encumbered by wife and children. We use sandalwood of Kasi, we deck ourselves with garlands, perfumes and unguents; we use gold and silver. To those like us also, let the Exalted One teach the Dhamma, teach those things that lead to prosperity and happiness in this life, and to prosperity and happiness in the world to come."

Said Bhagavan Buddha:

"Four conditions, Dighajanu, conduce to a householder's prosperity and happiness in this very life. Which four? The accomplishment [*sampada*] of unrelenting effort, of diligence, of good friendship and of balanced living.

“Further, four conditions, Dighajanu, conduce to a householder’s prosperity and happiness in his future life. Which four? The accomplishment of faith, virtue, charity and wisdom.”

Accomplishment is the operative term here. It means that which forms the basis of security and fulfilment. It not only means wealth, possessions, fame and influence, purely in a material and social sense, but it also means the acquisition of those moral qualities and spiritual values which conduce to fulfilment in the intellectual and spiritual levels. In whichever sense it is taken, it means accomplishment, the basis of security and fulfilment.

The two sets of *sampadas*, one connected with the here and now, the empirical accomplishments, and the other connected with hereafter, the spiritual accomplishments, are in the last analysis certain mental attainments which can only be acquired mentally. Since meditation essentially is mental culture, the development of mind means the aforesaid attainment.

The first *sampada* of unrelenting effort is that indefatigable vigour of mind that aims at perfecting anything in which one is engaged, any vocation or work, any interest or hobby. The Buddha emphasized

often that there should be no dichotomy between the so-called secular and spiritual dimensions.

A vocation need not only be a means of livelihood but it should also be a means for spiritual development. Whether a person is a clerk or businessman, a housewife or doctor, a farmer or judge, he or she should turn that very vocation into an instrument for the cultivation of spiritual qualities. This can be done when one is so ardently committed to the calling that it is no longer a burden or drudgery, but an adventure and a mode wherein one can exercise one's skills. Whoever is so committed to his or her occupation cannot be but proficient.

“Herein,” said the Blessed One, “Dighajanu, by whatsoever activity a householder earns his living, whether by farming, trading, rearing cattle, archery, service under the king, or any other kind of craft, at that he becomes skillful and tireless. He is endowed with the power of discernment as to the proper ways and means; he is able to arrange and carry out duties. This is called the accomplishment of unrelenting effort.”

In spiritual terms, this means instilling the mind with that vital power whereby one overcomes all limitations and grows upwards unto the unbounded plenum of spiritual freedom.

Diligence, the second *sampada*, means that alert mindfulness which enables one to preserve the good things and qualities that are one's lot, either as an endowment by birth or as an acquisition through personal effort.

Men suffer more from negligence and lack of mindfulness than from not having things. If a person is diligent he preserves what he has acquired, and thereby not only helps himself but also others around him.

“Herein, Dighajanu, whatsoever wealth a householder is in possession of, obtained by work and zeal, collected by the strength of his arm, by the sweat of his brow, justly acquired by right means, such he takes care of well by guarding and watching so that kings may not seize it, thieves may not steal nor fire burn it, nor water carry it off nor ill-disposed heirs remove it. This is the accomplishment of watchfulness.”

In terms of spirituality, it is that capacity of mind which gives one “direction” towards meaningful objectives. It is a pointer to essentials; by its quest for purpose, it makes life purposive.

One of the greatest joys of life is to find the company of a wise man. To resort to the company of good men, therefore, is an imperative for any success.

Said the Buddha:

Now when a man ties up with blades
Of Kusa-grass some fetid fish
The blades of grass get fetid too;
Such is consorting with a fool.

Now when in foliage a man
Ties up some Tagara [1]
The leaves will of the scent partake;
Such is consorting with the wise.

Every human being carries an aura. And to the extent we are exposed to the vibrations of a good aura, to that extent we become good and noble. In the Mangala Sutta, the discourse on what constitutes the real blessings in life, Lord Buddha enunciated “good company” as the first step towards progress and prosperity.

Not having bad company, cultivating the company of the wise, revering those to be revered, these constitute the highest blessings.”

Good company thus is a vital “accomplishment” without which there can be no fulfilment here or hereafter.

“Herein, Dighajanu, in whatsoever village or market town a householder dwells, he

associates, converses, engages in discussions with householders or householders' sons, whether young and highly cultured or old and highly cultured, full of faith, full of virtue, full of charity, full of wisdom, he emulates the faith of the faithful, the virtue of the virtuous, the charity of the charitable, the wisdom of the wise. This is called good friendship."

In spiritual terms, it implies a process of vitalisation through exposure to wholesome influences.

It is hardly necessary to emphasize the importance of the fourth *sampada* of "balanced living," which means striking the golden mean between miserliness and living beyond one's means ("the dog-in-the-manger" quality). He who lives beyond his means will certainly bring catastrophe on himself sooner than expected.

Prodigality is based either on craving or vanity, on pride or delusion. Similarly, the niggardly attitude is symptomatic of a contracted mind. It is, in effect, depriving oneself of the good things of life and depriving others as well. By balanced living one transcends these pitfalls and maintains a state of welfare which can never be attained otherwise.

"Herein, Dighajanu, a householder knowing his

income and expenses, leads a balanced life, neither extravagant nor miserly, knowing that thus his income will stand in excess of his expenses, but not his expenses in excess of his income.

“Just as the goldsmith, or an apprentice of his, knows, on holding up a balance, that by so much it has dipped down, by so much it has tilted up; even so a householder, knowing his income and expenses leads a balanced life, neither extravagant nor miserly.”

In terms of spirituality it implies that equipoise and even-mindedness which is capable of raising above all the pairs of opposites—like and dislike, praise and blame, rise and fall, knowledge and ignorance, poverty and affluence, youth and age, love and hate, etc.

This brings us to the remaining set of four *sampadas*: faith, virtue, charity, and wisdom, which conduce to spiritual progress.

Faith is a state of receptivity which keeps the mind open to higher values and “lets in” the light of truth. Faith has been compared to a seed which sprouts into a tree that bears the fruit of emancipation.

Faith is the wealth

Here best for man
By faith samsara's
Flood is crossed.

Virtue brings about moral purification and acts as a fence that protects us from all dangers and privations in a world where temptations and entanglements hold sway. Virtue comes from self-discipline voluntarily undertaken. It is based on a code of conduct.

Charity has been construed as the vessel which holds all the good fortunes of life. Poverty and affluence, happiness and misery, high or low birth, are all conditioned by the practice or otherwise of charity.

Charity, therefore, does not only uplift one morally, but socially and economically as well. To the extent a person is charitable, to that extent he enjoys well-being here and now, and well-being hereafter.

Wisdom, like the sun, dispels all darkness of the mind. It is through wisdom that one uproots all evils and cleanses the mind to turn it into an instrument of enlightenment.

Life has been described as a continuous becoming (*bhava*), like a wheel moving on and on upon the wilderness of samsara. One is born, grows, and dies, only to be reborn and continue the endless journey called life. This meaningless travel is caused by what

is known as karma, or volitional action. It is only through wisdom that the karmic energy is harnessed for gaining liberation. Wisdom, therefore constitutes the greatest “accomplishment” for an aspirant.

Energetic and heedful in his tasks,
Wisely administering his wealth.
He lives a balanced life,
Protecting what he has amassed.
Endowed with faith and virtue too,

Generous he is and free from avarice;
He ever works to clear the path
That leads to prosperity in future life.
Thus to the layman full of faith,
By him, so truly named “enlightened”
These eight conditions have been told,
Which now and after lead to bliss.

How does one bring into consummation all these accomplishments?

By sagacity (*nepakka*) said the Buddha in his famous Hymn of Universal Love. And sagacity is that maturity of mind which results from the practice of meditation.

Thus meditation and household life are mutually-complementary, since the former enriches the later.

Notes

1. A white fragrant flower like buttercup. [\[Back\]](#)

Table of Contents

Title page	2
Meditation in Modern Life	4
What Is Meditation?	7
Bhāvanā	8
Citta Visuddhi	8
Samatha	9
Ekaggata	10
Samādhi	10
Meditation And Mind Control	11
Development or Degeneration	11
Culture of Mind	13
Mind Control	14
Gradual, Not Sudden	15
Samādhi	19
Unified Code	20
Meditation and the Householder	21
Notes	33