

Regulations of the Āyusamana Daily Practice – Female Power for Ecstasy and Enlightenment

Āyukusala Thera (AT) interviewed by Samanī Vajirā (SV) and Samanī Sudhammā (SS) in the Āyurāma, Switzerland, on 4th, 17th and 22nd January 2009

Samanī Vajirā: Bhante, last year you have given several Dhamma lectures, in which you dealt with the problems of the Āyusamana practice as it is possible in the everyday life in Europe. You spoke about the ways to cultivate the factors of *jhāna*, the *jhānanga* constituents of ecstasy in meditation and the factors of enlightenment, *bojjhanga* in meditation. The other theme was how to regulate daily life according to the principles of Āyusamana training. For this Regulation of the Āyusamana Daily Practice can be used the quasi-monastic time table as we have it for example in the Āyurāma. But one has to keep in mind the fact that so far no strictly monastic life is possible in Europe; and this has led to designing the four types of Āyusamana training, some of which allow living and practicing as a so called “plain-cloth Samana”. Both the mentioned themes of regulations adjusted to the European conditions are connected with the questions of earning money for one’s own life support, getting involved in the regular social life and enjoying sensual pleasures by those practitioners of Dhamma whom the Buddha called *kāmabhogī*. We can say that all these are chiefly problems of motivation; in other words, the main question is why a person becomes an Āyusamana or an Āyusamanī. As I am these days preparing a workshop for the Āyusamanīs and Āyusamanas, I would like to ask some questions about the procedures of training related to the mentioned themes. A good overview of the four types of Āyusamana training in Europe is available on internet address [www.ayurama.eu/4typesamana.pdf]

Āyukusala Thera: The mentioned themes were explained only briefly for the German group at Sabbaloka Vihāra, Weltkloster in Radolfzell. The instructions were tailored, so to say, for persons who regularly meditate in their individual daily life and come to meet in the evening group where they sit for an hour and thereafter ask questions. Those persons are no monks, they live as ordinary decent people in Europe do, they are *kāmabhogī* normally motivated to enjoy sense pleasures, however they also do practice meditation and are interested in cultivation of the *jhāna* factors. The discussed themes have come out of the actual need of those meditators. Some of our discussions were recorded and even transcribed, but the quality of the audio recordings is mostly not good enough for any public reproduction. Nevertheless, the cultivation of the factors of *jhāna* was well treated by you, Āyusamanī Vajirā, within the course of Dibba-Vihāra meditation in Czech, and that talk was transcribed and well edited. The principles of Āyusamana training, taking into account that some may and some may not be *kāmabhogī*, were already treated by me in the letters to Sri Lankan Āyusamanī Charmini, which are available at the website of Āyurāma. [www.ayurama.eu/charmie.pdf]

SV: The principles of Āyusamana training provide a frame within which, the progress of meditation can be facilitated in the best way. Yet it requires the guidance of a good trainer who takes into account the personal qualities of the trainee. I remember, Bhante, how you were training us the monks and nuns in the monastic setting of the Āyukusala Ārāma in Sri Lanka. The optimal setting of the training has been developed during the years of your work together with the Sinhalese supporters and included the use of the facilities of traditional Sri Lankan Sangha. Now, there is a good group of the Āyusamanas and Āyusamanīs in Czechia; some of them have received a full *bhikkhu* training under your guidance of the *nissaya* in Sri Lanka and three of them are now really competent meditation teachers. However you have been able to offer the Āyusamana training also to the German group at Sabbaloka Vihāra.

AT: Well, there were only four or five persons in the German group who really understood themselves as Āyusamanas or Āyusamanīs. Most of those others just only adopted the regular meditation as a part of their everyday life without getting into the systematic studies of the Dhamma texts, which is an indispensable part of the Āyusamana training. You discuss the questions of Āyusamana training with those three men who at the Sabbaloka Vihāra conduct the meditation when I am not there. Also you speak with the German Āyusamanī Sudhammā who is specialist in training the “mindful harmonizing of energies”, as she herself designates the cultivation of the factors of *jhānanga* constituents of ecstasy in meditation, which is also for you an important theme. But I have to admit that I am not sure how far my German pupils devote themselves to the study of texts I have recommended to them; I did not call them to any exams, yet. [here AT is laughing.] Why don’t you check with them, Venerable Vajirā, to find out to which extent they have understood what I have been teaching. I have some sobering experiences with the Czech meditators and even with some of them posing as meditation teachers, experiences that brought me down to the earth. [here AT is making a sad face and pointing down to the ground.]

SV: Why? What is wrong about the Czechs? There are by now several Czech Āyusamanas, three of them, namely the venerable Akasa, Atari and Hita, have received from you the full *bhikkhu* training and also you recognize them as competent teachers of Dhamma and meditation. There are also seven Czech Āyusamanīs, three of them have received from you monastic training and you are satisfied with their results. What is the difference between the Czech, Sri Lankan, and German pupils of you, Bhante?

AT: The difference between the Czech and the German speaking Āyusamanas is conditioned mainly by the political character of their either post-communist or democratic countries; their cultural biases are very similar. There is one characteristic common to the Western Buddhists, namely profit thinking, which was aptly called spiritual materialism by Lama Chogyam Trungpa. In the German speaking world this may ensue in creating useless institutions that end in suffering under self-imposed bureaucracy. Sadly enough in the post-communist Europe, we meet also real thieves who pretend to be Buddhists in order to get money from Asian donors. The Westerners are generally more stingy and miserly than the Asians. My Sri Lankan and other Indian pupils differ from the Westerners due to the covert fact that they from childhood imbibed the Dhamma-bound virtues as an ingredient of their home culture; but on the overt level they often suffocate with prejudices adjacent to modern Buddhist fundamentalism. Teaching the practice of Dhamma to those born-Buddhists is often more difficult than to teach the less prejudiced Westerners. Those born-Buddhists believe to know everything in advance and do not see any need for own practical discoveries; some are getting lost in a blind political activism, but most of the born-Buddhists succumb to fatalism and indolence, as it is adjudged to them by both Western and their own publicists.

SV: Venerable Sir, your verdict on the Western Buddhists appears very hard-hitting. And the born-Buddhists do not come much better off. Would you kindly consider deleting this part of interview when editing its record? Could you instead tell briefly, what are the socio-culturally given biases, which one has to overcome in the Āyusamana training.

AT: Gladly, I will sum up, what are the socio-culturally given biases that one has to overcome in the Āyusamana training. But I will not oblige, Madam, to delete my hard-hitting criticism of the Buddhist realities. Anybody who would doubt its accuracy or its justifiability can contact me and ask for the names of Buddhist thieves and details of all those questionable deeds of Buddhists, which I am referring to. But to follow your kind suggestion, I will also point out some of the good aspects, which we are fortunate to see due to the training of the Āyusamanas and Āyusamanīs. Well, to sum up those not so fortunate Buddhist realities in the three worlds, in which I teach the Dhamma, I need to say just the following three sentences: First, most of the Buddhists in the Theravada Buddhist countries of Asia are either passive and can be

designated as “indolent traditionalists” or active, who can be designated as a small group of “aggressive fundamentalists”. Second, in the post-communist Europe we meet people who try to make money on selling their strange notions of Buddhism and some of them are really reckless thieving Buddhist opportunists. Third, in the democratic countries, especially in the German speaking world, we meet thoughtless people who are busy with superficial consumerism of ever growing variety of Buddhist schools, while those more serious ones can be designated as “ponderous Buddhists”. In these three sentences, I am pointing out succinctly the sad aspects of contemporary Buddhist realities. Nevertheless, in all the three mentioned worlds, we can meet real practitioners of the Dhamma who are competent in mastering their life and thus can be designated as *sappurisa*, which is the Buddha’s term for noble fully functioning person.

- SV:** Bhante, I want to ask two more brief questions, before trying to engage you in talking about my main themes, which are namely female power in meditative cultivation of ecstasy and enlightenment. My first brief question is: Why did you insist on having this interview in English? The second brief question is: Why do we speak so much about the socio-cultural context of the Āyusamana daily practice?
- AT:** All our Āyusamanas and Āyusamanīs understand English. Whenever they do not understand something completely, they can ask in their mother tongue, that is in Czech, German, Sinhala – this would eventually lead to discussing the theme in question and getting a deeper understanding of it. This was my idea while starting this interview. Your second question, venerable lady, would require a further long elaboration upon the culture-bound ideas and prejudices about meditation, spiritual way of life and asceticism, love and sex and happiness, relations between men and women, and so on. We have been speaking about the cultural background of our Āyusamanas and Āyusamanīs only to remember the biases they have to overcome; and I am fortunate to know that those biases are mastered by my pupils who are successful in their training, whereas the persons who stay attached to the mentioned biases of indolence, recklessness or ponderousness leave the Āyukusala tradition soon.
- SV:** Bhante, thank you for your answers that were thus far concerning the socio-cultural context of the Āyusamana training. Now, I would like to come to my main theme that is the power of femininity in connection with the meditative cultivation of ecstasy and enlightenment. Buddha speaks about the twenty two controlling faculties in the *Indriya-Samyutta* and therein in particular about the group of three controlling faculties, namely first the femininity faculty *itthi-indriya*, second the masculinity faculty *purisa-indriya*, and third the vitality faculty *jīvita-indriya*; this text is then dealing with progress in meditation. Similarly in the intensive meditation retreats of the Āyukusala tradition, the instruction for meditation progress starts from the cultivation of controlling faculties. Then gradually instructions are given for developing the factors of ecstasy and finally the factors of enlightenment. You have been explaining this procedure to your German pupils recently. Now I would like to ask you, Bhante, some technical questions in this context.
- AT:** This will need quite some time to deal with properly. Therefore I would suggest you, dear respected Āyusamanī Vajirā, that we make break now. We can have a look at the canonical texts referring to the theme; I would suggest *Indriya-Samyutta* of the *Sutta-Pitaka*, further on *Indriya-Vibhanga* and *Patthāna-Paccayaniddeso* of the *Abhidhamma-Pitaka* and also the *Samyoga-Sutta* of *Sattaka-Nipāta* as well as the suttas of *Ekaka-Nipāta-Rūpādivagga* of the *Anguttara-Nikāya*. You have already studied all these texts, Venerable Vajirā. Just please have another look at those texts and prepare then a list of the questions you want to ask.
- SV:** Very good, Bhante, thank you for the explanations you gave me so far. Let us continue this interview after some time.

Continued Interview on “Āyusamana Daily Practice – Female Power for Ecstasy and Enlightenment”
in the Āyurāma, Switzerland on 4th, 17th, and 22nd January 2009
Āyukusala Thera (AT) answers the questions of Samanī Vajirā (SV) and Samanī Sudhammā (SS)

- SV:** Venerable Sir, in several previous days we have been working on an interview about the Regulations of Āyusamana Daily Practice. In the Āyukusala training there is encompassed the whole Buddha’s Noble Eightfold Path, that is the training of *sīla-samādhi-paññā*, action-experiencing-knowledge. How are the two controlling faculties of femininity *itthi-indriya* and masculinity *purisa-indriya* relating to these three fields of training? What procedures are used to balance these two controlling faculties, how are they trained?
- AT:** Venerable Vajirā, the two controlling faculties of femininity and masculinity are steering the actions of men and women. They are conditions *indriya-paccaya* for other phenomena. Both these faculties are present in various degrees in every person whether male or female; they appear in action, in experiencing and in the personal knowledge of the instructed trainee. In regard to the progress of training, there is nothing special about these two controlling faculties, that means, as long as they are not somehow crippled. They should grow in the healthy development of personal integrity, in other words, they are balanced and harmonized when somebody is becoming a fully functioning person *sappurisa*. This has been repeatedly a theme of our discussions in Āyurāma; this has been also one of the reasons why we talked in regard to the training of Āyusamanīs about the importance of becoming a healthy sovereign female who is competent also in her social settings.
- SV:** This is also a culture bound issue. We have been discussing this also with our Sri Lankan Āyusamanī Charminī who in her daily life has to master two types of social settings; she lives in a traditional Buddhist country where she works at the French embassy and as an officer in charge of cultural affairs she has to deal especially with Europeans and with westernized Sri Lankans. She must be very mindful in order to upkeep her self-understanding as Āyusamanī despite of dealing with the worldly situations of those two worlds...
- AT:** Yes, she is an exceptional personality. That is all on the top of her own Āyusamanī training; but I do not think that she would be better off when she would be living in a monastery as an ordained *bhikkhunī*, even though the life of nuns in Sri Lanka is better than in other Buddhist countries, because it is closer to that what the Buddha taught. Yet the idea how a nun should be is bound to many common misunderstandings. Most of the people think that the Buddhist nuns would be just something like inferior copies of the monks. We have been trying to overcome that with the help of special regulations in the Āyukusala training of *samanīs*. Even before you obtained the high ordination as *bhikkhunī*, Venerable Vajirā, you went through a strict monastic training, which was technically as demanding as that of the Āyukusala monks. Due to that you have enjoyed much respect and appreciation from everybody in Sri Lanka. We were aware of the fact that the women from the traditional Sri Lankan culture have a different and higher self-esteem than the emancipated women from the West. And we have modeled the social aspects of the Āyusamanī training accordingly. We especially spoke about the so-called specific female qualities of being sensitive and supporting; this is directly connected to the aspects of femininity as comprehended in *itthi-indriya*. In this way conceived femininity has become also a new theme of Western psychology; here we could hope for a development aid from the Buddhist countries. For the women in the Buddhist countries this has been always a commonplace, a self-evident truth, but unfortunately they are losing it nowadays. Let us hope that the future Āyusamanīs will take it as their training task.
- SV:** But let us get back, Bhante, to the other part of my original question how are the controlling faculties relating to various fields of Buddhist training. Last week, when we have been discussing the purpose of Āyusamana training in the Sabbaloka Vihāra in Germany,

Āyusamanī Sudhammā wanted to know what has been the Buddha teaching about cultivation of female and male energies. She ever goes on talking about energies, which she obviously knows how to practically work with. Thus I have invited her to take part in the interview today. And we have decided to ask you, Bhante, for more explanation on this aspect of energies, too.

- AT:** Yes. That is alright, venerable ladies. The first and the most important thing: We should not forget why the Buddha teaches the comprehending *sampajañña* of all the controlling faculties. Thus we should as first ask: what is the use of the mindful noticing *sati-sampajañña* of the controlling faculties within the Dhamma training. This is, of course, a large theme; but I am glad that we have at least named it now. Hopefully we shall return to its various aspects. Now let us keep in mind that Buddha’s purpose of mindfully noticing the controlling faculties is to grasp their occurrence wisely. This wise grasping, *yoniso manasikāra* is done by means of the Abhidhamma paradigms and thus we have to learn them and to become able to work on them. The *indriyāni* are phenomena that function as conditions, as *indriya-paccaya*, which control subsequent arising of other phenomena; they are not sole causes of what is going to happen, but they influence or even steer the experiencing and acting. Buddha teaches the way how to explore the workings of mind and how to liberate the mind. To explore the controlling faculties is just a part of that.
- SS:** Venerable Sir, we have been speaking not only about femininity and masculinity but also about the other controlling faculties, which the Buddha teaches as belonging together in several groups. I am especially interested to know which faculties are steering our experience of different energies in various feelings. When I looked up the item “energy” in the *Buddhist Dictionary*, I got the reference to the item “*virīya*” that is explained as “manliness or heroism” and as such “identical with right effort of the Noble Eightfold Path”. This means something like the personal quality of being energetic and enthusiastic. But this is not that what I mean by experiencing of the different energies in various feelings. Explain please which controlling faculties are steering the energies in various feelings and how to cultivate their harmonization.
- AT:** Venerable Sudhammā, you do rightly distinguish between the not so good use of the word “energy” to designate a personal characteristic and the more proper use to grasp the energy processes in the stream of feelings. There are minimally two aspects of every experiencing, namely the cognitive one and the energetic one. The cognitive aspect is conditioned by the object of consciousness, that is the *ārammana-paccaya*, and by the goal of intentionality, that is the *adhipati-paccaya*; this holds for every experiencing that may be further distinguished due to other conditions such as the motivational root *hetu-paccaya* or by the type of nutriment *ahāra-paccaya*, that is being fed to consciousness. As you know, there are twenty four conditions, which we recite in the daily *Āyukusala-Pūja*. But you are especially interested in the controlling faculties, which are steering the energies in various feelings. Tell me first, dear Sudhammā, what experience do you refer to, when you speak about feelings.
- SS:** Well, in the analytical procedures of *vipassanā*-meditation we take the feelings as one of the four foundations of mindfulness. During the very basic stage of *vipassanā* we distinguish only between pleasant and unpleasant feeling. However I understand as a feeling any experience, which has a special feeling quality that is not easily disposed off as only either pleasant or unpleasant. There are some feelings that vitalize us and some feelings that are tiring. In some feelings we can perceive vibrations of energy and that energy can be directed and used for purposes of our choice. As examples I would mention the feelings experienced when we radiate either the non-directed unlimited *mettā* or the *mettā* directed for healing purpose. In all such cases, I experience the feelings of both the mental pleasure *somanassa-sukha* and the bodily pleasure *kāyika-sukha*. Moreover an option to influence other beings is involved, too. Let us remember how the Buddha through *mettā* tamed the baited elephant; similarly we can help a person to cheer up just by radiating *mettā*. This I understand as meditative working

with energies. I think that the controlling faculties *indriyāni* are steering the energies in these various feelings. Sometimes I say that I send you good energies and I really mean what I say. When I practice these various ways of dealing with energies of *mettā* and so on, I do it just intuitively. Nevertheless I think that this practice can be explained and further improved with the use of Abhidhamma. Can you explain how is this working and how can we teach it to others.

AT: You are speaking very clearly, Venerable Sudhammā, very clearly, yet very concisely about phenomena that need profound analysis and are not at all easy to explain. The explanation of these phenomena can be understood only by those persons who are well advanced in the *vipassanā*-meditation and also have studied the Abhidhamma in a systematic way. As you have correctly mentioned, in *vipassanā*-meditation we take the feelings as one of the four foundations of mindfulness and in the basic stages of *vipassanā* we distinguish only between pleasant and unpleasant feeling. With progress in *vipassanā* we distinguish less and less till finally we distinguish only between all that what belongs to the world and that what is beyond all worldly reality, namely the highest freedom of nibbāna. Thus we step by step abandon also all those interesting issues of energies.

SS: Alright, Bhante, but also the Buddha himself and probably many of his fully enlightened pupils have been working with the feelings and energies. If one is not yet enlightened, is there any danger in this working with the energies?

AT: An enlightened person has purified his mind by means of *vipassanā* and is free from two dangers, namely free from danger of getting involved into experimenting with feelings and energies instead of working for the progress to liberation from suffering, and also free from the danger of possibly starting to use his skills for unwholesome goals. However, when working with energies carefully and discussing this work with a teacher, you do not have to fear the mentioned dangers. You can work with energies on various levels of complexity. Anybody can try to develop the energies connected with *mettā* and also anybody can teach it to others. There are very few precautions to be taken in this; I have described them briefly in the chapter on *Strategies of Sympathy* in my book *The Art of Happiness*. Experimenting with feelings and energies can be a nice pastime that can bring about also some useful outcomes as in your case. You make discoveries useful for a better understanding of the workings of mind and the outcomes of your experimenting are also helping to create better conditions for the progress to final liberation.

SS: Yes, Bhante, this is what I am striving for. However I enjoy also the healing use of energies, and also that of the love cultivated in *mettā* and *muditā*. Based on such experimenting, I have developed my own system of concepts for grasping the involved phenomena. Most of these concepts are connected with the procedures of the energy work. Of course I use the conceptual frame of the five meditation skills *pañca-vasiyo*, which is very important in the Āyukusala tradition and has been well explained in your Dhamma lectures. I find useful that what is in your book described as the paradigms of the roads to power, *iddhi-pāda*; especially the procedures of the power of intention *chanda* show how to intensify and direct the energies. But that does not exactly fit to my way of working with energies. Therefore I use also some concepts that may not be quite compatible with the paradigms of Abhidhamma. I differentiate between three types of energy fields: first is the general energy of a particular situation, which may be sad, depressive, hateful, or in the contrary cheerful and loving; second is the directed or concentrated stream of energy, which may vary similarly like that general one, but has a definite direction and can be experienced with gradients weakened with growing distance from the source person; third are the localized flows of energy experienced for example in the bodily contact during the healing touch or while kissing or caressing a child's forehead, tender holding hands, making love and so on.

- SV:** What happens, Bhante, in the intensification of these energies during sexual intercourse? Buddha discerns between the joy of sensual experience, *sāmisa-pīti*, which is characterized as connected to flesh, and *nirāmisa-pīti*, the spiritual joy without flesh. In the Indian languages derived from Pāli and Sanskrit, the word *pīti* or *prīti* is used just for the climax experience of orgasm. Sometimes you have been comparing these two forms of *pīti*, while stressing that the spiritual rapture of the *pīti-jhānanga* is getting ever more sublime in the higher states of *jhāna*. Buddha spoke about his remembering the rapture experience while sitting as a young child under the rose apple tree. This must have been a sensual experience of *pīti*. How much similarity is in the energy changes of those two forms of *pīti*?
- AT:** All the so far mentioned types of energy fields are found in the world of senses *kāma-loka*, in which the polarity of the femininity faculty *itthi-indriya* and the masculinity faculty *purisa-indriya* is the basic power. Buddha says in the first suttas of the Book One of *Anguttara-Nikāya* that this is the strongest motivational power altogether. Buddha teaches how to get liberated from the binding power of this polarity by the means of body mindfulness *kāyagatā-sati*, which is then the main idea of the last suttas of the Book One of *Anguttara-Nikāya*. In the Āyukusala training we use especially the instructions of *Rathopama-Sutta* to master it. This is valid in the work with all types of energy fields you have mentioned. The main point of the instruction is to stay with the directly experienced phenomena and not get involved with imaginations and associated thoughts. These instructions hold good in all situations and for all who train themselves, no matter whether practicing according to *pātimokkha* as a *bhikkhu* and *bhikkhunī*, or practicing meditation while leading a usual life of a *kāmabhogī*. All human beings, no matter how progressed on the path of Dhamma, all are time and again partaking in the various energy fields you have been speaking about. There is no harm in accepting the occurrence of the various energies and mindfully comprehending them. Our Āyukusala training is based on the Buddha's fundamental instructions for ethics *sīla*, meditation *samādhi*, development of wisdom *paññā*. These are valid in everyday routines, in meditation, as well as in all experimenting.
- SS:** Good, Bhante, I fully accept this and I keep the Buddha's fundamental instructions in mind. Yet I would like to ask a question in relation to the experimenting I have described. Are there, Bhante, any particular paradigms of Abhidhamma that I could use while working with these phenomena of various types of energy?
- AT:** What you were talking about, Venerable Sudhammā, all that you have very nicely described in the common language. Most important is that it works in your practical undertakings. The relevant paradigms of Abhidhamma would use very technical concepts on the level of micro-analysis; these are very difficult even for an experienced Abhidhamma expert. One would use the paradigm of consciousness processes *citta-vīthi* that are being steered by the influences *javana* through the secondary *citta-vīthi*. The basics of this are described in the psychological commentary to my German translation of the Abhidhamma book *Rūpa-Arūpa-Vibhāga*. However Buddha has given us also tools for the macro-analysis; these are for example the paradigms of the controlling faculties *indriyāni*. When we use only roughly the paradigms of *indriya-paccaya* without taking into account all the other conditions that eventually influence the changes of consciousness stream and of the energy flows, then we get an overview about what is going on and also some possibility to control and steer those processes. But we cannot control it in detail; we cannot yet develop the magical powers of *siddhi* as they are described in the texts of Pāli Canon. However, when we are already able to see what is done e.g. by the *somanassa-indriya*, the controlling faculty of mental pleasure, or by the vitality faculty *jīvita-indriya*, then we can already make some important choices in order to control also the energies, which you have been speaking about.
- SV:** Buddha's words in the *Indriya-Samyutta* are about the controlling faculties ordered into several groups. The first group, obviously the most important one, is the group of the five

controlling faculties, namely *sati* mindfulness, *saddhā* faith, *virīya* energy, *samādhi* concentration and *paññā* wisdom. These are the controlling faculties, which play the most important role in the Āyukusala meditation training, their cultivation and balancing is the task of the first days of every Āyukusala intensive meditation retreat. It is interesting that in the *Indriya-Samyutta* in its second group of controlling faculties come as the first the femininity faculty *itthi-indriya*, second the masculinity faculty *purisa-indriya*, and third the vitality faculty *jīvita-indriya*. Only thereafter, come the other groups of controlling faculties.

- AT:** Venerable ladies, now you see that the group including the femininity faculty *itthi-indriya*, has been obviously considered an important one. But the Buddha never talked about the femininity without referring also to the masculinity, even when he opened the issue of an ideal wife in the *Bhariyā-Sutta* of *Anguttara-Nikāya*. One cannot understand the explanation of all that is included in *itthi-indriya* without comparing it with the aspects of *purisa-indriya*. This is in detail elaborated in the *Samyoga-Sutta* of *Anguttara-Nikāya*; there you find it well explained for the purpose of transcending the *samyoga* union of the two.
- SV:** Bhante, I have studied thoroughly the *Samyoga-Sutta* and two ideas arose in my mind. The first idea is that any translation and explanation from that sutta will be culture-bound. I have been thinking of our Āyusamanī Charmini whom I see as a very feminine person in the best sense of the word, but I do not think that she would fit very well to the femininity concept prevalent nowadays in Sri Lanka; yet I trust that she is able to progress in the Āyukusala training to transcend the bondages of the union of traditionally understood sex characteristics. The question of the culture-bound ideas of femininity and masculinity would certainly deserve another longer interview. Now I would like to ask you for at least brief explanation in regard to the other of the two ideas, which I consider very important for personal practice. Obviously all controlling faculties are virtually present in each person. What is to be done with them in the progress of Āyukusala training? Which of the regulations of the Āyukusala training were established in special regard to the sex differences? What has to be done for harmonizing the femininity and masculinity in one's own mind? And in particular, how should a woman, according to the Buddha, cultivate her femininity faculty *itthi-indriya*?
- SS:** I have also, Bhante, another question regarding the femininity faculty. When I work with the energies that steer the changes of the flow of feelings, I can definitely see the differences between the female and male energies even within my own flow of feelings. What are the different advantages and gratifications of the female and male energies? How can be these used in a gratifying way for cultivation of the *jhānanga* factors of ecstasy and for cultivation of the *bojjhanga* factors of enlightenment?
- AT:** Venerable ladies, your questions are directed to some very important themes. I just manage to note and name them in order to keep them in my mind. You both are young, powerful women full of energy and I see that you would like to go on with our interview. May I ask for your developing compassion towards your teacher who is somewhat slower due to his usual thoroughness in answering and who is now growing even slower because of his higher age?
- SS:** Yes, Bhante, let us note down the questions, which we would like to get answered. Maybe we can come back to them later on.
- SV:** Yes, Bhante, let us make an appointment for continuing our interview some other day. Tell us please in one closing sentence what do you consider most important in regard to our themes.
- AT:** As the most important in the Āyukusala training, there is much effort from the very beginning devoted to the cultivation of mindfulness *sati*. When we then use mindfulness in its function of controlling faculty, it is joined as *sati-sampajañña* with the wise comprehension to notice the occurrence of all the other phenomena and serves thus their balancing in order to make out of our mind a perfect vehicle for the journey to liberation.

Final Discussion held after the Interview
“Āyusamana Daily Practice – Female Power for Ecstasy and Enlightenment”
in January and February 2009

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Whereas the first part of the interview was spoken and recorded in English for the benefit of all the Āyusamanas and Āyusamanīs who understand this language, the very lively final discussion has spontaneously developed in German, the language of the world shared in daily life of the persons who participated in the interview.

We have given up the idea of translating our discussion into English soon after trying it with the few first recorded statements. Thereafter we gave up also the idea of recording the discussion. The valuable outcomes of the discussion cannot be forgotten by the persons who participated in the interview. These persons have spoken very personally about their experiences during the Āyukusala training and have not censored any of their communications about all even the most intimate themes that were triggered by the questions formulated during the last recorded part of the interview.

We are open for the questions of those who have read the interview and are seriously interested in Āyukusala training and in particular also in the theme of Employing the Female Power for Ecstasy and Enlightenment. Thus we suggest:

Write down your questions and send them to the Āyukusala teachers

Āyukusala Thera, e-mail : ayukusala@gmx.ch

Samanī Sudhammā, e-mail : ayusudhamma@gmx.net

Samanī Vajirā, e-mail : ayuvaju@gmail.com

The Buddha's followers assembled in the Āyukusala Central European Sangha (ACES), hold the Dhamma to be skillful (*kusala*) living (*āyu*). The Buddha's Noble Eightfold Path provides for character cultivation and handling everyday situations (*sīla-sikkhā*), meditation training (*samādhi-sikkhā*) and developing wisdom (*paññā-sikkhā*). This applies to both the lay and monastic orders (*sangha*). The ACES are not compliant to any particular sect (*nikāya*) of the various contemporary national Buddhist institutions. The ACES are following the original Buddha-Dhamma recorded in the Pāli Canon and kept alive in the unbroken tradition of Theravāda.

websites:

www.ayukusala.org

www.ayurama.eu