

# The Canberra 1992 Talks



Venerable  
Chanmyay Sayadaw



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Chanmyay Yeiktha Meditation Centre  
55a Kaba Aye Pagoda Road  
Mayangone P.O.  
Yangon 11061  
Myanmar  
Phone: 95 (1) 661479  
Email: chanmyayinform@gmail.com

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55a Kaba Aye Pagoda Road  
Mayangone P.O.  
Yangon 11061  
Myanmar

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# Refuge and precepts, meditation instructions

## To practise this mindfulness meditation we need to purify our morality

Today is the first day of our retreat, the 28th of December 1991. Everybody likes to live a happy, peaceful and blissful life, so every possible effort is made to be free from suffering. Mindfulness meditation, or *vipassanā* meditation, which was taught at the time of the Lord Buddha, is the way of release from all kinds of suffering. To attain the cessation of suffering, we need to destroy the causes which are *lobha* (greed, desire, craving, attachment) *dosa* (ill-will, hatred, anger) and *moha* (ignorance or delusion). To eradicate all these mental defilements we need to realize or rightly understand each and every mental and physical phenomenon in its true nature. We need to practise *vipassanā* meditation to realize this body-mind process as it really is by being aware of what is occurring in our body and mind as it really occurs. This mindfulness meditation is taught in accordance with the discourse of the Four Foundations of Mindfulness, the *Mahāsatiṭṭhāna Sutta*, expounded by the omniscient Buddha well over 2,500 years ago.

To practise this mindfulness meditation, first of all, we need to purify our morality, our moral conduct by observing the pre-

cepts such as five precepts, eight precepts, nine precepts, and so on, for laymen. For bhikkhus there are 227 rules of monastic code. Fully observing these precepts we can purify our moral conduct, morality. These precepts were laid down by the omniscient Buddha as a prerequisite for the development of mindfulness. That's why we have to take up eight precepts here, just now. The aim of taking up eight precepts is to purify our deed and speech, our moral conduct. This is indispensable to attain deep concentration of mind based on which the insight knowledges will arise.

## **To have a clear conscience we have to observe eight precepts**

Penetrating knowledge, or experiential knowledge, of mental and physical phenomena is indispensable to exterminate all kinds of mental defilements which are the causes of all kinds of suffering. To have the penetrating insight, or experiential knowledge of the body-mind process, we need some degree of deep concentration. To attain a degree of deep concentration, constant and continuous mindfulness of what is happening to our body and mind is required. To have constant and continuous mindfulness, our mind should be balanced and stable. To have a balanced and stable mind, we should have purification of morality or of deed and speech. To purify our deed and speech we need to observe the rules of the precepts laid down by Lord Buddha. That's why we have to take up the eight precepts: abstention from killing, abstention from taking what's not given, abstention from incelibacy, abstention from telling lies, abstention from using any kind of intoxicant, abstention from taking substantial food after midday, and so on.

So, by fully observing these eight precepts our deed and speech will be purified. Based on the purification of deed and speech we are able to concentrate our mind to a large extent.

Purification of deed and speech is called *sīla visuddhi*, purification, virtue or morality. Without purification of morality we do not have a clear conscience when we practise our mindfulness meditation. To have a clear conscience we have to observe eight precepts as a base for our *vipassanā* meditation. So, based on purified conduct, or morality, or virtue, we concentrate our mind on any mental process or physical process as it really occurs. Because of the clear conscience, the mind becomes stable, balanced. Then it is able to concentrate on its meditative objects very well. Then we attain deep concentration of mind. When the mind is deeply concentrated, the insight that arises becomes sharp, penetrating. That insight realises the true nature of bodily and mental phenomena.

## Three kinds of training

In Buddhism, to free oneself from all kinds of suffering, we have three kinds of training. The first one is *sīla sikkhā*, training in *sīla*, virtue or moral conduct. The second one is *samādhi sikkhā*, training in concentration. The third is *paññā sikkhā*, training in insight or wisdom or enlightenment. Of these three trainings the first training is to observe these precepts so that we can purify our morality or conduct. Based on purified morality or conduct, we contemplate our mind, we contemplate all mental and physical phenomena as they really are. That is *vipassanā* meditation.

## The difference between *samatha* meditation and *vipassanā* meditation

I think here we need to explain very briefly the difference between *samatha* meditation and *vipassanā* meditation. *Samatha* here means calm, tranquillity. *Samatha* means a mental state

that calms defilements or hindrances. When the mind is not concentrated on any object of meditation, it is unable to calm any of the hindrances or mental defilements. It is only when the mind is well concentrated on the object of meditation that it can calm all kinds of hindrances and mental defilements. So *samatha* actually means concentration. So it can be called calmness and tranquillity and serenity. The aim of *samatha* meditation is to attain a fair degree of concentration of mind only, not for the realisation of bodily and mental phenomena. A *samatha* meditator cannot realize any mental or physical phenomena, even though he has attained the highest degree of concentration such as *jhāna*, and also *abhiññā* (supernormal power). So, *samatha* meditation aims at the attainment of deep concentration only.

A *samatha* meditator cannot realize bodily and mental phenomena in their true nature, so he is not able to destroy mental defilements which are the cause of suffering. *vipassanā* means the insight which penetrates into the true nature of bodily and mental phenomena, especially the three characteristics of existence. These are *anicca*—impermanence, *dukkha*—suffering, and *anatta*—impersonal nature. But without some degree of concentration a *vipassanā* meditator is not able to realize these bodily and mental phenomena in their true nature. An appropriate degree of concentration can be obtained by being aware of what is happening in body and mind as it really occurs.

The aim of *vipassanā* meditation is to attain the cessation of suffering through realization of bodily and mental phenomena based on some degree of deep concentration. That is the difference between *samatha* meditation and *vipassanā* meditation.

There are also other points of difference between the two types of meditation: the *samatha* meditator takes a single object. Suppose he takes respiration (in-breathing and out-breathing) as the object of meditation, he contemplates on in-breathing and out-breathing. Whenever the mind goes out he has to bring it back to the primary object and focus it on the nostrils and make a mental note, “in-out, in-out” and so on.

## Realize what is happening at the moment as it really occurs

But a *vipassanā* meditator needs to realize each and every mental process and physical process as it really occurs. So he has many different objects of meditation. Any mental state can be the object of *vipassanā* meditation, any emotional state can be the object of meditation, any physical process or physical activity, action or movement can be the object of meditation. Because a *vipassanā* meditator needs to rightly understand every mental and physical process in its true nature, he hasn't a single object of meditation; he has many different mental and physical processes as the object of meditation.

Accordingly, while engaged in *vipassanā* meditation when the mind goes out or he thinks about something else, the yogi must not bring back his mind to the primary object. He must observe the mind which is going out or is wandering or is thinking about something else. He needs to realize what is happening at the moment as it really occurs.

So, when a thought arises, he must observe it as it is. When sadness arises, he must observe it as it is. When happiness arises, he must observe it as it is. When imagination arises, he must observe it as it arises. When any unpleasant physical sensation, such as pain, itching, stiffening, numbness and so on arises, he must observe it as it really is. Any mental state, emotional state, physical process is the object of meditation because it needs to be realized by a *vipassanā* meditator. Here, the difference between the *samatha* meditation and *vipassanā* meditation is that a *samatha* meditator takes only a single object of meditation, but a *vipassanā* meditator takes many different mental processes and physical processes as the object of meditation. He has to be careful not to bring back the mind to the primary object when the mind goes out, wanders or thinks about something else. He must be aware of the mind which is wandering or thinking

about something else and observe it, be mindful of it as it really occurs, making a mental note, “thinking, thinking, thinking—wandering, wandering, wandering”, and so on. He must observe that thought until it has disappeared. Only after the thought has disappeared, he should return to the primary object.

## The practical exercise of *vipassanā* meditation

In the following nights we will deal with both the theoretical and practical aspects of *vipassanā* meditation. Today is the first day so we have to lay stress on the practical aspect of this meditation, so that you can easily practise this meditation. Some of the meditators have a lot of experience in *vipassanā* meditation. But there may be some who haven't any experience in this meditation, so we have to deal with the technique, the practical exercise of *vipassanā* meditation.

Before you begin to practise *vipassanā* meditation first of all you have to reflect on some attributes of Lord Buddha, who teaches us this way of liberation. The Buddha has innumerable attributes, but any attribute on which you reflect is enough. The nine attributes of the Buddha are known to all meditators, I think. The first one is *arahaṃ*. *Arahaṃ* means the Lord Buddha, or the omniscient Buddha is worthy of honour and homage, because he has totally destroyed all mental defilements and attained the cessation of suffering. This is what the attribute *arahaṃ* means: The Buddha who is worthy of honour and homage because he has attained enlightenment through destroying all mental defilements and hindrances.

You should reflect on the attributes of the Buddha for about two minutes. By reflecting in this way on the Buddha you will be inspired to practise this mindfulness meditation taught by him.

Then, after that, you should develop loving kindness towards all living beings, *mettā*. Reflect on the welfare of all living beings, wishing their peace, happiness and prosperity. You develop

this spirit of loving kindness towards all sentient beings, saying, “May all beings be happy and peaceful. May all living beings be free from all kinds of suffering. May all living beings get rid of suffering”. And so on. In this way you should develop your loving kindness towards all living beings. This is called *mettā bhāvanā*. Your mind becomes clear, tranquil and serene by developing loving kindness towards all living beings.

Then, you should reflect on the repulsive nature, the loathsome nature, of your body by reflecting on the impurities of the body such as: intestines, blood, slime, and so on. When you reflect upon the impurities of your body, you become less attached to your body. Attachment is the cause of suffering. Less attachment makes suffering less. So, when you reflect on the impurities of the body your attachment to the body becomes less and less. Then you become unattached and develop your mindfulness meditation.

Then, the fourth protection: You should reflect upon death, ever approaching death. We can die at this moment, we can die tonight, we can die tomorrow, and we can die the day after tomorrow, at any second. You have to reflect upon this, “Death is certain, life is uncertain”. By reflecting on the nature of death we rouse effort for the practice.

These are called the four protections: reflection upon the virtues of the Buddha; developing loving kindness towards all living beings; reflection upon the impurities of the body; reflection upon the nature of death. You do these four protections about two or three minutes, after that you begin to practise your meditation.

## **Posture**

Don't sit in the cross-legged, full lotus position. If you cross one leg over the other, the circulation becomes irregular, unstable. In a short time you feel pain and numbness. So, the two legs

should be evenly placed side by side, the left one outside and the right leg inside; or, the right leg outside and the left leg inside. As you feel comfortable, you should place these two legs side by side, not one upon the other. The body should be kept straight. Do not bend forward and do not bend backward. Head and neck must be kept straight. The hands should be placed on the ankles, the right one placed upon the left one, the palms upward. You should not touch the two thumbs like this. If the two thumbs touch, then the pulse on the tip of the thumb becomes so distinct that you cannot note any other object. So, the two thumbs should not touch. Also, the hands can be put on each knee, the palms upward, not downward. If you put the palms downward, the heat from the palms is too tense, and gradually it becomes more and more severe. Then the feeling of hot sensation becomes unbearable later on.

## **Focus the mind on the abdominal movement**

The clothing around the waist should be loose, do not wear tight clothing. You should ensure that the abdomen moves very freely. Then, focus the mind on the abdominal movement, the outward movement of the abdomen and the inward movement of the abdomen. The movement depends on the physical constitution of the meditator. Sometimes the movement rises outward and then falls inward. For some meditators the abdomen rises upward and falls downward. Whatever it may be, what you need is just to know or just to be mindful of it at that moment as it really occurs, that's all. When you feel an upward moment, you observe it, noting "rising". When you feel a downward movement, you observe it, noting "falling", when you feel an outward movement you observe it "rising". Labelling or making a mental note is needed in the beginning of the practice, so that the mind can be concentrated well on the object of meditation. The

labelling or noting helps the mind to be focussed on its object very well. So you note, “Rising-falling, rising-falling”.

If the rising movement or the falling movement is not very distinct to your mind, then you can put both hands on the abdomen. Then, when the abdomen rises, the hands move outward or upward. When the abdomen falls, the hands move inward or downward. In this way you can note “rising-falling”. Do not take deep breaths or vigorous breaths so that you can make it more distinct, because the breathing should be normal and natural. When you make it quick or vigorous, you get tired in a short time. So, the breathing should be normal and natural. Focus the mind on it and know it as much as possible, making a mental note “rising-falling, rising-falling”. When your mind becomes concentrated to a certain extent you will be able to feel the rise and fall of the movement very distinctly.

## Your mind may wander

While you are engaged in the movement of the abdomen, your mind may wander. Do not cling to the abdominal movement. Leave it alone, and follow the mind that is wandering and observe it, “wandering, wandering, wandering, wandering” until it has disappeared.

After it has disappeared, you return to the primary object, the rise and fall of the abdomen. When you feel any painful sensation or numbness in any part of your body, you should focus on that sensation and note it as it is, making mental notes “pain, pain, pain”, or “numb, numb, numb” and so on. After the sensation has subsided or disappeared, you return to the primary object and note as usual.

The rising and falling movement of the abdomen is *vāyo dhātu* (the wind element) one of the four primary material elements to be realized by a meditator. *Vāyo dhātu*, the wind element, has the characteristic of movement, motion, vibration,

support. You have to realise it very clearly. That's why you have to start with it, but be careful not to take it as a single object of meditation.

The abdominal movement is not the single object of meditation, but one of many different mental and physical processes, which are the objects of meditation. When your mind goes out, follow the mind and observe it as it is.

## **Whatever arises, note it**

When you deal with thoughts, ideas, mental images, imaginations, your noting mind must be energetic and somewhat quick, so that the noting mind becomes gradually more powerful than the thinking process. When the noting mind becomes more powerful the thinking process becomes weak. Then after some time the thought stops because it is overwhelmed by the noting mind. That's why we need to note attentively, energetically, and somewhat quickly.

After the cessation of the thought you return to the primary object of the rising and falling of the abdomen and note as usual.

In sitting, when you hear a strong sound you should note it, "hearing, hearing, hearing". Then come back to the primary object and note it as usual, "rising-falling". Whatever arises in your mind, emotional states or mental states, you should note it as it is and then return to the primary object and note as usual.

## **Try not to change position**

When you are sitting, you should try not to change position. But if you are not able to sit even for half an hour without changing position, you may change once in a sitting. If, after sitting in meditation for a time, you feel unbearable painful sensations, you should note them as "pain, pain, pain", being patient with it. But if it eventually becomes unbearable and you intend to move,

you note the intention, “intending, intending, intending”, before changing the position and then continue to sit and observe the abdominal movement or any other object which is more distinct.

When there are two objects arising, you should note the object which is more distinct. You should sit very still. Do not move your hands or legs, or any part of the body. Try to sit very still and calm so that you can attain deep concentration of mind.

## **Walking meditation**

You should be sitting and walking alternately. In the walking meditation, first of all, you should not close your eyes, but your eyes should be half-closed, looking at a place two meters ahead of you. Do not look farther than that. If you do, you feel tense on the back of the neck, sometimes you may feel dizzy or your head may ache. So you should look at a place about two meters ahead of you. When you make a left step, observe it and make a mental note “left”. If you do a right step, you observe it and make a mental note “right”; “left-right”.

Do this for about twenty minutes. After that you note the movements of the foot, “lifting-moving”, “lifting-pushing”, “lifting-putting”, or “lifting-dropping, lifting-dropping”. Two parts of each step must be noted for about ten minutes. After that you should note “lifting-pushing-dropping, lifting-pushing-dropping”. This should be noted slowly, “lifting-pushing-dropping, lifting-pushing-dropping”. In this way, you should walk at least for one hour if it is possible.

While walking, when your mind goes out, note this and come back to the walking. Your stepping must not be long, the stepping should be short. Each step should be a length of a foot so that you can observe well each part of the step. You must not look here and there. In this way, you should walk back and forth. But do not make any noise placing the foot. You have to put

down the foot very, very slowly. You have to lift the foot very, very slowly, so you can be aware of the movement of the foot very well. This is walking meditation.

By practising sitting and walking meditation may all of you practise your meditation strenuously and attain the cessation of suffering.

# Meditation instructions, contd.

Today is the second day of our retreat, the 29th of December 1991.

Yesterday, I explained how to practice mindfulness or *vipassanā* meditation, very briefly. Mindfulness meditation, expounded by the Lord Buddha, is of four types. The first one is mindfulness of the body or physical processes, *kāyānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna* in Pāḷi. The second one is mindfulness of feeling or sensation, *vedanānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna* in Pāḷi. The third is mindfulness of consciousness, *cittānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna* in Pāḷi. The fourth is mindfulness of Dhamma, *dhammānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna* in Pāḷi. This Dhamma is mostly translated into mental objects or mind-objects. Actually, this fourth group of mindfulness meditation (that is mindfulness of Dhamma) includes the other three mindfulness groups of meditation too (mindfulness of the body, mindfulness of feeling or sensation, mindfulness of consciousness). So, mindfulness of the Dhamma is somewhat difficult to translate into any English word or equivalent of it.

## Mindfulness of the body or bodily processes

When you are mindful of the rising movement and falling movement of the abdomen, it is called *kāyānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna*,

mindfulness of the body. When you are mindful of lifting, pushing dropping, touching, pressing of the foot, it is also mindfulness of the body, bodily processes or physical phenomena, *kāyānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna*.

When you stand, you have to be aware of the standing posture, mentally noting “standing”. This is also *kāyānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna*.

When you bend your arms, then you have to be mindful of the movement of the bending arms, making mental notes “bending, bending, bending, bending”, by being aware of the bending movements of the arm. This is also mindfulness of the body, physical phenomena. When you stretch it out, you observe the stretching movement of the arm as it really occurs.

When you sit on a chair at the table, when you sit down on a seat or on the cushion, then you have to be aware of the sitting movement, making mental notes “sitting, sitting, sitting”. The whole movement of sitting down must be noted as it occurs.

When you rise from your seat, the rising movement of the body must be observed as it occurs, making mental notes “rising, rising, rising”, slowly. When you sit down, you should do it slowly, when you rise from the seat, do it very slowly and be aware of the whole process from the very beginning of the rising and sitting down movement until the end of it.

When you reach to hold your spoon at the table, then you should be aware of the stretching movements of your arms, making mental notes “stretching, stretching”, or “reaching, reaching”. When the hand touches the spoon or the fork, observe it, “touching, touching”. When you hold the fork, observe the holding of the fork, “holding, holding”. When you pick up some food, observe it as, “picking, picking”, and so on. All these are *kāyānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna*, mindfulness of the body, mindfulness of physical processes.

When you take the food, note it “taking, taking, taking”. When you bring it to the mouth, then your bringing movement

must be observed, making mental notes “bringing, bringing, bringing”.

Before the food reaches the mouth, you intend to open the mouth. If the intention is very distinct, it must be noted. Whatever intention, if distinct, must be noted “intention, intention” or “intending, intending”. It means that you have the intention to open the mouth. So, observe the intending and the opening of the mouth, making mental note “opening, opening, opening”. When you put the food into the mouth, note “putting, putting”. When you put the hand down, note “putting down, putting down”. When you chew the food, note “chewing, chewing”. When you intend to swallow it, note “intending, intending”. When you swallow the food, note “swallowing, swallowing”. When the food touches the throat on its way down, you should note “touching, touching”, and so on.

## **When you observe intention, this is called mindfulness of mental states**

All these mindfulnesses of physical processes are called *kāyānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna*, except for the intention. When you observe intention, it is called *cittānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna*, mindfulness of mental states. Whenever we say “consciousness” it includes some of the mental states, or mental factors, which arise together with consciousness. In accordance with Buddhist psychology, consciousness never arises alone. It arises together with its mental concomitants. We call them *cetasikas*. They are mental concomitants such as intention, one-pointedness, contact, feeling, memorizing, perception. So, we are not able to separate the consciousness from its mental concomitants or mental factors which arise together with it.

Intention is *cetanā* in Pāḷi. *Cetanā* is volition, motive. Intention doesn’t arise alone. It follows the consciousness that arises at that moment. So, when we observe the intention, it means

that we are observing the consciousness that arises together with the intention. Because the consciousness is the leader, the other mental factors or mental concomitants are the followers. When consciousness cognizes the object, then the mental factors or concomitants arise together with consciousness. Without consciousness, no mental factors or mental concomitants arise.

It is only when consciousness cognizes any object—visual objects, objects of hearing or objects of smelling—the mental factors arise together with it. So, if we say intention, it means that we are mindful of the consciousness together with the intention. That is *cittānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna*, mindfulness of consciousness. Then, except for the intention, the mindfulness of physical movements, while we are taking the food to the mouth and swallow it, is *kāyānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna*, mindfulness of physical phenomena or physical processes.

## **You must not cling to the movement of the abdomen**

While you are engaged in the rise and fall of the abdominal movement, your mind may go out and wander, think about something else, or imagine. Then you must not cling to the movement of the abdomen. You leave it alone and follow the mind which is wandering, thinking or imagining. Observe it as it really occurs, making mental note “wandering, wandering, thinking, thinking, imagining, imagining”.

If you see any mental image, you should observe the consciousness of seeing, or the thought of seeing the mental image, noting “seeing, seeing, seeing”, until the mental image has disappeared.

## **There is no mental process or physical process which should not be thoroughly realized**

To observe these mental states, such as thoughts, ideas, opinions, imaginations, is to realize things in their true nature. So, in *vipassanā* meditation, you must not bring the wandering mind or thinking mind back to the primary object, because all mental processes and physical processes are the truth of suffering. These mental and physical processes must be thoroughly realized as they really occur. There is no mental process or physical process, which should not be thoroughly realized by a meditator. So, every mental or emotional state or physical process must be attentively, energetically observed as it really occurs. Only after each of these mental states (thoughts, ideas, opinions, and mental images) has disappeared, should you return to the primary object, the rise and fall of the abdomen.

Sometimes you may analyse the technique or the experience you are having, or the Dhamma. This analytical knowledge must also be noted, making a mental note as “analysing, analysing, analysing”, until it has disappeared. Then, return to the primary object as usual. Mindfulness meditation is, “to pay bare attention to what is happening in the moment”, as the Venerable Nyanaponika Thera, the author of “The Heart of Buddhist Meditation”, mentions in his book. To pay bare attention to what is happening in your body and mind as it really occurs, that’s mindfulness meditation.

In mindfulness meditation, or *vipassanā* meditation, there is no room for thinking, analysing, criticizing, logical reasoning, or philosophical thinking. There is no room for preconceptions because when you have preconceived ideas about the technique, the Dhamma, or the experience you are having, you can’t realize it in its true nature. Perception is affected by your preconcep-

tions, so that you can't realize any mental or physical process in its true nature or as it really occurs.

## **Do not reflect upon the technique or experience**

Just pay attention to what is happening as it really is. That's all. Do not reflect upon the technique or experience. If you reflect upon it, then the reflecting must be noted as "reflecting, reflecting, reflecting", until that reflection has disappeared. Only after it has disappeared, you return to the primary object and note as usual. This is also mindfulness of consciousness, or mental states.

## **Mindfulness of feeling or sensation, *vedanānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna***

When your meditative experience comes to an advanced state, when it improves and you feel happy, sometimes you feel *pīti*, rapture. This happiness must also be observed, this *pīti* must also be observed as it really occurs, making mental notes "happy, happy, rapture, rapture", and so on. This is mindfulness of feeling or sensation, *vedanānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna*. Sometimes you may feel sad about your poor experience, when you are not able to make progress in meditation practise. That sadness must be observed. It is also one of the emotional states which must be thoroughly realized by a meditator in its true nature, making mental notes "sad, sad, sad".

When the feeling or sensation of sadness has disappeared, you return to the primary object, the rise and fall of the abdomen and note as usual. This is also mindfulness of feeling or sensation. When you have sat for, say, about twenty or thirty minutes, you may feel painful sensations, stiffening, itching, aching, or

numbness in any part of your body. Then, that painful sensation, that unpleasant physical sensation must be observed as it really is, noting “pain, pain, stiffening, stiffening, itching, itching, numb, numb” and so on.

## **Mental noting is very helpful to concentrate your mind**

Labelling or mental noting is very helpful to concentrate your mind on the object of meditation in the beginning of the practice. Without labelling or mental noting the mind doesn't go to the object very well. Sometimes it may go astray. Sometimes it wanders about. A mental note keeps the mind on the object of meditation. So, in the beginning of the practice, labelling or mental noting is necessary. When you observe a painful sensation, note “pain, pain, pain”, until that pain has subsided or disappeared. After the painful sensation has subsided or disappeared, you return to the primary object and note as usual “rising, falling, rising, falling”. Observe it attentively and energetically.

## **When painful sensation becomes severe**

When you have observed a painful sensation, say, for about thirty seconds or one minute, you may feel it more severe, stronger, and more intense. But actually, the sensation of the pain doesn't become more severe, it doesn't become more tense. You only think that it becomes more tense, more severe, and stronger, because gradually your mind becomes more and more deeply concentrated on the painful sensation. As a result the insight that arises together with the noting mind and concentration becomes penetrating. So, that insight knowledge realises the severity of the painful sensation more and more distinctly, more

and more clearly. Then you think that the painful sensation becomes severe. But whatever it may be, you must be patient with it by observing it attentively and energetically. Later the painful sensation may disappear or may subside. Then you return to the primary object, the rise and fall of the abdomen, and note as usual.

But, though you have a tendency to change the position due to this painful sensation, you must not change position. If you are not able to sit for one hour without changing position, you may change your position once, when you feel that the painful sensation becomes unbearable. Change your position once, but before you change your position, observe the intention to change the position. As you know, every action or movement is preceded by intention. When you are able to note the intention before the action or the movement, your concentration will improve rapidly. So, when you have the intention to change position, note the intention as “intention, intention, intention” about four or five times. After that, change position very, very slowly so that you are able to be aware of all the movements involved.

There are no actions which must not be observed, because every action and every movement must be thoroughly realized in its true nature by a meditator. So, every movement involved in the act of changing position must be observed. To do it you have to slow down. After you have changed your position, you continue to note the rising-falling. If the painful sensation is still predominant, then you should note the painful sensation.

## **Note the most distinct object**

Sometimes you find two or more objects arising. Then you choose the object to be noted. Sometimes you get puzzled, not knowing what to do or what to note. It is not very difficult to note one of two or more objects which are arising at the same

moment: be mindful of the predominant object. It is natural for the mind to note the most distinct object, the most pronounced object of all many different objects. When you observe the predominant object, then the other objects will fade away, will subside, or disappear.

Suppose that you observe the rise and fall of the abdomen. But then you feel an itching sensation on the back, you have a pain in the leg, and you hear a distinct sound. What object should you note? If the itching sensation on the back is predominant, then the itching sensation must be noted “itching, itching, itching” until the itching sensation has disappeared. If the itching sensation keeps going on or it becomes gradually stronger and stronger, though you note “itching, itching, itching”, then you have a tendency to scratch it, to make it disappear. You can do it, but mindfully.

When you want to scratch, you note “wanting, wanting”, or “wishing, wishing”, or “intending, intending”. When you lift your arm and hand note “lifting, lifting”. When your hand stretches to the point of the itching sensation, note “stretching, stretching”. When your hand touches the point of the itching area, note “touching, touching”. When you scratch, note “scratching, scratching”. After the unpleasant sensation of itching has disappeared, you put down your hands and note “intending, intending, intending, putting down, putting down”, and so on.

To deal with these actions and movements of the body, the omniscient Buddha teaches us a separate chapter in the discourse of Mahāsatipatṭhāna Sutta. The name of the chapter is “*sampajānapabba*”. This means: clear comprehension of the body-mind process. Whatever actions or movements there may be, they must be observed as they really occur. This refers also to daily activities, or general activities.

## The two characteristics of mental and physical phenomena and daily activities

Why should we observe each and every action and movement of the body? Because we want to realize them in their true nature. Then, what is the true nature or the intrinsic nature of each of these physical processes and mental processes? The commentary to the text says, “When a meditator with deep concentration realizes the true nature of the body-mind process, he knows either of the two characteristics of mental and physical phenomena”. One is *sabhāva lakkhaṇa* in Pāḷi. It means: the specific or individual characteristic of mental or physical processes. The other is the general or common characteristic of mental or physical processes. A meditator with deep concentration first realizes the specific or individual characteristic of mental or physical phenomena. When he proceeds with his practise, and with deeper concentration, he comes to realise the general characteristics of mental and physical processes.

These two types of characteristics are the true nature of mental and physical phenomena. To realise them, or either of them, we have to be mindful of any actions or movements of the body as they are. In other words, we have to be mindful of all daily activities such as bending of the arms, stretching of the arms, lifting of the arms, of putting down the arms. While we are washing, while we are taking a bath, while we are taking food: whatever we are doing must be observed as it really occurs. To be able to realise the specific and general characteristics of these processes, we have to slow down as much as possible. The slower, the better.

## The four primary material elements

There are four primary material elements in Buddhist philosophy: *paṭhavī dhātu*, *āpo dhātu*, *tejo dhātu* and *vāyo dhātu*. Our phys-

ical body is comprised of the four primary material elements. Out of these four, most of the time we have to be mindful of *vāyo dhātu*, the wind element or air element.

It has the characteristics of movement, motion, vibration, and support. So, whenever we move, observe it. That's *vāyo dhātu*. Whenever we feel vibration or vibrating, we should observe it, as it is *vāyo dhātu*. Say, when we lift our foot while we are walking, the lifting is a series of lifting movements arising and passing away. But we are not able to realise it as it is because our concentration is not good enough. That lifting movement must be observed. The lifting of the foot is not a single action but a series of many lifting movements which are arising and passing away.

To realise these many broken movements of lifting very distinctly we have to slow down the lifting movement, pushing movement, putting movement, dropping movement, and so on. If we do not slow down these movements, we are not able to catch them, to be aware of them, or to observe them. Then we are unable to realize them in their specific nature or general nature. That's why we have to slow down whatever we are doing.

## **Slow down while walking**

In our daily activities, when we walk, we should slow down our step and note "left, right, left, right". When we observe two parts of the step, we note "lifting, dropping, lifting, dropping". When we observe three parts of the step we note "lifting, pushing, dropping". The more parts of the step are noted, the slower our steps should be. So, when we observe three parts of the step as "lifting, pushing, dropping", the stepping should be slower than when noting two parts. Unless we make a slow step, we are not able to catch it, we are not able to concentrate on it, we are not able to realise it.

## **Do not identify with the pain**

That's why we have to slow down. *Vipassanā* meditation, as you know, is to realise any mental or physical process as it really occurs. When you have, say, a painful sensation, you have to realise it as a process of painful sensations, not as a person or a being. Do not identify the pain with yourself, your person, your being. The sensation of the pain is neither a person nor a being. What is it? It is just a natural process of feeling, or sensation. But when we are not able to realize it in its true nature, we identify this painful sensation with our self. You identify this painful sensation with yourself, "I am painful, I feel pain".

Actually, there is no I, no person, no being who feels pain. So, what is it? The pain is an unpleasant physical sensation of a natural process. If we realise that it is just a natural process of painful sensation, we do not identify it with ourselves.

## **Any movement should be realised in its true nature**

Similarly in walking, when we lift our foot, we note "lifting", when we push it forward, we note "pushing", when we drop it, we note "dropping". In this case, "lifting" means that a very tiny lifting movement arises. Then, it has passed away. Then, another movement arises and passes away. And another movement arises and passes away. In this way, in a stretch of the lifting movement of the foot, a series of many broken tiny movements of lifting is included. But, we do not realise it, we do not rightly understand it, because our concentration is not deep enough. A series of many broken movements of lifting can be realised with deep concentration; that is when your concentration is deep enough. To realise these movements one after another, we have to slow down the lifting movement of the foot. In the

same way, the pushing movement of the foot and the dropping movement of the foot, and so on.

Consider a fan. When the fan turns around very fast, you see a circle. The circle is not the original nature of the fan. When you see the fan as a circle, it means that you do not see it as it is. When the fan is slowed down and turns around very, very slowly, then you see one blade after another. Then you do not see the circle. What you see is the blades, the three blades, which move one after another, around and around. Then you come to realise it as it really is. You come to see the fan in its original nature.

Anything which moves, should be observed in its true nature. To realise it you have to slow down that movement, so that you can catch and observe each movement and realise it as an individual movement of physical phenomena. That's why we need to slow down our actions and movements. That's why we need to slow down our stepping in walking. Then we realise these movements as they really are.

What benefit have we got? Yes, we realise the movement in its true nature. We realise, for instance, the lifting movement of the foot. When we are not able to realise the lifting movement of the foot, we take it to be a foot or to be my foot. Then there is a person who belongs to the foot. Then the idea of a person is assumed in the knowing of the lifting of the foot. When we are able to realise the series of broken movements which are arising and passing away while lifting our foot, then we do not identify these movements with our self, with a person, with a being because we are realising that it is just a natural process of broken movements of physical phenomena. Then we can rightly understand it.

This is *vipassanāñāṇa*, insight knowledge, which realises the specific characteristic of the wind element, *vāyo dhātu*. In the same way, you also have to slow down the other movements, so that you can realise them in their true nature.

May all of you strive your best to achieve your goal, the cessation of suffering, Nibbāna.



# Meditation instructions, contd.

Today is the 30th of December 1991.

We will continue our Dhamma talk on the practical exercise of mindfulness meditation. When you sit down for meditation and after having settled yourself on your seat very well, you should keep your body straight and erect. The neck and the head must also be held in a straight position. Then focus your mind on the movement of the abdomen. When the abdomen rises, observe it very precisely, making a mental note as “rising”. Observing means to know the rising movement of the abdomen very precisely and closely. When it falls, follow the falling movement of the abdomen with your mind very closely and precisely, noting it as “falling”. In this way, you note “rising, falling”.

I repeat this point because some meditators are confused about mindfulness of the abdominal movement. The rising movement is caused by the wind element, *vāyo dhātu*. The falling movement is also caused by the wind element, *vāyo dhātu*. To realize the movement of the rising process and the movement of the falling process, we have to observe it as it really occurs.

The abdominal movement is the primary object of meditation. While you are engaged in it, you may hear a sound or a voice, sharp or loud. Then you have to observe it, making a mental note as “hearing, hearing, hearing”. When you smell a scent or an odour, you should note it as “smelling, smelling, smelling”,

observing the consciousness of smelling. Seeing a visible object means to be mindful of the consciousness of seeing. When we make a mental note, “seeing, seeing, seeing”, then we observe the consciousness of seeing the object. The eye doesn’t see the object. The person doesn’t see the object. What does see the object is the consciousness. Without consciousness, the eye cannot see the object, the person cannot see the object.

## **Without mentality seeing can not occur**

Suppose we have a dead body here lying on the floor. We show a piece of paper to the corpse to have a look at it. Although we hold this paper in front of the eyes of the dead person, he cannot see the paper. His eyes cannot see the paper. Why? Because he has no mentality. If he had a mind, at the moment of showing the paper the seeing consciousness would arise and would see the piece of paper. Therefore, when we see an object, we observe the consciousness of seeing and we make a mental note as “seeing, seeing, seeing”. To make a mental note or labeling is not very much important, but at the beginning of the practice it helps the mind to concentrate on the object of meditation. That is why we have to use it. Labeling or noting refers to an ultimate reality and this is called “*tajjā-paññatti*” in Pāḷi. “*Tajjā-paññatti*” means “concepts that refer to ultimate reality”. It is suitable to see the object and it enables the consciousness to see the object. Although it is not very much important, it helps the mind to concentrate on the object of meditation very well in the beginning of the practice. That is why we have to use labeling or noting. What is important is to be aware of the object that is arising at that moment. When we see an object, then what really exists at that moment is the consciousness of seeing. We must be aware of that consciousness of seeing as it really occurs. To be able to be aware of the consciousness of seeing, you have to make a men-

tal note as “seeing, seeing, seeing”. This noting or labeling helps the mind to concentrate on the consciousness of seeing.

## **Two aspects of *vipassanā* meditation**

Here, we notice two aspects of *vipassanā* meditation: the first aspect is knowing, or being mindful, or being aware of the object as it is. The second aspect is the labeling or noting. The noting helps the mind to know the object very well. When your meditation experience is at an advanced stage, your concentration is extremely good. Even though you send the mind out to any desirable or pleasant object, the mind doesn't go out. It stays with the object of meditation. With such a concentrated mind, you need not use labeling or noting, but you can be just aware of the object that is arising at that moment. Sometimes we notice that the observing mind without labeling doesn't stay with the object very deeply and attentively. It doesn't penetrate into the object. Then the labeling or noting helps the mind to penetrate into the object of meditation very deeply. In such a case, labeling or noting is very beneficial for a meditator to develop deep concentration and penetrate into the object of meditation. That is why we have to use labeling or noting. When you hear a sound or a voice, sharp or loud, you should observe the consciousness of hearing, making a mental note as “hearing, hearing, hearing”. Observing the consciousness of hearing is beneficial in order to destroy all the mental defilements and hindrances. Later on, I may be able to explain how noting or observing the consciousness of seeing and hearing enables a meditator's mind to destroy all mental defilements.

The Lord Buddha expounded many discourses that deal with mindfulness in regard to the consciousness of seeing, the consciousness of hearing, the consciousness of smelling, the consciousness of tasting, the consciousness of touching, and the consciousness of thinking. When one is mindful of see-

ing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, or thinking, one restrains the sense doors. The restraint of the sense doors is called “*indriyaṣaṃvara*”. “*Indriya*” means the six kinds of sense bases, that is the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind. These six sense bases must be restrained by being mindful of the consciousness of seeing, the consciousness of hearing, consciousness of smelling, the consciousness of tasting, the consciousness of touching, and the consciousness of thinking. So, “*indriyaṣaṃvara*” means the restraint of the sense doors. These six sense doors are known as the doors through which mental states, especially mental defilements, come into the mind. If you are mindful of whatever you see, whatever you hear, whatever you smell, whatever you taste, whatever you touch, or whatever you think, then these six doors are closed. None of the mental defilements get into the mind through these doors because the sense doors are restrained. These doors are closed with mindfulness. That is why you have to be mindful whenever you see something, whenever you hear something, whenever you smell something, whenever you taste something, whenever you touch something, and whenever you think about something. When mindfulness becomes strong enough, none of the mental defilements or undesirable mental impurities, can come into the mind through these doors. The doors are closed through mindfulness. So, this is called “*indriyaṣaṃvara*”. We can say that it means the closing of the six sense-doors by being mindful of whatever arises regarding the eye, the ear, the nose, and so on.

## **Mindfulness of seeing**

When we say that you must be mindful of the consciousness of seeing when you see an object and make a mental note as “seeing, seeing, seeing”, you may not understand the purpose of noting the seeing consciousness. However, when you have experienced it by being mindful of the seeing consciousness, you come

to understand how deep this awareness of the seeing consciousness is. When you practice sitting meditation and hear a sound or a voice, you should note it as “hearing, hearing, hearing”. When you see something, you note it as “seeing, seeing, seeing”.

While you are sitting, you have your eyes closed. Then, how can you see an object with your closed eyes? Now, please close your eyes and then look at me. Do you see me? No. You cannot see me with closed eyes, but you can see me in your mind. This consciousness of seeing must also be noted as “seeing, seeing, seeing” until this mental image has disappeared. Only after it has disappeared should you return to the primary object and note it as usual. When you smell a scent or an odour, you should note it as “smelling, smelling, smelling”. When you taste food, you should note it as “tasting, tasting, tasting”, or “bitter, bitter, bitter”, or “hot, hot, hot”, or “sour, sour, sour”, and so on.

By the way, let me ask you, “When you touch fire, do you feel cold or hot?” Hot. “When you touch chillies, what do feel? Do you feel hot or cold?” Hot. No! “But, when you taste it, what do you feel?” Hot. Yes! Do you have any other word for feeling “hot” due to chillies, any other word except “hot”? Burning. Burning is very hot. Do you think that the sensation of touching a fire and the taste of chillies is the same sensation? No. In our Burmese language there is a separate word for the sensation of the hotness of chillies. We call it “*sae-te*”. When we touch fire, we say “*pu-de*”. These are two different words. In English, when you taste chillies, you say “hot”, and when you touch fire you also say “hot”. I wonder whether there is any other word except “hot” for chillies. Burning also means hot. Yes. When you taste chillies while eating, then you should note the sensation as “hot, hot, hot”. What is the point of noting it like this? This is the closing of the door of the tongue. When you note “hot, hot, hot” and the concentration becomes good, you don’t have aversion towards the hotness. You neither like it nor dislike it because you just know the sensation of hotness. As a result, there is no aversion to it and no desire for it. Because there is no aversion

and no desire, the mental defilements don't come into the mind through the tongue. That is the value of noting each experience of tasting. It means closing the door. The word "*indriyaṣaṃvara*" is very often used by the Buddha, in almost all the discourses, because it is very important to close the doors. Can you close the doors, the six sense-doors? You don't know. It is very easy. When you see, note "seeing, seeing, seeing", or when you hear something, note "hearing, hearing, hearing". This is the closing of the doors. In this way, you come to understand how to close the doors. It is very important to close the doors. If you do not close the doors by being mindful of what is happening in the moment, then a great deal of mental defilements will come into the mind. As a result, the mind will become defiled and you will suffer. This is why we have to note whatever we see, whatever we hear, whatever we smell, whatever we taste, whatever we touch, and whatever we think about. In this way, no mental defilements come into the mind and make it defiled.

## **The bad habit of looking at the watch**

Sometimes yogis see a visual object in the sitting meditation, although they think that their eyes are closed. However, these yogis are not aware that they often open their eyes. So, can these meditators see the object with their eyes? Yes, especially when they look at the watch! One of my meditation students is a monk called U Vasarana. He was ordained in 1979, and he is still a monk. He has been practicing *vipassanā* meditation for a very long time, but whenever he practices sitting meditation, he places a watch in front of him. After about twenty minutes of meditation he opens his eyes and looks at the watch. Then he closes his eyes again and continues to meditate. After fifteen minutes he opens the eyes again and looks at the watch. In an hour's sitting, I think that he opens his eyes about six times. He can see the object with his eyes. Do you think that he can at-

tain deep concentration and clear insight? No. Not at all. He has been practicing meditation for many years, but he hasn't attained anything.

What I want to point out is that in the sitting meditation you should not open your eyes even once. However strong the desire to open the eyes is, you must note the desire as "desire, desire, desire" until it has disappeared. When the desire has disappeared, you won't open your eyes. If you open your eyes, the mind goes with the eyes and concentration is disrupted. When the concentration is disrupted very often, can the concentration become very deep or good? It can't be deep, and it can't be good. Therefore, do not open your eyes even once in a sitting. As long as you are in the sitting posture you must not open your eyes. Close your eyes and focus your mind on any mental or physical process which is arising at the moment.

## **Do not move while engaged in sitting meditation**

Though you do not open your eyes in sitting, sometimes a meditator moves his body, leg, back, or hand. It feels like an unconscious movement. Actually, it is a conscious movement. Let's say, in the sitting he lifts his hand and then puts it down. He is not aware of the movement, but his mind knows it. Can he attain deep concentration? No. Because he is moving his hand, his mind is not stable. It is distracted and becomes restless. That is why he moves the hand. So, you must not move your hands and limbs while you are sitting. You should try to be like this Buddha statue: still and quiet, without moving. When you are able to sit in a still and quiet position, this helps your mind to concentrate well on the object of meditation. So, try to sit still, quiet, and without moving your limbs or your body.

But there is an exception. When your mental effort becomes weak, the body can no longer be kept upright and straight. Grad-

ually the body bends down because you do not note the object attentively and energetically. As the mental effort becomes weak the body becomes slanted. The slanted body must be straightened up again. If you stay in this slanted position, you can't feel the abdominal movement very clearly. The slanted body presses on the abdomen and the abdomen cannot move freely. So, you should straighten your body. But first of all, you should note the intention to straighten as "intention, intention, intention", then note "straightening, straightening, straightening". The movement of straightening must be observed very attentively. In this way, you may be able to note individual movements of straightening when your concentration is good enough.

If your mental effort is strong enough and knows every object of meditation, the body can be kept straight all the time. When your effort becomes weak, the body sinks down and slants. This is why you should always put enough effort into the noting. In this way, the noting mind becomes powerful and strong, and it can keep the body straight. If you are able to sit 45 minutes or 1 hour without changing position, this is fine. If you are not able to sit for at least 40 or 45 minutes without changing position, then you can change position once in a sitting when the pain becomes unbearable. But you should change the position mindfully. The movements of changing must be observed very attentively and in great details. Let's say, when you want to change your position, first of all note it as "intention, intention, intention". When you move a leg, note it as "moving, moving, moving", and when you move the other leg, note it again as "moving, moving, moving". In this way, you have to observe all actions and movements involved in the act of changing position. After you have settled into your new position, you should continue to note the rising and falling of the abdomen. If after ten minutes you want to change the position for a second time due to unbearable pain, you should not change again. You should not change a second time. It is better to get up and practice walking meditation. This is more beneficial for you. If you change the position

a second time, it will become a habit and accompany you during the course of meditation. Although you don't have any painful or unpleasant sensation at an advanced stage of your meditation practice, you have the desire to change your position due to this bad habit of changing position. As a result, you unconsciously change the position all the time. Then concentration breaks. Therefore, do not change the position a second time. It is even better to not change position even once during a sitting.

## **Be patient with painful sensations**

Please be patient with a painful sensation by observing it attentively, closely, and precisely. When the concentration on the painful sensation becomes deep, then you won't have any aversion towards the pain because you are just aware of the pain. You are not affected by the painful feeling. What you are realizing is an unpleasant physical phenomenon, an unpleasant physical sensation. When you note the pain in this way, it doesn't affect you, it doesn't disturb you, it doesn't annoy you. The pain is realized as a process of unpleasant physical sensations. Then you can continue to sit for ten, fifteen or twenty minutes. To experience the pain in this way, you should perseveringly observe the pain attentively, closely, and precisely. However, when the pain becomes unbearable and concentration is getting weak, you should get up and practice walking meditation. That's better.

## **Take care of your eyes during walking meditation**

During walking meditation, the most important thing is to take care of your eyes. If you look around here and there while walking, you can never attain deep concentration in walking meditation. You should determine, "I won't look around as long as I am on retreat". When I say that you should not look around while

practicing walking meditation, you may think that you should not look around during the walking meditation, but that you can look around while going to the dining hall or to your room. Should you think like this? No. Around this retreat centre there are many beautiful things: hills, meadows, trees, kangaroos, or rabbits. When you look around while going somewhere, you see all these beautiful things. Then you enjoy them; enjoyment is also one of the mental defilements. It is *lobha*, desire, enjoyment. We are here to make the utmost effort to destroy all mental defilements by being mindful of what is happening in our body and mind as it really is. The enjoyment of beautiful scenes and things destroys the aim of our meditation. So, should you enjoy the beautiful things around this retreat centre? No. If you have the desire to enjoy them, what should you do? Yes, note the desire. Note it as “desire, desire, desire” until it has disappeared. When the desire has disappeared, you won’t look around.

## **How to note during walking meditation**

During the walking meditation, at the beginning of the practice, you should note the steps as “left, right” for about ten minutes. The movement of the left foot must be observed, making a mental note as “left”. When you move the right foot, the movement of the right foot must be observed and noted as “right”. “Left, right, left, right”. The noting helps the mind to concentrate on the movement of the foot. What is important is to know the movement, to be aware of the movement, or to be mindful of the movement. After ten minutes of noting “left, right, left, right”, you should note each step as “lifting, dropping”. When you lift the foot, observe and note it as “lifting”. When you drop the foot, observe and note it as “dropping”. In this way, note the steps as “lifting, dropping, lifting, dropping” for about ten minutes.

After that you should note the steps as “lifting, pushing, dropping”. When the foot is lifted, observe and note it as “lift-

ing”. When the foot is pushed forward, observe and note it as “pushing”. When the foot is dropped, observe and note it as “dropping”. “Lifting, pushing, dropping, lifting, pushing, dropping”. These three parts of each step should be observed and noted for about twenty minutes.

After that you should note each step as “lifting, pushing, dropping, touching, pressing”. When the foot is dropped, note it as “dropping”. When the foot touches the floor, note it as “touching”. When you press the foot by shifting the weight to the other foot, note it as “pressing”. After noting “pressing” you can note the lifting of the other foot, that is the very beginning of the lifting movement of the other foot. Note “lifting, pushing, dropping, touching, pressing” until the end of the walking meditation. If you are able to note these parts of each step very well, you can further increase your noting. Let’s say: when you lift the heel of the foot, observe and note it as “lifting”. When you raise the toes, observe and note it as “raising”. In this way, you observe and note each step as “lifting, raising, pushing, dropping, touching, pressing”.

When you are able to note all these parts of each step very well, you should note the intention before the lifting movement as “intention, lifting, raising, pushing, dropping, touching, pressing”. You must know for yourself whether or not you are able to note each of these parts of the step very well. It depends on you. If you have to strain yourself in order to know all these parts of the step, it is not correct and you should not do it. You should reduce the number of objects, for example simply note “lifting, pushing, dropping, touching”. If you need not strain yourself in order to know all these parts of the step, then you can do it. Then you could also note, “intention, lifting, intention, raising, intention, pushing, intention, dropping, touching, intention, pressing”, noting the intention before every movement. If you are aware of the intention, note it. If you are not aware of it, do not note it. In any case, you have to slow down. Your stepping should be very, very slow, so that you can note

all these intentions before each movement. In the same way, intentions should also be observed before actions and movements during the daily activities. We have to observe the intentions so that we can realize how this intention is related to the movement. In other words, to realize the relationship between the intention and the movement or the action that follows. It is very important to realize this relationship. The understanding of this relationship can destroy the idea of a person, a being, or an individual (*atta*). That is why we also have to observe the intention. As you know, the principle of *vipassanā* meditation is to be mindful of what is happening in your body and mind as it really occurs. There are no mental states or mental processes and no physical processes which should not be observed. We must be mindful of all of them as they are.

# Meditation instructions, contd.

Today is the first of January 1992, the fourth day of our meditation retreat here. We will continue our discourse on the practical exercise of *vipassanā* meditation.

*Vipassanā* is a compound word. The first part is “*vi*”, the second is “*passanā*”. When “*passanā*” is analysed, according to Pāḷi grammar, the root of “*passanā*” is “*dis*”, “*sannā*” is a suffix. “*Dis*” means “to see”, or “to know” or “to penetrate”. When the suffix “*sannā*” is combined with the root “*dis*”, then the word “*dis*” becomes “*pas*”, then it becomes “*passanā*”. Then “*passanā*” means, “seeing”, “knowing”, “penetrating”. When we use the word “*passanā*”, “seeing” is not ordinary seeing, but “seeing into it”. So *vipassanā* means to penetrate into the true nature of the Dhamma. “*Vi*” means “various”. Here, “various” means “various characteristics”. Even though the word “various” is used, it refers only to the three characteristics, that is, *anicca*, *dukkha*, and *anatta*. So here, “*vi*” means *anicca*, *dukkha*, *anatta*—impermanence, suffering, impersonal nature, or no-soul, no-self nature.

When the two words are combined, they become “*vipassanā*”. Then it means: seeing into or penetrating into the three characteristics of mental and physical phenomena. In other words: *vipassanā* means seeing into or penetrating into the three characteristics of impermanence, suffering and the impersonal na-

ture of the body-mind process. That's why Pāḷi scholars translate "*vipassanā*" as "insight". "Seeing into" because it is insight knowledge that penetrates into the three characteristics of impermanence, suffering and impersonal nature of mental and physical phenomena.

If you have realized the impermanence of any mental process or physical process, do you identify that process with a person, a being, an I, or a you? Do you identify? Do you regard this process which is impermanent as a person, a being? No, because what we call a person is something that we take as ever-lasting and who does not die. This person has never disappeared. It is ever-lasting until now, at least. Because we regard it as permanent, we regard it as a person. When we have realized the impermanence of mental processes and physical processes, do we regard this dual process of mentality and physicality as a person, a being? No. Why? Because this process is impermanent. What we take for a person, a being, an ever-lasting being, is this: we think that from the time we were born, we are ever-lasting, we have never died until now. Right? That's why we take this impermanent process as a person.

If we have realized this body-mind process as just a natural process of arising and passing away or as impermanent, do we regard this body-mind process as a person, a being? No. Why? Because we realize its impermanence. It arises and then passes away, so it's impermanent. So, it is neither a person nor a being, neither a man nor a woman. Why? Because it is not permanent, it is subject to impermanence. If we take this body-mind process for a person, a being, then we have the idea of a personality, an individuality. Then that person has a desire to be rich. This person has a desire to be a president, that person has a desire to be pretty, that person is angry with someone who insults him. This anger or desire arises depending on the idea of a person, a being. Yes. So the idea of a person or a being is the cause of the arising of desire and anger. Desire and anger are two mental states included in all mental defilements. Because, if you have desire,

your mind is defiled. If you have anger, your mind is defiled with anger. So they are defilements, mental defilements, or *kilesas* in Pāḷi. These mental defilements, beginning with anger and desire arise dependent on the idea of a person, a being.

But none of the mental processes or physical processes are ever-lasting. They are subject to impermanence. When we have rightly understood through our direct experience, by means of mindfulness meditation, then there is no person, no being. Neither a mental process is a being nor any physical process is a being. Why? Because these dual processes are impermanent, arising and very instantly passing away.

The word *vipassanā* means: the insight that penetrates into impermanence, suffering, and the impersonal nature of mental and physical processes. If we have realised these three characteristics of bodily and mental phenomena, do we take this dual process to be a person, a being? No. Because mental defilements arise dependent on the idea of a person, a being. Now, this dual process of mental and physical phenomena is impermanent, so it is neither a person nor a being, a soul, or a self. Then, when we have no idea of a person or a being.

## **The purpose of *vipassanā* meditation is to eliminate suffering**

The purpose of *vipassanā* meditation is to eliminate suffering through insight knowledge that penetrates into impermanence, suffering and the impersonal nature of bodily and mental phenomena. To eliminate suffering through realisation, through right understanding, or through insight knowledge. But actually, insight knowledge is not enough to destroy the root of all defilements. You also have to attain path knowledge, *maggañāṇa*. Then, to include the two *ñāṇas*, *maggañāṇa* and *vipassanāñāṇa*, we use the word “realisation”, the realisation of the three characteristics of mental and physical phenomena.

The idea of a person or a being, is known as *sakkāya diṭṭhi* or *atta diṭṭhi* in Pāli. You need to rightly understand the true nature of the body-mind process. Here, “rightly understanding” is known as *sammā diṭṭhi*, *sammā*—right, *diṭṭhi*—seeing, understanding, view. *Sammā diṭṭhi*—right understanding, right view, right seeing. This *sammā diṭṭhi*, right understanding, is one of the eight factors of the noble path, *magga sacca*. To rightly understand the true nature of the body-mind process, you find these three characteristics: impermanence, suffering and impersonal nature. Then, when you want to rightly understand these three characteristics, what should you do? You should make an effort to be mindful of what? The body-mind process. If we realise or rightly understand the impermanent thing as impermanent, then this is right view. Why? Because we realise it or we see it as it is.

## **What does right understanding mean?**

What does right understanding mean? Right understanding means understanding something as it is. If we want to see mental processes and physical processes as the really are, how should we be mindful of them? This “how” is very important. How should we be mindful of them, or, how should we observe them, how should we see them, how should we be aware of them? By noting.

## **Preconceptions about these three characteristics**

You see, some Buddhists are mindful of these mental processes and physical processes, but they combine their preconception about these three characteristics. They note *anicca*, *dukkha*, *anatta*: *rūpa*, physical processes, are *anicca*, *dukkha*, and *anatta*—impermanent, suffering and no-soul, no-self. *Vedanā*, feeling,

is *anicca*, *dukkha*, and *anatta*—impermanent, suffering and no-soul, no-self. *Saññā*, perception, is *anicca*, *dukkha*, and *anatta*—impermanent, suffering and no-soul, no-self. *Saṅkhārā*, mental formations, are *anicca*, *dukkha*, and *anatta*—impermanent, suffering, and no-soul, no-self. *Viññāṇa*, consciousness, is *anicca*, *dukkha*, and *anatta*—impermanent, suffering, and no-soul, no-self”. In this way they are mindful of these five aggregates of mental and physical phenomena. But, should we do it in that way?

Should we see mental processes and physical processes in that way? No. Why? Because we want to see mental processes as they are. We want to see physical processes as they are. Then, what should we do? We should be mindful of mental processes and physical processes as they really are. This is the meaning of “how”: as they really are, as it is.

That’s why we have to be mindful of the pain when it arises and note it as “pain, pain”. We see it as it is. We do not drive it away. Do you want to drive it away? Why? Because of the aversion to the pain. Yes, sometimes you have aversion to the pain, but sometimes you have attachment to the pain. In Burma, some of the meditators, especially female meditators, have no pain at all after about one month of meditation. Then, they are not able to observe any mental processes or physical processes attentively. But they want to be attentive. Then what do they do? They look for pain because with pain they are able to note it very attentively. In order to find it, they sit with their two legs underneath their body. Then, their friend comes. Who is their friend? Pain! They have been looking for a friend. In this way, when they have their friend, they are satisfied with it. Then, they can note it very attentively, they are attached to pain.

## Pain is the key to the door of Nibbāna

That's why I said: sometimes you have aversion to the pain, sometimes you are attached to the pain. But, in this retreat, none of the meditators is attached to the pain. But pain is the key to the door of Nibbāna. That's why the Burmese meditators look for it. They are looking for the key to open the door of Nibbāna. So, how can the pain be the key to the door of Nibbāna?

When there is pain, you observe it very attentively and persistently by being patient with it. The pain becomes more severe, you think. But actually, the pain is not more severe. The more your mind is concentrated on the pain, the more clearly the mind knows it, the more clearly the mind knows its characteristic. What is the characteristic of pain? It is unpleasantness. Unpleasant feeling of the pain is perceived more and more by the mind when the concentration becomes deeper and deeper. Then, you think that the pain becomes more severe. Actually, the pain doesn't become more severe, but the knowing of it becomes clearer, sharper, and more penetrating. So you think the pain becomes more severe, but you are a very persevering meditator. So, you observe the pain more and more. When the mind becomes more and more concentrated, the mind penetrates into the centre of the pain. Then it knows, "The pain has the nature of unpleasant feeling".

If you come to realise this characteristic of the pain more clearly, you do not identify the pain with yourself. Before you have realised the characteristic of the pain very clearly and penetratingly, you think, "My leg is very painful. My back is very painful". There is "my", "I", a person, the pain is identified as a person. But with deeper concentration, the mind penetrates into the centre of the pain. Now you come to realise the pain as an unpleasant feeling of a natural process. It is neither a person nor a being. Then you do not identify the pain with yourself. You do not take the pain to be a person, a being, an I, or a you. Then

you are not affected by the pain. You are happy with the pain because you realise it.

When concentration becomes much deeper, the mind comes to realise the pain as layers of pain, one wave of pain arises and then goes away. Then, another wave of pain arises and goes away. Then, another wave of pain comes and goes away. In this way, you come to realise, “The pain is not permanent. Many waves of pain come and go, come and go. They are impermanent”. Then you do not identify it with yourself. Then you do not have any aversion to it, you are not angry with it. Meditators very easily get angry with the pain because they have not yet rightly understood the true nature of the pain, the specific characteristic and general characteristic of the pain.

The Buddha said, “What is impermanent is suffering, what is suffering is of an impersonal nature”. When you see the impermanence of the pain, rising and passing away, coming and going you see it as suffering. Then you see its impersonal nature, which is the nature of feeling or sensation. It’s neither a person nor a being.

Because you have realised these three characteristics of a painful sensation, you don’t have any mental defilements at that moment. You are neither happy nor unhappy with the pain. You have no desire to be attached to it. You have no ill-will against the pain because the pain doesn’t affect you, because you do not identify the pain with yourself. The defilements have been destroyed.

## **When the defilements have been destroyed, what do you achieve?**

When the defilements have been destroyed, what do you achieve? The cessation of suffering, Nibbāna, at that moment. There is no suffering at all in Nibbāna. When you have destroyed all defilements by realising the impermanence, suffering, and

impersonal nature of a painful sensation, then you have reached the state of cessation of suffering.

Therefore, pain is the key to the door of Nibbāna.

Nibbāna is neither a mental process nor a physical process, so it is permanent. If Nibbāna were a mental process, it wouldn't be permanent. If Nibbāna were a physical process, it wouldn't be permanent.

Therefore the cessation of suffering means the cessation of all mental and physical processes. The cessation of all mental and physical processes can be attained in this existence, Nibbāna cannot be found after death. You think that there is life which is something ever-lasting in you. No, your body, the so-called person, is composed of bodily and mental phenomena. Bodily phenomena are impermanent. Mental phenomena are also impermanent. Then, is there anything ever-lasting? No.

## **Cessation of suffering, Nibbāna, can be attained in this existence**

So, the cessation of suffering, Nibbāna, can be attained in this existence. It is attainable in this existence, if you put enough effort in your practise and devote enough time to your meditation. The aim of our *vipassanā* meditation is to attain the cessation of suffering through rightly understanding mental and physical phenomena as the really are. That is why we have to observe any mental process or physical process as they really are.

## **There is no room in *vipassanā* meditation for preconceptions**

In other words: There is no room in mindfulness meditation or *vipassanā* meditation for preconceptions, for reasoning, for thinking, for intellectual, logical, philosophical thinking. Then,

how can we attain it? How can we practise it? See it as it is, that's all.

See any mental process or physical process as it is at the moment of its arising. Then, when we are able to observe any mental state or emotional state, attentively and effectively, the noting mind doesn't have any reaction to the object at that moment.

Suppose we have anger. Because we don't know the anger as a mental process, which should be observed, we stay with it. Sometimes, we enjoy it. Then the anger becomes stronger. When the anger changes into actions, verbal action and physical action, then it becomes what?

When we know that anger is one of the mental states or emotional states that must be observed, we observe it "anger, anger, anger, anger", as it is "anger, anger, anger, anger". Gradually, the noting mind becomes more and more powerful, because we note it attentively, energetically. Then, the anger, the cause of the angry mind, becomes weak. The noting mind which is more powerful overwhelms the anger and the anger stops. The noting mind doesn't react to the anger. It observes it.

It doesn't react to the anger. If the mind reacts to it, the mind will also get angry. It doesn't react to the anger because it observes it. It accepts it openly as it is, that's all.

## **Non-reactive awareness**

Mindfulness is called non-reactive awareness. It is necessary not to react to any object. When the mind doesn't react to any object, you will be happy with it. When the mind does react to any object, you won't be happy with it, there may be some disadvantage.

In order to not to react to the object, we have to observe it as is, that's all. If we react to the object, we have to observe it as it is in its true nature. That is mindfulness meditation which

leads you to the cessation of suffering. Because you believe in this mindfulness meditation, you come to meditate.

I believe in it.

May you rightly understand the theory of *vipassanā* meditation and the meaning of the word “*vipassanā*”, strive your best and achieve the goal, the cessation of suffering.

# Purification of mind

Today is the 2nd of January 1992, the sixth day of our meditation retreat.

Yesterday we explained how to deal with painful sensations. And I told you that pain is the key to the door of Nibbāna. When the pain is well observed, attentively and energetically, first of all you feel it unbearable, severe, and stronger. You have to be patient with it by observing it, by penetrating into it. Then, gradually your mindfulness and noting mind become more and more deeply concentrated on the pain. Then you come to realise the pain, the specific characteristic of the painful sensation. The specific characteristic of the painful sensation is: unpleasant physical sensation. Unpleasant physical feeling or sensation is the specific characteristic of pain, *dukkha vedanā* in Pāḷi.

## **The first insight knowledge: (*nāmarūpaparichedañāna*)**

When you realise it more clearly, first of all you know the pain as an unpleasant physical sensation or an unpleasant phenomena. Then you distinguish between the pain and the mind that notes it. There's the pain, unpleasant physical sensation and there's the mind that notes it. You come to differentiate between the object and the subject. The object: the unpleasant physical sensation, the subject: the mind that notes and realises it. This is the

first insight knowledge of the thirteen stages of insight knowledge. It is called *nāmarūpaparichedañāṇa* in Pāli. The meaning is: the insight which differentiates between *nāma* and *rūpa*, mental processes and physical processes, or the insight knowledge that discerns the true nature of mental processes and physical processes.

This is the first stage of insight knowledge. We have thirteen stages of insight knowledge and one path knowledge, *maggañāṇa*, and one fruition knowledge, *phalañāṇa*, and one reviewing knowledge, *paccavekkhanañāṇa*. In this way, a meditator tries to go through all these stages of insight knowledges and path-, fruition-, and reviewing knowledges, until he has attained at least the lowest path knowledge, *sotāpattimaggañāṇa*.

Out of these *ñāṇas*, the insight that differentiates between the painful physical sensation, the unpleasant physical sensation, and the mind that notes and realises it is *nāmarūpaparichedañāṇa*. You see, you can realise or penetrate into the true nature of a painful sensation because your concentration is good enough. If the concentration is not good enough you won't be able to realise any mental process or physical process. So, to have any insight knowledge, you need some degree of concentration. This is called purification of mind.

## Purification of mind

In the course of *vipassanā* meditation, there are seven kinds of purification. The first is *sīla visuddhi*, purification of moral conduct, morality. To purify morality or moral conduct, we have to observe five precepts or eight precepts. Five precepts are abstention from killing, abstention from stealing (or abstention from taking what is not given), abstention from sexual misconduct, abstention from telling lies, abstention from using any kind of intoxicants. These are the five precepts. If you fully observe

these five rules of moral conduct, your deed and speech is purified; this is the purification of morality or moral conduct.

When you fully observe the eight precepts, the purification of moral conduct is attained by observing the eight precepts. You have ample time to devote on your meditation because in the eight precepts, the sixth one is the abstention from taking substantial food after midday. So, after midday, you have nothing to do for your dinner or for any kind of substantial food. You have a lot of time to spend on your meditation. That's why you have to observe eight precepts. A time is prescribed or fixed for taking juice or having tea. That's also not very important. When you are not hungry, you need not take any juice or any hot tea. Then you have more time to spend on meditation. That's why some of the meditators here do not go for juice or hot tea. Instead of taking these things they spend more time on their meditation. Then their mindfulness and concentration becomes continuous and constant to a large extent. That's why you should observe eight precepts. *sīla visuddhi* means to fully observe the precepts so that your deed and speech is purified.

When you sit in meditation and focus the mind on the abdominal movement or any other physical or mental process, sometimes your mind may go to deeds and speech. You may recollect something you did in the past, used false talk in the past. Because that deed is not purified, you are unhappy about it, you get embarrassed. Sometimes you feel guilty about it. When the mind is defiled and feels guilt, you can't concentrate well on the object of meditation. Because you haven't attained the purification of conduct or morality, *sīla visuddhi*, you do not have the purification of mind, deep concentration.

With deed and speech purified when you recollect your deed and speech, you are happy about the purity of the deed and speech. So, you feel happy, you feel rapture, your mind becomes calm. Then you can concentrate your mind on the object of meditation very well. Based on purified moral conduct you practise *vipassanā* meditation or *samatha* meditation. Then your

mind easily becomes concentrated on the object of meditation because of purification of deed and speech or moral conduct.

When the mind is concentrated to a large extent, the insight that arises together with that concentration, becomes sharp and penetrating. The insight that penetrates into the true nature of mental and physical phenomena, which is the insight that differentiates between the object and the subject, or the mental process and physical process, it is the first stage of insight knowledge, *nāmarūpaparichedañāṇa*. *Nāma* is the mental process, *rūpa* is the physical process, *paricheda* means to differentiate, or to discern. *Ñāṇa* means insight. So, *nāmarūpaparichedañāṇa* means, “the insight that discerns the specific characteristic of mental and physical phenomena” or, “the insight that differentiates between the two processes, that is mental processes and physical processes”.

When you observe the rise and fall of the abdomen, knowing the very beginning of the movement of rising until the end of it, realising the very beginning of the falling movement until the end of it, gradually your mind becomes concentrated. The more deeply the noting mind is concentrated, the clearer insight becomes. Then it penetrates into the nature of mental and physical processes. Here, it penetrates into the rising movement of physical phenomena and the falling movement of physical phenomena as a series of movements, a series of broken movements which are arising and passing away one after another. Then you come to realise the noting mind that realises this movement as just a natural process which is arising and passing away.

In that state of *paricheda*, insight knowledge, you are not aware of yourself. What you are realising at that moment is just the rising movement, the falling movement, and the mind that notes it. You are realising, discovering this dual process of mental phenomena and physical phenomena. Because you are not conscious of your bodily form and yourself, you do not identify with the rising movement or the falling movement or the mind that notes it, the mental process that knows it. You don't take

this dual process to be a person, a being, an I, or a you. Then you have removed the idea of a person, a being, a self, a soul, an I, or a you.

Because you don't have any idea of a person or a being concerning this rise and fall of the abdomen and the mind that notes it, there won't arise any mental defilements such as desire, craving, lust, greed, hatred, ignorance, and so on. These mental defilements arise dependent on the idea of a person, a being. But now you do not discover any person or any being, any self, or any soul. What you discover here are the physical processes of the rising movement and the falling movement and the mental process of the noting mind.

These dual processes are also arising and passing away. They do not last even the millionth part of a second. You experience or realise it through your personal experience with the help of deep concentration. Then you have removed the idea of a person, a being, *sakkāya diṭṭhi*, *atta diṭṭhi*, which is the cause of the defilements. This is the insight knowledge that discerns the specific characteristic of movement, of *vāyo dhātu*, the wind element, or the insight knowledge that differentiates between the object and the subject. The object is the physical process of movement, the subject is the mental process of the noting mind. This is the first *ñāṇa*. In this way, this mindfulness meditation, *vipassanā* meditation, enables a meditator to purify his view, his understanding.

We call the idea of a self *sakkāya diṭṭhi*. *Sakkāya diṭṭhi*, the idea of a person or a being, has been destroyed by the insight knowledge that discerns the specific characteristics of mental and physical phenomena, of object and subject.

## **For a *vipassanā* meditator very deep concentration is not needed**

But we should be careful to have purification of mind, deep concentration of mind. Here, deep concentration means some de-

gree of deep concentration. For a *vipassanā* meditator very deep concentration is not needed. When the noting mind is very deeply absorbed into the object of meditation, then it is not able to realise any mental or physical process because it is totally absorbed into the object of meditation.

So, a *vipassanā* meditator need not have very deep concentration, but he needs some degree of concentration. Let's say a constant and continuous concentrated mind for at least ten minutes, then twenty minutes, then thirty minutes. If he can concentrate the mind deeply for about ten minutes, that concentration is enough to have the insight knowledge that penetrates into the true nature of mental and physical phenomena. If the mind can be concentrated more than ten minutes, twenty or thirty minutes or one hour, it is better.

When the mind is not well concentrated, mental defilements or hindrances get into the mind. Then the mind gets defiled. The insight that arises together with the defiled mind is not sharp and penetrating, so it cannot realise mental and physical phenomena in their true nature.

## **The five hindrances**

When the mind is well concentrated on each object of mental process or physical process, it is purified of five kinds of hindrances. The Pāḷi text and commentary about them has said, "What are the five kinds of hindrances? They are: sense desire, ill-will, anger or hatred, sloth and torpor, and restlessness and worry. The last one is sceptical doubt". These are the five kinds of hindrances which defile the mind when the mind is not concentrated well.

## Six kinds of sense desires

Sense desire is called *kāmacchanda nīvaraṇa*. *Nīvaraṇa* means hindrance. *Kāmacchanda* means sense desire. While you are meditating in sitting or in walking, you may have a sense desire. Here sense desire means the desire to see a pleasant visible object, the desire to hear a sweet sound, the desire to smell a scent, desire to taste a good food, a desire to touch a soft texture and so on, or the desire to think about something which is pleasant. These are six kinds of sense desires. If you have any of the sense desires, you can't concentrate.

## Sense desire is a hindrance to your concentration as well as insight

“Rising-falling, rising-falling”, you put enough effort into the noting, trying to realise the very beginning movement of rising and falling. But while you are engaged in that, you hear a bird singing outside the meditation hall. Then, you should note “hearing, hearing, hearing”. But you fail to note “hearing” because you like the bird's sound. Therefore, you fail to note it. What do you have? A desire to hear the song of the bird. That desire is known as sense desire, *kāmacchanda nīvaraṇa*. When you do not note the desire, then that desire becomes stronger and stronger. Can you well concentrate on the object of meditation? No. So, that sense desire is a hindrance to your concentration as well as insight because it defiles your mind. This is sense desire which is one of the five hindrances to your progress and concentration, as well as insight.

## Anger agitates your mind

Then another hindrance is *vyāpāda nīvaraṇa* in Pāli. *Vyāpāda* means ill-will, hatred, or anger. *Vyāpāda nīvaraṇa* we call it.

While you are meditating sometimes you recollect that you were once insulted by a person. Then, what do you have? Anger! When that anger is not noted, the anger becomes stronger. The anger agitates your mind, it distracts it. So, the anger is a hindrance to the concentration of your mind. So, it is called *nīvaraṇa*, hindrance. The same is true with disappointment, dejection, depression. These are also included in ill-will. They are also a hindrance to your progress in concentration as well as insight. If you have any of these mental states or emotional states, while you are meditating, what should you do? Note them as they are.

Your noting should be energetic, attentive and somewhat quick. Why? In this case there are two processes of mentality. One is the process of anger, the other is the process of the noting mind. If the process of anger becomes stronger, it overwhelms the process of the noting mind. Then, you can't concentrate well, the noting mind becomes weaker and weaker. Eventually, you may stop your meditation because you can't concentrate on the object of meditation. If the process of anger becomes weak because the noting mind becomes stronger and stronger it overwhelms or overpowers the process of anger. Then the process of anger becomes weak and stops. So you need to make your noting mind stronger and more powerful. Note energetically, attentively, and somewhat quickly.

If your noting is slow, then in between each noting the anger arises and becomes stronger. When you noting becomes continuous and constant because of the energetic noting, then there is no time in between each noting for the anger to arise. Then the anger becomes weaker and weaker. Then it stops.

So, be careful to note any mental state or physical state attentively, energetically, and somewhat quickly so that your noting mind becomes more and more powerful. This is ill-will, the hindrance of ill-will. *Vyāpāda nīvaraṇa* we call it.

## **Sloth and torpor, mental sluggishness**

The third hindrance is *thīnamiddha nīvaraṇa*. *Thīnamiddha* means: sloth and torpor, mental sluggishness. This is a bad friend of a Yogi. He is a friend because he wants to stay with you all of the time, but he is bad. Sometimes you enjoy it. When you enjoy it, it stays on. Then, you should note it, “sleepy, sleepy, sleepy, sleepy”, attentively and energetically so that you can make your mind alert and active. When the mind becomes alert and active, then sloth and torpor will go away.

This is the hindrance of *thīnamiddha nīvaraṇa*. When you feel sleepy, when you have sloth and torpor, can you concentrate well on the object of meditation? No. So, these hindrances are the enemy of concentration or purification of mind. When this sleepiness oppresses a Yogi, he is helpless to note it because his mind becomes dull, heavy with the burden of sleepiness. So, he is not able to note it. But you must try to note at this stage. You should open your eyes in this state of sleepiness, mental sluggishness. When you open your eyes, your mind becomes alert and active to a certain extent. Then it has firm energy to struggle with the sleepiness.

Note “sleepy, sleepy, sleepy, sleepy”, as much as possible, persistently and perseveringly. Then, gradually, the mind becomes alert, active and light. Then your friend goes away. When the sleepiness, sloth and torpor, has been destroyed, you close your eyes again.

## **Put some more effort into the noting**

If you contemplate on the rise and fall of the abdomen as usual, lightly and superficially, then your bad friend comes again. Put some more effort into the noting. You should do it attentively and energetically. Then the mind becomes alert and active for the time being. Then your friend doesn't come again.

If you are not able to overcome sloth and torpor in this way, then the Lord Buddha teaches us seven ways of overcoming sloth and torpor, in the discourse of the Pacalāyana Sutta. In this discourse, the Buddha gives us seven ways to overcome sloth and torpor.

## **Three ways of overcoming sloth and torpor**

I want to explain only two or three ways of overcoming because it takes some time to explain all the seven ways. One of the seven ways is: When you are not able to overcome the sleepiness by noting it attentively—actually, you are not able to note attentively— then the Lord Buddha said, “You should pull you ears and twist them very forcefully”.

One of the other ways is to get up and walk. When you walk, you should walk backwards. Yes. You should go backwards. Then the sloth and torpor will go away. If you do not believe in the teaching of the Buddha, you should practise it. On a retreat in Thailand which I conducted before I came here, and in New Zealand too, I also explained these ways of overcoming hindrances. The meditators were practical men, they put it into practise. They walked backward, “lifting-pushing-dropping, lifting-pushing-dropping”.

Especially two Dutch ladies liked it very much because one of the Dutch ladies was very sleepy in every sitting. She was disappointed with her meditation. That’s why I explained to them these seven ways of overcoming sleepiness. That Dutch lady liked this way of overcoming sleepiness very much. She put it into practise. She always walked backward. The space for walking meditation was also very large, very good. So, even at night she walked backward. From that time onward she didn’t feel sleepy. Sleepiness, sloth and torpor was overcome. So, I would like you to put it into practise when you feel sleepy and when you are not able to overcome it.

Another way of the seven ones is: You get out of the meditation hall. When you are not able to overcome this sloth and torpor, get out of the meditation hall and look up at the sky and count the stars, one, two, three four, and so on. Then, look in all directions. Then you will feel light, the mind becomes alert and active. But the Buddha said, before you look up at the sky, you should wash your face. After that you look up at the sky, count the stars, and look at the moon. But I think here in this retreat, you need not look at the sky. You should look in all directions to see kangaroos and rabbits. Your eyes will become wide. The mind becomes alert and active.

Yes. These are three ways of overcoming sloth and torpor, sleepiness which the Buddha taught us. There are also the other ways but we need not list them because three ways are enough. Try them.

I want to tell you one of the ways which one of my younger meditators practised in Burma. The meditator is a young student, fifteen years old. She was feeling sleepy in every sitting. She was not disappointed, but she got angry, because whenever she sat she got sleepy within five minutes. I did not explain these seven ways of overcoming sleepiness, but she had her own way of overcoming sloth and torpor. There's a big Tamarind tree in the meditation centre. She sat near the Tamarind tree, facing the tree. Her face was about four inches away from the tree trunk. Then she began to meditate, "rising-falling, rising-falling" and in five minutes as usual her friend visited her. She noted "sleepy, sleepy", but later on she wasn't able to note. Then her forehead hit the tree. Bang! She rubbed her head with her hand, but continued to meditate. But then again, for a second time it banged against the tree. Then, for the third time! From that time on, the sleepiness was gone. You should also imitate her, put this way also into practise.

## Restlessness and worry, or restlessness and remorse

Another hindrance one is *uddhacca-kukkucca nīvaraṇa* in Pāḷi. The meaning is restlessness and worry or restlessness and remorse. This restlessness and remorse is also one of the meditator's friends. When you sit and note the rising and falling for about two or three notings, then the mind goes. But you don't know it, you think you are continuing to note the rise and fall of the abdomen. But the mind scarcely comes to the rise and fall and notes it superficially and lightly. Then it goes again, but you don't know, because in the beginning of the practice you are not able to know the wandering mind, the thinking mind. You are not able to note it because you are not used to note the wandering mind or the thinking mind. Later on you are able to note it, but the mind is going out very often. This is *uddhacca-kukkucca nīvaraṇa*.

As long as you have restlessness worry, and remorse, you are not able to concentrate your mind on any object of meditation. So this is also a hindrance. Then, what should you do? You should train yourself to observe whenever the mind goes out, whenever the mind wanders, whenever the mind thinks about something else, whenever you see some mental image. You should observe these mental states attentively, energetically and somewhat quickly, so that your noting mind becomes more and more powerful, and is able to overcome, the thinking and wandering process. Then the thinking process and wandering process will stop.

In this way, thoughts become less and less. If you do not note these thoughts, they become more and more. Sometimes the thoughts are floating, sometimes you are dragged by the thoughts a very long way, because you do not note thoughts. The Buddha said that when the mind is distracted, you should note it. When the mind goes out, when the mind wanders about, when

the mind thinks about something else, you must note it. So, to overcome this restlessness and remorse, you should determine, “I won’t think about anything else as long as I am on retreat”.



# Purification of mind, contd.

Today is the 3rd of January 1992. We will continue our Dhamma talk about the purification of mind or consciousness, *citta visuddhi*.

Yesterday we explained the five hindrances which defile the mind when the mind is not concentrated on the object of meditation. When mindfulness becomes sharp, clear and continuous in meditation, then concentration becomes deeper. When concentration is deep enough, the noting mind becomes purified from all the hindrances: *kāmacchanda nīvaraṇa*, sense desire; *vyāpāda nīvaraṇa*, ill-will, hatred, or anger; *thīnamiddha nīvaraṇa*, sloth and torpor; *uddhacca-kukkucca nīvaraṇa*, restlessness and remorse; *vicikicchā nīvaraṇa*, sceptical doubt.

## **Doubt about the Triple Gem**

Because of this doubt, you do not put enough effort into the practice.

When you do not put enough effort into the practice, you won't be able be mindful of any mental or physical processes.

When mindfulness is not energetic and attentive, then the mind will not be concentrated well on the object and you can't attain deep concentration.

When the concentration is not yet good enough, your mind gets defiled with the hindrances.

So, doubt about the Triple Gem, especially about the technique of meditation, is a great hindrance to your progress in concentration as well as insight knowledge.

But when you have rightly understood the theory of the technique of meditation and some aspects of Dhamma, you may be able to overcome these doubts about the Triple Gem, especially about the technique of meditation to a large extent.

Then you may be able to put some effort into the practice.

Then mindfulness becomes sharp and clear, constant to a certain extent.

Then concentration becomes deep enough.

Then the mind becomes free from all of the five hindrances.

When the mind is purified from the hindrances, you feel quiet, calm, tranquil, serene and composed. When you have attained deep concentration and feel tranquil, quiet and composed, you will have a wholesome experience of meditation.

Then you can overcome this doubt, *vicikicchā* nīvaraṇa, about the Triple Gem. When you do not waste any thoughts doubting the technique or the Triple Gem, you'll be able to put enough effort into the practice.

## **How long to get good results out of this meditation?**

It's natural for every kind of work that you haven't any good results out of it at first. In the same way, in this *vipassanā* meditation too, you can't get a good result out of your practise at the beginning of the practice. When you have practised this mindfulness meditation at least for ten days, you may have some good results. But it takes at least about two months to have a remarkable benefit of this meditation. And if you can practise for one month, it also can give you reasonable benefits for your practice.

What I mean is this: by practising for about seven days you can't get good results out of this meditation, but you know the technique, and you can continue to practise it at home. Then you may be able to get some benefit. So, for the beginner, we cannot expect him to overcome his doubt about the Triple Gem, and especially about the technique. But he may do so after some good experience in sitting or walking, if he does it systematically and methodically.

This doubt is *vicikicchā nīvaraṇa*, one of the hindrances to your progress in concentration as well as in insight knowledge. To overcome it, you have to put enough effort into your practice. Then, this ancient path will lead you to living a happy and peaceful life, a blissful life.

## **What you need is to have continuous and constant mindfulness**

To concentrate the mind well on the object of meditation, what you need is to have continuous and constant mindfulness for the whole day. We cannot expect any meditator to have continuous and constant mindfulness for ten days. But, he must try to have continuous and constant mindfulness for the whole day, as much as possible.

Then gradually mindfulness becomes continuous, constant, and powerful.

Then the mind becomes concentrated more and more deeply.

Then he can overcome these hindrances and also the mental defilements.

Then the mind becomes free from all hindrances and mental defilements. It is purified, quite purified from the hindrances. But this state of being purified may last for about, say, ten minutes, twenty minutes or thirty minutes. About ten minutes of purification is enough to have the insight knowledge that pene-

trates into the specific characteristic and general characteristics of the body-mind process, of mental and physical phenomena.

## **Purification of mind is the second stage of purity**

So, purification of mind is the second stage of purity in the course of our *vipassanā* meditation, mindfulness meditation.

The first purification is the purification of morality, moral conduct. We call it *sīla visuddhi*. The second one is the purification of mind, *citta visuddhi*. Unless you attain some degree of *citta visuddhi*, purity of mind, you can't realise any mental or physical processes as they really are. Only when you have some degree of purity of mind, can you distinguish between mental processes and physical processes. This must be realised through your personal experience, not by theory.

When you contemplate on the rise and fall of the abdomen making mental notes, "rising-falling, rising-falling", you should try to be aware of the very beginning of the rising movement up to the end of it. You should follow the process of the rising movement with your noting mind very closely and precisely up to the end of it. In the same way, when you observe the falling movement, you should be aware of the very beginning of the falling movement up to the end of it, following the process of the falling movement with your mind very closely and precisely.

## **Follow the process of the rising and falling movement very closely and precisely**

In the beginning of the practice, even though you try to follow the process of the rising movement and the falling movement very closely and precisely, you can't do it because your mind is not familiar with the practice. And also, your breathing is not

regular. Sometimes you take a vigorous breath, sometimes you take a quick breath, because you are not satisfied with the movement of the abdomen. You want to make it more distinct, more predominant, so that you can easily concentrate on it. So, the breathing is not regular. You should try to make the breathing normal and natural and steady. When the breathing is balanced and steady, then you are able to observe the rising movement and falling movement attentively and closely. Then you notice that the mind goes out.

Because you can very closely observe the process of the rising and falling movement, you know that there's a thought or that the mind is wandering. At first, you are unable to note the rising-falling steadily. Most of the time you do not know that the mind is thinking or wandering. Only after the end of a wandering mind do you come to realise, "My mind has wandered. My mind has thought about something" and so on. But, though you know that you have had a wandering mind or a thought, as soon as you know that you had a wandering thought, you should note, you should train yourself to note, "wandering, wandering-thinking, thinking" and so on, as a training for about four or five times.

Later on you are able to observe the rising-falling movement well and steadily, attentively to a certain extent. When the mind goes out, sometimes it is after going out that you come to realise that it had gone out. Then you can observe it, "going, going-thinking, thinking-wandering, wandering", and so on. Whenever the mind goes out, you should observe it as soon as you know it. Whenever the mind thinks about something else, you should observe it as soon as you know it.

In the chapter on *cittānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna*, mindfulness of consciousness in the discourse of Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta, the Four Foundations of Mindfulness, the Buddha said, "When the mind wanders, then you should know it as 'wandering, wandering'. When the mind thinks about something else, you should know the mind, making mental notes, 'thinking, thinking'", and

so on. Why does the Buddha teach us to be mindful of the mind which is wandering or which is thinking or distracted? Because he wants us to realise the wandering mind, thinking mind in its true nature. When the mind is realised as just a natural process of mentality, we do not identify the mind with a person or being.

## **The mind is just a natural process of mentality**

Why? Because we know that the mind is just a natural process of mentality. It is neither a person nor a being. What is it then? It is just a natural process of mentality. So, we don't have any idea of a person or a being regarding this wandering mind or thinking mind.

Then we don't react to this object, the wandering mind, the thought process. Then we accept it as it is. When we accept it as it is, we do not react to it.

Then we don't have either aversion or desire. With this, aversion and desire, the two hindrances, have been destroyed through the realisation of the wandering mind or thinking mind as just natural processes of mental phenomena as they really are.

That's why we have to observe whenever the mind wanders, whenever the mind goes out, or whenever the mind thinks about something else.

For beginners sometimes it is difficult to observe or to be mindful of the thought process. As soon as they know that there is a thought, they bring the noting mind back to the primary object consciously or unconsciously. If they train themselves to observe or to be mindful of the thought process, they will be successful. Even though the meditator observes this thought process attentively and energetically, but when the thinking mind is more powerful than the noting mind, then the thinking mind keeps on. It is dwelling for, say, about five seconds, half a minute,

a minute, and so on. In such a case the meditator may bring the mind back to the primary object of meditation.

But such a case is very rare, I think. Whenever the mind goes out, if you observe it attentively, energetically, and somewhat quickly, then the noting mind becomes powerful and overpowers the thought process. As a result, the thought process becomes weak and then stops. In some cases, some of the meditators enjoy thinking, wandering, imagining. If they enjoy the thinking mind, the wandering mind, the imagining mind, or the imagination, they can't overcome it. Later on they become restless because of these mental states. In such a case we should leave *vipassanā* meditation, mindfulness meditation, alone and switch our mind to loving kindness meditation, *mettā* meditation.

## **Sometimes we should practise *mettā***

You may have some experience in developing loving kindness meditation, *mettā* meditation. When we develop *mettā* meditation, the mind is easily concentrated to a certain extent, but not very deep. When the mind becomes concentrated to a certain extent, we feel calm, tranquil, and serene.

If we proceed with the loving kindness meditation, the mind becomes more and more deeply concentrated and we feel more tranquillity, serenity and calmness.

When we think that we have enough concentration, serenity, and tranquillity we should switch to *vipassanā* meditation, mindfulness meditation.

It may take about fifteen minutes, thirty minutes, or sometimes an hour, to concentrate the mind by means of *mettā* meditation. But we should do it until we have attained some degree of concentration, tranquillity, and serenity of mind.

Then we should switch to *vipassanā* meditation by being aware of, first of all, the rising-falling, and so on. In this way, restlessness, despair, depression, or strain and stress, can be

overcome through the development of loving kindness meditation. Sometimes we should practise this for one sitting or two sittings and during walking too. It is very helpful to concentrate our mind on the objects of *vipassanā* meditation, mental processes and physical processes. One day, I may have time to explain how to practise *mettā* meditation.

## **The hindrances are the enemy of concentration**

A distracted wandering mind, thinking mind, imagination, ideas, opinions, mental images, analysing, criticizing, thinking about, reasoning, reflecting; all these are hindrances. It is called *uddhacca-kukkucca nīvaraṇa*. When you have these mental states or emotional states in your mind, you are not able to concentrate your mind. So the hindrances are the enemy of concentration. You must not accept them. As soon as you know that you have one of these mental states in your mind, you must observe it until it has disappeared. When you deal with wandering mind, thinking mind, thoughts, ideas, opinions, or imagination, your noting mind should be attentive, energetic and somewhat quick.

## **Too much effort makes the mind dispersed and distracted**

Not very quickly, but somewhat quickly. If you note any thought, idea, or imagination very quickly, like this, “thinking, thinking, thinking, thinking, thinking, thinking, thinking”, you will become restless, you will become scattered. You can’t concentrate well. The commentary to the Pāḷi text says, “Too much effort makes the mind dispersed and distracted”. It is right. If you note very quickly, “thinking, thinking, thinking, thinking, think-

ing, thinking, thinking”, you have to put too much effort into the noting.

Then the mind is not concentrated on the object of meditation. It goes astray because you are too eager to attain concentration, because you put too much effort in the noting.

You should be careful that you do not note the thoughts very quickly, but the noting should be somewhat quick. In other words: steady effort should be put into the noting of the thoughts.

Then, the noting mind gradually becomes more and more powerful and the thinking mind becomes weaker and weaker until it stops.

In this way, you can expel the hindrance of restlessness and remorse. Then the mind becomes concentrated and purified from hindrances. Only when the noting mind is purified from defilements or the hindrances insight knowledge that arises together with concentration becomes sharp and penetrating. Only then it can penetrate into the true nature of bodily and mental processes, as they really are.

In other words, only when the mind is well concentrated, deeply concentrated, on the object of meditation, insight knowledge that arises together with concentration realises the specific characteristics or general characteristics of mental and physical phenomena. This is called *vipassanā ñāṇa*.

## **Appropriate levels of concentration for insight**

When we say “*vipassanā*”, it includes both mindfulness and insight because without mindfulness no insight arises. When you are mindful of any mental or physical process, then you get concentration and insight. In the Burmese language, we use the word “shoo-ti”. “Shoo” means mindfulness, “ti” means insight. So, *vipassanā* means “the mindful penetration of the three char-

acteristics of *anicca*, *dukkha*, and *anatta* of mental and physical phenomena. If you are not mindful of mental and physical phenomena you are not able to realise them or you are not able to have the insight that penetrates into the true nature of mental and physical phenomena.

Even though our concentration is deep enough, but if our aim is not to realise mental and physical processes, then we can't do it. The aim of *vipassanā* meditation is to realise bodily and mental phenomena as they really are. However, the aim of *samatha* meditation is to attain a higher degree of concentration, not to realise any mental and physical processes. So, though a *samatha* meditator has attained the fifth stage of deep concentration, higher concentration (*jhāna*), he is not able to realise any mental and physical phenomena because his purpose is not insight but deep concentration of mind only.

In some cases, when our mind is too deeply concentrated on the object of meditation we are unable to realise any mental or physical processes, because the mind is too one-pointed.

This concentration is called too deep concentration which does not enable a meditator to realise bodily and mental phenomena. But, too deep concentration is a very rare case. Yes. No meditator here has too deep concentration! So, do not worry about it.

## **Five mental faculties which a yogi must be possessed of**

There are the five mental faculties which a Yogi must be possessed of. Each of these mental faculties is to be kept in balance and made sharp and strong. The Visuddhi magga, a commentary to the Pāḷi texts, explains the five mental faculties:

1. Firm faith in the Dhamma. It is called *saddhā* in Pāḷi, *śraddhā* in Sanskrit.

2. Strenuous effort. We call it *virīya*. In some cases it is known as *padhāna*.
3. Firm, constant and continuous mindfulness, *sati* in Pāli.
4. Deep concentration, *samādhi*.
5. Insight, or enlightenment, *paññā*.

*Saddhā, virīya, sati, samādhi, paññā*; these are the five mental faculties which a Yogi must be possessed of. And all these faculties should be kept in balance and be made sharp and strong.

## **How this applies when observing rise and fall of the abdomen**

When we realise any mental process or physical process such as the rising movement and falling movement of the abdomen, in the beginning we know that our abdomen rises and falls. Then, what we know is: there's a person whose abdomen rises and falls. We have the idea of a person or a being concerning the rise and fall of the abdomen. We do not discern the specific characteristic of the wind element, *vāyo dhātu*. So, we identify the rising-falling movement of the abdomen as a person, "My abdomen rises and it falls back". When, because of enough effort, the mindfulness becomes clearer and sharper and the concentration becomes deeper, the noting mind becomes concentrated on the rising-falling movement of the abdomen to a certain extent. Then we come to realise the rising movement as a physical process and also the falling movement as a physical process. We do not pay any attention to the form of the abdomen or the form of the body. What we are realising at that time is just the physical process of the rising movement and the physical process of the falling movement. The mental process that knows it realises it.

Here we come to differentiate between the mental process and the physical process without being conscious of the abdomi-

nal movement or the form of the body, because our mind is solely concentrated on the movement, the process of the movement. Then we do not have any idea of an I or a you, a person or a being. At that moment, then what is there? It is just the physical process of the rising movement, the physical process of the falling movement, and the mental process that knows it as it is. This is called insight that realises or penetrates into the true nature of the rising movement and the falling movement and the mind that notes it.

To make this insight arise in this way, we need a concentrated mind, some degree of concentration. If the mind is not well concentrated on the movement of the abdomen, we are not able to realise this dual process in this way. Because the mind is well concentrated on the movement of the abdomen, we come to realise that it is just the natural process of the rising movement and the falling movement and the mental process of the mind that notes it. So, to have insight, we need some degree of deep concentration. To have deep concentration, we need constant and continuous, clear and strong mindfulness. Even though it is not yet continuous and constant for the whole day, it must be clear and powerful. So, we need clear and powerful mindfulness to attain deep concentration of mind.

To have a clear and powerful mindfulness, what we need is enough effort in the practice, in the noting. Strenuous effort should be put in the noting, in the practice. If the effort is slack or weak mindfulness cannot be powerful and clear. Only when the mental effort becomes powerful it enables a meditator to be mindful of whatever arises in body and mind attentively, very precisely, and closely.

To put strenuous effort into the practice, what we need is strong faith or confidence in the technique or the Dhamma expounded by the Buddha, especially in the technique we are now practising.

Because we have strong faith in the technique, then we put strenuous effort into the practice.

When we are mindful of any mental and physical processes with strenuous effort, which means attentively, energetically, precisely and closely, then mindfulness becomes powerful.

When mindfulness becomes powerful and clear, then the mind becomes more and more concentrated on the object which is observed.

When the mind is deeply concentrated on the object of meditation, it is free from all hindrances such as sense desire, ill-will, aversion, and so on.

When the mind becomes purified, the insight knowledge that arises together with concentration becomes sharp and penetrating.

Then it penetrates into the true nature of the body-mind process. When we note the rise and fall it penetrates into the physical process of the movement, the rising movement and the falling movement, and the mental process that knows the object.

A meditator must have these five mental faculties balanced, sharp, and strong. They are: strong faith, strenuous effort, clear and powerful mindfulness or constant mindfulness, deep concentration, and insight or enlightenment. In Pāḷi: *saddhā, viriya, sati, samādhi, paññā*. They are called the five *indriyas*, “five mental faculties which a Yogi must be endowed with”. These five mental faculties are related to each other as cause and effect.

What is the basic cause? *Saddhā*, strong faith in the Dhamma and the technique of meditation. When *saddhā* is strong enough, then it causes strenuous effort to be mindful of the object.

When *viriya* becomes strenuous, or strong enough, then the mindfulness becomes clear, powerful and continuous.

When mindfulness becomes clear, powerful constant, and continuous, the mind is deeply concentrated on the object of meditation.

When the mind is deeply concentrated on the object of meditation, there arises insight knowledge that realises the specific characteristics of bodily and mental phenomena. That is *vipassanāñāṇa*.

With practice we attain the insight knowledges one stage after another until we have attained the thirteenth stage of insight. Then we come to realise the cessation of all kinds of suffering with the attainment of path knowledge. This is also called enlightenment. We can also say we have become enlightened at the end of all thirteen stages of insight knowledge, if we have attained all of them.

In this way, you can attain the cessation of all kinds of suffering in this existence. What you need is to be endowed with the five mental faculties: *Saddhā*, *virīya*, *sati*, *samādhi*, and *paññā*.

May all of you be possessed of these five mental faculties, balanced and strong enough, and attain the cessation of suffering.

# Purification of mind, contd.

Today is the 4th January 1992, the 8th day of our meditation retreat. We will continue our Dhamma talk about the five mental faculties.

A Yogi must be endowed with these five mental faculties: strong faith, strenuous effort, constant and powerful mindfulness, deep concentration, and insight and enlightenment (*saddhā, viriya, sati, samādhi, paññā*). All five faculties must be strong and sharp so that a meditator can achieve his goal, says the “Visuddhi magga Aṭṭhakathā”, the “Visuddhi magga” commentary. There are nine ways to sharpen and to strengthen these five mental faculties listed in the commentary. But here I will deal with only two or three ways to strengthen your mental faculties.

The first way of sharpening the mental faculties is: when you practise *vipassanā* meditation and you are mindful of mental and physical processes, you must bear in mind that with deep concentration you will be able to realise the dissolution of every mental and physical process which is observed. None of the mental and physical processes is permanent. None of the mental and physical processes lasts very long. So, every mental state, physical state, or emotional process arises and passes away instantly. When it arises, it instantly dissolves. So, when our concentration is deep enough, you will be able to realise the dissolu-

tion of every mental and physical phenomenon. With that view in mind, you should practise *vipassanā* meditation, mindfulness meditation.

That is one way to make the mental faculties sharp and strong. If you believe in the ever-changing nature of mental and physical phenomena, you'll be able to easily observe and realise the dissolution of mental and physical phenomena which are observed. Then your *saddhā*, firm or strong faith, becomes stronger. *Viriya* also becomes stronger, mindfulness becomes more constant, more continuous, and powerful, concentration becomes deeper, insight becomes more penetrating, and so on. In this way, the five mental faculties of a yogi are strong and sharp. The commentary uses the word *tikkha*. *Tikkha* here means sharp.

The second way is: You must take the practice very respectfully. If you do not take it respectfully then you don't put enough effort into the noting, into the practice. It is essential for us to be respectful so as to realise these body-mind processes in their true nature and destroy all defilements to achieve the cessation of suffering. For the attainment of Nibbāna, to practise mindfulness meditation, *vipassanā* meditation, is very important. Bear in your mind that this mindfulness meditation leads to the cessation of suffering. It is very important for you to live happily and peacefully. In this way, take it respectfully. Then you will put enough effort into the noting, into the practice. This is called *sātaccakiriyāya sampādeti* in Pāḷi.

The third way is *sātaccakiriyāya sampādeti* in Pāḷi. *Sātaccakiriyā* here means developing the mind constantly and continuously. *Sampādeti* means when mindfulness is constantly and continuously developed, then your five mental faculties become sharp and strong. To make mindfulness become continuous and constant, you should be aware of whatever arises in your body and mind as it really occurs from moment to moment. You have to be mindful of every moment. Then mindfulness becomes continuous and constant. When

mindfulness becomes continuous and constant, concentration becomes deeper and insight becomes more and more penetrating. Then it realises the processes of mental and physical phenomena as just natural processes, which are arising and passing away one after another; arising and passing away from moment to moment. In this way, constant and continuous mindfulness makes your five mental faculties strong and sharp. If you use all these three ways of sharpening the five mental faculties, it is enough for you to achieve your goal, to attain the cessation of suffering.

## **The twin faculties must be kept in balance**

Among these five mental faculties, the twin faculties must be kept in balance. These are: *saddhā* and *paññā*, *virīya* and *samādhi*. Faith and insight (here it means wisdom), strenuous effort and deep concentration. These mental faculties must be kept in balance so that you can easily and comfortably realise the true nature of mental and material phenomena. The commentary says that if *saddhā* (faith) is strong and *paññā* (wisdom) is weak, then that person may be credulous.

He may easily believe in what should not be believed, even incredible things, ideas, or opinions. He may believe because he is prone to faith. If he easily believes in what should not be believed, any incredible things or ideas, he may take the wrong path which may lead him to distraction. So faith must be balanced with wisdom.

To have some wisdom, he must learn some scriptures, he must listen to some discourses. He must discuss religious teachings with competitive teachers, and so on. In this way, he can have some knowledge of the Dhamma or religious teachings. Because he has some knowledge he won't be easily believe in what should not be believed. Then he is not led to the wrong path. So, he must have some knowledge of the scriptures, some knowl-

edge of the Dhamma or religious teachings. Faith must be balanced with knowledge.

If wisdom is too strong, and knowledge is too wide and too deep, then faith is weak. This leads to thinking, reasoning about anything he has experienced, thinking about his experience, comparing it with his preconceptions. In this way, he may become a crooked man. Then he should read the discourses expounded by the religious teachers to make his faith strong enough. In this way, weak faith should be balanced, with *paññā*, knowledge.

Strong *paññā*, wisdom or knowledge of the scriptures must be kept balanced with strong faith. In this way, he can have some degree of faith in the right path or true Dhamma. If the meditator's concentration is too strong and too deep and effort is too weak, then he can be mindful of any mental or physical process. His mind easily concentrates on the object of meditation because he has much experience. He has practised for about, say, ten days, two weeks, or three weeks, so he can pretty easily concentrate on any mental or physical phenomena.

The longer he sits, the deeper the concentration becomes. His concentration gets into the object more and more deeply. Then that meditator's effort becomes lax and wanes. Because he can concentrate the mind well on the object of meditation, even though he does not put enough effort into the practice, he does not note attentively or steadily. Then effort becomes weaker and weaker. Because there is no driving force in the concentration of mind, the mind becomes dull, heavy, and sluggish. Then the meditator becomes sleepy and he is overwhelmed by the hindrance of sloth and torpor, because of the slackening of effort.

I think none of our meditators experienced this state of mind. Why? Because the concentration is not yet deep enough, strong enough. Why is your concentration not strong enough? Because this is just the beginning of the practice. Eight days, this is the beginning. But there are some meditators who have

attained some degree of deep concentration and the insight that realises mental and physical phenomena in their true nature. There are some meditators who have some degree of deep concentration, not too deep concentration. So, be careful. Do not let your concentration become too deep. When your concentration becomes too deep, sloth and torpor will come to you because the effort becomes less, weaker and weaker. Without striving, the concentration cannot be maintained. Gradually, the concentration becomes weaker and weaker and then it gets into sluggishness, sloth and torpor, and sleepiness. But the remedy is very easy. If you feel that your concentration is deep enough, you put some more effort into the noting. It can be maintained by strenuous effort.

## **If the effort is too much or too strong**

Then again, if effort is too much or too strong and the concentration is too weak, then what will happen to you? The commentary says that if effort is too strong and concentration is weak, you have the danger of distraction and restlessness. It means that you can't concentrate well on the object of meditation because you feel restless and distracted. This has happened to some of the meditators here.

The day before yesterday, one of the meditators had listened to the Dhamma talk in which I said, "When you note thoughts you should note them attentively, energetically, and somewhat quickly, so that your noting mind becomes more powerful than the thinking mind". Do you remember that point? He noted thoughts. His thoughts were too many, but he persistently and perseveringly noted these thoughts very, very quickly. This means, that he put too much effort into the noting of the thoughts. Then his effort (*viriyā*) became too strong. He could not concentrate well on the object of meditation, thoughts were going on. He was striving to note them and to make them stop,

but the thoughts were very stubborn. Then he became disappointed and restless. For almost the whole day he became restless and tired. He battled with the restlessness. Then, he felt hot in the whole body, especially in the head. There was also throbbing in the head because of the restlessness. Then he thought he was going mad because he could not get any calmness, tranquility or serenity. He is one of the meditators here, who did not know his defect. This is why this has happened to him.

He wanted to make the mind well concentrated and the thoughts disappear. So he strived, strived and strived, to note more and more attentively and to note more quickly. One of his defects was that he failed to note one point in my Dhamma talk. He missed one word. In my Dhamma talk, I said, “If you note thoughts, you should note them attentively, energetically, and somewhat quickly”. But he missed the word “somewhat”. So, being greedy to make thoughts disappear, he strived to note these thoughts more and more quickly and he became more and more restless. Now he is all right because he knows what he missed.

Too strong effort makes the mind restless, distracted. Excessive effort must be balanced with concentration. How? He must reduce his effort. He should make his mind stable and steady, reducing his effort and steadily observing what is happening there, any mental state or physical process. The proper attitude towards his practice and his experience is just to be mindful of whatever arises in his mind and body as it really occurs at the moment. That’s all. He should be mindful steadily, without too much eagerness, without too much greed. When the effort becomes steady, he feels comfortable and happy with it. Then the mind becomes gradually concentrated more and more. In this way, he can attain deep concentration by reducing his effort, being aware of what is happening calmly and comfortably. Then his concentration becomes deeper and deeper.

## Mindfulness can never be too strong

In this way, effort must be balanced with concentration. But out of these five mental faculties, the one that can never be said to be too strong is mindfulness. The commentary said, “Mindfulness can never be said to be too strong”. When you practice *vipassanā* meditation, noting attentively and energetically, for a day and night, say 24 hours, mindfulness becomes more and more continuous, more powerful. Then you cannot say, “My mindfulness is too strong“. The more continuous mindfulness becomes, the deeper the concentration and the more penetrating insight becomes, the more you realise the body-mind processes in their true nature. So, mindfulness can never be said to be too strong. That’s why I told you to strive to have continuity of mindfulness for the whole day, constant and continuous mindfulness for the whole day.

One of the meditators here asked me, “Sayadaw, if a meditator practises this *vipassanā* meditation strenuously and intensively for two months, can his mindfulness become continuous and constant?” I told this Yogi, “If he practises intensively as he is instructed by his teacher, he is certain to have constant and continuous mindfulness for the whole day”.

If you do not believe in what I say, come to Chanmyay Yeiktha, my meditation centre and practice for two months intensively. Then you will know that this is true through your personal experience. Constant and continuous mindfulness is vitally needed to make progress in your meditation. That’s why you have to lay stress on the awareness of the daily activities in more and more detail.

When I conducted a two-month meditation retreat near Oxford in England, about 18 meditators participated in this retreat. One American monk, about 30 years old, participated in the retreat. He hadn’t time enough to attend for the two months because he was doing his doctorate. He had only one month. From the day he was instructed to meditate and listened to the dis-

courses on the practical exercises of *vipassanā*, from that time on he very carefully observed the daily activities, such as sitting or bowing down, sitting down, rising from the seat, stretching of the arms, bending of the arms. At that time he lived at the Chithurst monastery, the Venerable Sumedho's monastery. His name was Kittisara. He never missed any activity or any movement. After one month of meditation he had reached the eleventh stage of insight knowledge, the insight knowledge of equanimity.

The mind is very stable in that stage. Neither happiness nor unhappiness affect the mind. Neither *sukha* nor *dukkha* affect the mind. The mind stays in the middle. So, it is called the insight knowledge of equanimity. He had reached that stage in one month of meditation. When he was about to leave the retreat, he came to me to say farewell and to pay his respects. Before he paid respect to me by bowing down, he said, "Venerable Sir, without awareness of daily activities, meditation is nothing". You should remember that sentence, "Venerable Sir, without awareness of daily activities, meditation is nothing". He said this through his personal experience. Because he strived to be mindful of all daily activities as much as possible in more and more detail, he had reached the eleventh stage of insight knowledge. It is difficult for a meditator to reach this stage in one month. Because he had continuous and constant mindfulness for the whole day by being aware of all daily activities in more and more detail, he attained this stage of equanimity.

Now, we also expect some of our meditators to reach that stage of insight knowledge of equanimity. This is why we conduct one month of meditation here. There may be many meditators who will reach that stage of equanimity.

Meditators like that American monk Kittisara, who believe in the value of awareness of daily activities, will strive to be mindful of all daily activities as much as possible, slowing down their actions and movements. Then they can have detailed awareness or mindfulness of daily activities. Then their mindfulness becomes

continuous, constant, and powerful. Then they can be expected to reach that stage of insight knowledge when the retreat is over. Then we shall see.

These are the five mental faculties, which are called *pañc'indriyas* in Pāli. Every meditator must be possessed of these mental faculties and make them strong and sharp, and keep them balanced. If you are able to make these five mental faculties strong enough, you can drive out any of the hindrances which come into your mind. When the hindrances are driven out, then your mind is purified from these hindrances, because the mind is not disturbed by ill-will, sloth and torpor, sensual desire, restlessness and remorse, or sceptical doubt.

Today one of the meditators told me about her doubt. In the last Dhamma talk, she said she rightly understood the five hindrances. Out of these five hindrances she has the last one. What's that? Sceptical doubt. She doesn't have sceptical doubt, but she has doubt. Not about the Dhamma, but about her ability to make progress in her meditation, she said. What should I say, what should I remark about her doubt? You see, because she has weak effort in her practice, she doubts about her ability to make progress. If she puts enough effort into her practice, she need not have doubt about her ability to make progress. So, I told her, "If you practise this meditation intensively and put enough effort into the practice, you need not have doubts about your ability to make progress". She is sure to reach any higher stage of insight knowledge, maybe the thirteenth stage of insight knowledge. Not only she, but also the other meditators too, if they put enough effort in the practice, making mindfulness constant and continuous for the whole day by being aware of all daily activities. By slowing down all actions and movements, they can reach the thirteenth insight knowledge of equanimity.

This is the purification of mind, *citta visuddhi*. When the mind is well concentrated on the object of meditation by being aware of all mental and physical processes very attentively, then it is free from all kinds of hindrances. Then it becomes pu-

rified. When you have attained the purification of mind, *citta vi-suddhi*, then you begin to attain the insight that penetrates first of all into the specific characteristics of mental and physical phenomena. And you also begin to distinguish between *nāma* and *rūpa*, mental phenomena and physical phenomena, because the insight that arises together with the concentrated and purified mind, becomes penetrating, sharp, and powerful. So, you begin to realise the specific or individual characteristics of mental and physical phenomena, *nāma* and *rūpa*.

Suppose you practise walking meditation by being aware of the very beginning of the lifting movement of the foot, following the process of the movement through the whole step, with the mind very closely and precisely observing. Gradually your mind becomes concentrated more and more. That is if you do not look around here and there. Even though you strive to put enough effort into the noting of the movement of the foot, if you very often look around, what happens? The concentration very often breaks and becomes weak. Then it cannot be concentrated on the movement of the foot. So, when the desire to look around arises, note it until it has disappeared. In this way one becomes concentrated on the movement of the foot gradually.

First of all, his foot becomes light. His stepping is very much satisfying. He is pleased with his stepping. Because it becomes light, he enjoys it, but not very much. Why? Because if he enjoys it very much, his attachment makes him trouble. So, he is pleased with his stepping. Then he comes to realise: there is the lifting movement and there is the mind that notes it. There is the pushing movement and there is the mind that notes it. There is the dropping movement and there is the mind that notes it. In this way he comes to differentiate between the noting mind, the mental process, and the movement of the foot, the physical process.

Here, at this stage of experience, he is still aware of the form of the foot and the form of the body, but he differentiates between the noting mind and the movement of the foot. The not-

ing mind is *nāma*, the movement of the foot is *rūpa*. Then he comes to differentiate between *nāma* and *rūpa*. When this insight becomes more and more powerful he loses awareness of the form of the foot. What he is realising at that moment is just the not-ing mind and the movement of the foot. Sometimes, when he proceeds with strenuous effort, his concentration may become deeper. Then he may feel his body like a robot. That means the removal of the idea of a personality, individuality.

May all of you strive your best to achieve your goal and accordingly attain the cessation of suffering, Nibbāna.



# Purification of mind, contd.

Today is the fifth of January 1992, the ninth day of our meditation retreat. We will continue yesterday's Dhamma talk. Yesterday we dealt with purification of mind.

As to purification of mind we have explained the five mental faculties of a meditator. Purification of mind is the cross-roads for *vipassanā* meditators.

## Purification of mind: *samatha*

*Samatha* meditators also have to attain purification of moral conduct or purification of morality, *sīlavissuddhi*, followed by purification of mind, *citta visuddhi*. Both kinds of meditators are to attain these two purifications. For a *samatha* meditator, if he has attained purification of mind, it means that he has attained *jhāna* concentration. Either *jhāna* concentration or *upacāra* concentration, access concentration, is known as purification of mind for *samatha* meditators. When a *samatha* meditator has attained very deep concentration, it is called absorption concentration. Absorption concentration is known as *appanā samādhi*, it is called *jhāna*.

*Jhāna* means fixedness concentration because the mind is fixed to the object of meditation very firmly. That state of mind,

that state of consciousness is also called *jhāna* concentration. If this state of concentration is attained by a *samatha* meditator, his mind is totally absorbed into the object of meditation. So, it is called *appanā samādhī*, absorption concentration. Both absorption and fixedness concentration are known as *jhāna* concentration.

Before a *jhāna* meditator has attained absorption concentration, he has attained very deep concentration which is close to the absorption. It is called *upacāra samādhī*, neighbourhood concentration. Because this concentration is very near to the *jhāna* concentration, his mind is quite purified from hindrances. So, he has attained purification of mind, *citta visuddhi*.

If the *samatha* meditator has attained absorption concentration, his mind is purified from all kinds of hindrances, so he has attained purification of mind, *citta visuddhi*.

Therefore a *samatha* meditator can attain purification of mind, either by access concentration or absorption concentration.

Though he has attained these two kinds of concentration, he proceeds with the *samatha* meditation to attain higher and higher concentration of mind. He proceeds with his meditation, so that he can attain supernormal powers, such as flying in the sky, walking on the water, going through the mountains, and creating many bodies of a person, and so on. But he is not able to realise any mental or physical processes, because his aim of meditation is to attain deep concentration and supernormal power.

So, *samatha* meditators can attain the first two purifications. There are seven kinds of purification. But a *samatha* meditator only attains the first two.

## ***Vipassanā* meditation**

*Vipassanā* meditation is of two types, *samathapubbaṅgama vipassanā*, and *suddha vipassanā*.

*Samathapubbaṅgamaṃ vipassanā* means insight meditation preceded by *samatha* meditation.

*Suddha vipassanā* means pure insight meditation, the pure insight meditation without *samatha* meditation preceding.

*Samathapubbaṅgamaṃ vipassanā* was practised in the time of the Buddha by those who had ample time to devote to meditation, say, six months, one year, two years, twenty years or thirty years. First of all, they practised *samatha* meditation to attain *jhāna* concentration, absorption.

## The *jhānas*

*Jhāna* concentration is of four stages in accordance with the Suttanta. There are eight attainments, *aṭṭhasamāpatti*. It means that there are four form *jhāna* concentrations and the other four are formless *jhāna* concentrations. That is the literal translation of the word. To explain it for easy understanding, the form *jhāna* concentration means *jhāna* concentration based on both physical and mental phenomena. This is called form *jhāna* concentration. It has four stages.

Formless *jhāna* concentration means the *jhāna* concentration on mere mental processes, without physical phenomena. In other words, we may say that the *jhāna* concentration based on physical phenomena is called form *jhāna* concentration. The concentration based on mere mental processes is called formless *jhāna* concentration.

In the *samathapubbaṅgama vipassanā*, the insight meditation preceded by *samatha* meditation, first of all he practises *samatha* meditation such as respiration meditation, breathing meditation, or he concentrates the mind on some devices, like *kaṣiṇa*, *asubha*, and so on. The point is to have only one single object of meditation. Whatever object it may be, you have to concentrate on it. Whenever the mind goes out, bring the mind back to the object of meditation. Whenever the mind goes out, you need

not follow the mind, but you bring it back to the primary object and focus on it. In this way, he gradually attains a concentrated mind.

When his concentration is very deep, it is called access concentration or neighbourhood concentration. When he proceeds with his practice, in two or three moments of consciousness he attains *jhāna* concentration, absorption concentration. Then, he does not want to proceed with his *samatha* meditation. He wants to change from *samatha* to *vipassanā* meditation, based on either access concentration or absorption concentration which he has attained by means of *samatha* meditation. He focusses the mind on any mental or physical process and then contemplates on it, say, such as rising-falling, any kind of sensation or feeling, or the lifting, pushing, dropping, touching, pressing of the foot. He takes any mental process or physical process as the object of meditation after he has attained either access concentration or absorption concentration.

Such a meditator is called a meditator who practises *vipassanā* meditation preceded by *samatha* meditation, concentration meditation, or serenity meditation. He may strive his best to attain either access concentration or *jhāna* concentration, say, for a month or two, six months, one year, two years or three years. Because he has a lot of time to spend on *samatha* meditation. Say, after three years he has attained both access concentration and absorption concentration, *jhāna* concentration. Then he wants to change from *samatha* to *vipassanā*, from serenity meditation to insight meditation, based on either access concentration or *jhāna* concentration. He must be mindful of any mental process or physical process as it really occurs. This is called: *samatha-pubbaṅgama vipassanā*, insight meditation preceded by *samatha* meditation.

Yes. You had better to practise *samatha* meditation first and then *vipassanā* meditation later when you have time enough, at least six month. I think that some of you may have at least

six month to spend on meditation. Then you can spend three months on *samatha*, then, another three months on *vipassanā*.

When a *samatha* meditator has attained either access concentration or absorption concentration his mind is quite purified from hindrances, so he has attained purification of mind, *citta visuddhi*, the second one. If he switches his mind to any mental or physical process as insight meditation, he is able to realise any mental process or physical process which is observed as it really is. But he would take about three months to attain this purification of mind, *citta visuddhi*.

## **Pure insight meditation, *suddha vipassanā***

Then pure insight meditation, *suddha vipassanā*. *Suddha vipassanā* means nothing else than what you are practising now.

Why? Because you did not practise *samatha* meditation first. Did you practise it at the beginning of the retreat? No. You went straight to *vipassanā*, insight meditation, by being aware of rising-falling, lifting, moving, dropping touching, and so on. The insight meditation you are practising now is the one that is not preceded by *samatha*, so it is called pure insight meditation, *suddha vipassanā*. Why do you have to practise this *suddha vipassanā*, pure insight meditation? We don't have ample time to spend on meditation. We have only how long? Five days, ten days, two weeks, three weeks, four weeks, that's all. If we practise *samatha* meditation from the beginning of the retreat, we have to strive our best to attain access concentration at the end of the retreat. But, it is also not sure.

Here, access concentration means when your noting mind is concentrated well on the object of meditation without wandering or thinking about something else for, say, about one hour or two. Then you can say that you have attained access concentration. But what is the name of the concentration which you have attained by being aware of all mental and physical phenomena

by means of pure insight meditation? How do you call this kind of concentration you attained? It is called *khaṇika samādhi*, momentary concentration.

## ***Khaṇika samādhi* means momentary concentration**

*Khaṇika* means momentary, *samādhi* means concentration, so *khaṇika samādhi* means momentary concentration. When you concentrate on the rising movement, then you note rising. As long as the rising movement exists, your mind concentrates on it. But the rising movement is not very long. Normally, if a meditator breathes in and out normally, the rising movement lasts for about two seconds, and the falling movement also lasts for about two seconds. This is for a normal person. But there are some meditators who have a short breath. Then, how long does it last? Maybe half of this time.

This is why some of the meditators cannot find their rising-falling movement, in order to concentrate on it. Such a meditator, who has a short breath, very easily gets tired. There are also some meditators who have a long breath. Their rising movements lasts about three seconds or four. They can note, “rising, rising, rising, rising, rising, rising” for five or six times, because their breath is very long. So, normally, the rising movement lasts for about two seconds, then the falling movement for about two seconds. When they note the rising-falling movement, it is, “rising-falling, rising-falling”. They can note thirty times in a minute. But do not try to test it because it will take you some time and your concentration will be disturbed.

Concentrate your mind on the rising movement for about two seconds. Then you note the falling movement with the mind concentrated on the falling movement. Then again, on the rising movement; the mind is not on a single object. It is concentrated on each object of meditation one after another uninterruptedly,

undistractedly, continuously. Then the concentration becomes continuous, constant. Then it is called *appanā samādhi*.

The meaning of momentary concentration is: successive concentration, consecutive concentration, the mind concentrated on each object of meditation one after another. Then it becomes powerful. “Rising-falling, rising-falling”. When you note the rising-falling movement very concentratedly for five minutes or ten minutes at least, then your mind becomes quiet, calm, and tranquil. Then you feel quiet.

Sometimes you feel quiet, serene, and tranquil for about thirty minutes or forty minutes. It means that the mind doesn’t go out very often, but it may go out occasionally, say, in thirty minutes your mind may go out three or four times. But when the mind goes out you know it as soon as it goes out and you note it. The mind stops there and comes back to the primary object. In this way, the mind is concentrated on the object of meditation. When your noting mind is concentrated on each object of meditation successively and consecutively for about thirty minutes, then your mind is purified from hindrances for thirty minutes. Then you have attained *citta visuddhi*, purification of mind.

When the mind is purified from hindrances, the insight knowledge that arises together with the concentrated mind becomes sharp and penetrating. From the time you have attained purification of mind, *citta visuddhi*, gradually you begin to realise mental and physical phenomena in their true nature. It means that you have attained some insight knowledge.

## **Momentary concentration is equal to that of access concentration**

Either access concentration or absorption concentration has the ability to overcome the hindrances. The commentary says that *khaṇika samādhi* has the same ability as access concentration to overcome hindrances. It means that momentary concentration

is equal to that of access concentration which a *samatha* meditator can attain. Both concentrations have the ability to purify the mind from hindrances.

Some Pāḷi scholars hold that access concentration and absorption concentration are attained by *samatha* meditators, so only a *samatha* meditator can attain purification of mind. Because they do not have any knowledge of this momentary concentration, they hold that only *samatha* meditators can attain purification of mind.

It is not so. They do not know *khaṇika samādhī*, momentary concentration. In many places of the scriptures and commentaries *khaṇika samādhī*, momentary concentration is mentioned. You experienced that it is wrong because now you are an insight meditator, you have attained some degree of concentration, momentary concentration, and you are able to purify your mind from hindrances to a certain extent. So, you know it through your experience.

This is just eight days of meditation. If you practise about two weeks or three weeks, then your concentration becomes better, the mind becomes more purified, then you have attained purification of mind to a large extent.

How a meditator concentrates on the four primary material elements

In the commentary to the first text of Abhidhamma, called “Dhammasaṅgaṇī”, *khaṇika samādhī* is well explained. The Visuddhi magga, the text for meditation, describes how a meditator who concentrates on the four primary material elements can attain purification of mind by means of *khaṇika samādhī*, momentary concentration. The four primary material elements are widely known to almost all meditators.

The four primary material elements are:

1. *Paṭhavī dhātu*, the earth element.
2. *Āpo dhātu*, the water element.
3. *Tejo dhātu*, the fire, or temperature element.
4. *Vāyo dhātu*, the wind or air element.

These *dhātus* are named earth, water, fire, and wind as metaphors so we can easily communicate the characteristics of these elements. The characteristics of *paṭhavī dhātu*, for instance, the earth element, are hardness and softness.

Occasionally, you may concentrate on the hardness of your body or softness of your body. Then, you are practising on the four primary material elements.

## **Experiencing the specific elements while walking**

When concentration on the movement of the foot while walking is deep enough, your foot becomes light. You note, “lifting, pushing, dropping, touching, pressing”, as if effortless, as if you do not put any effort, as if the movement is going on of its own accord, and also the mind that notes it. You feel that you need not make any effort to note it because the concentration becomes deeper and deeper. So, there is movement, then the mind notes it, there is pushing movement and the mind notes it. In this way, you feel very comfortable, very happy, you enjoy it, you are very pleased with your walking meditation. You do not want to stop after one hour of walking. You want to proceed with it, say, one and a half hours or two hours, and so on. When the bell is rung, you may be disappointed, because you have to come to the meditation hall to listen to a Dhamma talk (laughs), though you had the good walking.

Because of the deep concentration, you feel your foot is light, your walking is automatic. When you note, “lifting, pushing, dropping, touching, pressing”, you feel there’s are robot walking. You are not a robot. You see it, “lifting, pushing, dropping, touching”, and so on. What does it mean that you feel like a robot? It means that the walking movement is not identified with yourself, with a person or a being, you don’t take it as a person or a being. So, you believe it is a robot which is walking.

Then gradually you are feeling as of walking on a heap of cotton because the form of your feet becomes soft. You feel it soft and also the place where you walk has become soft. When the feeling of the foot is very soft, you do not think, that you are walking on anything which is solid.

Then you feel you are walking on the air. Your foot doesn't seem to touch the ground or the floor. Sometimes you may feel that you are walking two about feet above the ground, just feeling the air.

When you feel this softness under your foot, it means that you experience the specific characteristic of the earth element. Occasionally, you don't feel that your feet are soft. What you experience is the feeling of softness, then there's the mind that knows it. That's all. Then you are not conscious of yourself, your foot, or your bodily form. The insight knowledge that realises the softness of *paṭhavī dhātu* destroys or removes the idea of personality, individuality, *sakkāya diṭṭhi*, and *atta diṭṭhi*.

Then again you note, "lifting, moving, dropping, touching, pressing-intending, lifting, moving, dropping, touching, pressing". Sometimes you feel as if your movement is bouncing. When you lift your foot, your foot suddenly lifts of its own accord. You are surprised by the experience of it because you do not expect it to bounce when lifting.

When you note "pushing", the foot is suddenly pushed forward too much. You cannot control it. There too you are surprised, "Who pushed my foot forward?"

When you put it down, it drops abruptly. You want to drop it very slowly, but it drops down very abruptly. It means that you are realising the pulling movement of *vāyo dhātu*, the wind element.

Sometimes you put the foot down, but then the foot comes up again, it is bouncing. This is *vāyo dhātu*, the wind element. When the wind element is between the foot and the floor, you push the foot down, then it bounces up. You feel, "There is *vāyo dhātu*, the wind element". It means that you have the insight

knowledge of the specific characteristic of the wind element. That insight removes the idea of an I or you, a person, a being. Then, *sakkāya diṭṭhi*, and *atta diṭṭhi* has been removed.

The idea of a personality, an individuality, I or you, self or soul, is the seat of all mental defilements. When you have a seat, you sit on it. When you have the idea of a personality, or an individuality, mental defilements arise dependent on it. This idea of a person, a being, *sakkāya diṭṭhi*, *atta diṭṭhi* is the seat of all mental defilements.

When you don't have a chair, say, you want to sit on a chair, but there is no chair. You think that you have a chair, so you sit on it. But actually, the chair is not there. What happens? Falling backward! So, you must remove the chair conceit so that you don't have defilements. There was the chair, the seat, *sakkāya diṭṭhi*, *atta diṭṭhi*, the idea of a personality, individuality.

May you be able to remove this *sakkāya diṭṭhi*, the idea of a personality or individuality, and achieve your goal.



# Tenth day

Today is the sixth of January 1992. Our retreat has been on for 10 days

Ten days of retreat, of meditation, is nothing to those of who expect to achieve arahantship. In Sri Lanka in the 5th century AD, a Mahāthera called Tissa (*mahāthera* means senior monk in Pāḷi) who was very learned in scripture had more than 10.000 disciples. Some of his disciples attained arahantship, but he himself hadn't yet reached the lowest stage of path knowledge because he hadn't practised meditation. One of his disciples, who was an arahant, reminded him of his neglect of meditation. The Mahāthera felt ashamed and went into a forest with a view of attaining arahantship (the fourth path and fruition knowledge) in three day's time. He went without informing his disciples in the monastery.

He got up very early in the morning and went into the forest to practise meditation. When he had practised meditation for three days, he did not experience anything. He could not even concentrate on the object of meditation very well. But he was persevering, so he continued to practise meditation for three years. Nothing was attained. Then, nine years. Nothing. Then twenty years. Nothing. He did not relax, occasionally he felt depressed. But he didn't give up. He persevered with his practice.

On the thirtieth year of his meditation, around midnight while he was walking, he thought about his meditation from the very beginning to that day. He hadn't attained any stage of path

knowledge, *magga* and *phala*. So, he felt sad and cried. Why did he cry? Over his failure to attain any *magga* or *phala*. One of the deities, who lived in a tree near the walking place wished to help this old monk. She began crying aloud, crying and shouting. The Venerable Mahāthera, the old monk, hearing the deity crying, stopped crying himself and asked, “Who is crying here?”

The deity said, “Venerable Sir, it is me who is crying”.

Then the senior monk asked her, “Why do you cry?”

The deity said, “Seeing and hearing that you were crying, it occurred to me that crying enables a meditator to attain arahantship. That’s why I was crying. Crying must enable a meditator to attain arahantship. So I imitated you to attain arahantship”.

The senior monk felt ashamed and said to himself, “Tissa see, the female deity reviled you, mocked you because you are crying over of the failure to attain arahantship”. Then he became calm because of the shame and practised calmly, steadily. The mind became gradually concentrated, more and more deeply, because he had no sadness and no depression, no stress and strain. The mind became clear and calm because of this deity. This deity was his teacher.

Gradually concentration became deeper and deeper, realising *anicca*, *dukkha*, and *anatta* of all mental and physical phenomena. He attained the first path and fruition, the second path and fruition, the third path and fruition, and finally, the fourth path and fruition knowledge, arahantship.

He had to practise meditation for thirty years to attain arahantship. First of all, he thought that because he was a very learned Mahāthera he would attain arahantship within three days. He failed. But he didn’t go back to the monastery. He continued to practise for three years, nine years, twenty years, twenty-five years. He didn’t go back to the monastery because his aim was to attain arahantship. He persevered. He practised strenuously and intensively until he attained arahantship on the night of his thirtieth year of meditation.

This is why I say ten days of meditation is nothing to those who want to attain arahantship. With a view to attain arahantship in three days he went to the forest and he failed. But he did not relent. He did not go back to the monastery. He proceeded with his journey. In this same way, meditators must copy him, must imitate him without going back home, practising perseveringly and persistently so that you can attain at least the lowest path of *sotāpattimagga*. Not twenty days not thirty days, not sixty days but until you have attained at least the lowest path of enlightenment *maggañāṇa*, path knowledge.

But for me it is not possible to stay until you have attained arahantship. I'll have to go back to Burma. I'll have to be back in Burma on the sixteenth of February. On the seventeenth and eighteenth I take rest. Then on the nineteenth I have to go on a very long journey in the country, delivering discourses and conducting meditation retreats for about one month. All has been set up. So, it is impossible for me to stay here, though you may stay until you have attained arahantship. What I want to point out here is that you should not think ten days of meditation is a long time.

In Burma, some of the younger meditators, seventeen or eighteen year old girls and novices, practise meditation for one month or two, intensively, strenuously. They get up at 3:30 am, practising the whole day without a break. At night, at ten o'clock, they may go back to their dormitory and rest. But some of them don't take rest at ten. They continue to practise until midnight or later. You should also practise in that way, being mindful of all mental and physical processes which are arising at that moment.

## **Mindfulness should be continuous and constant**

As I explained, mindfulness should be continuous and constant at least for a period of time, ten minutes, twenty minutes, or thirty minutes. If mindfulness becomes continuous and constant, concentration becomes better. In these twenty minutes you may discover any new experience, any unusual experience, or any amazing experience in your meditation; in sitting, walking, or in daily activities too. That's why I told you, please be more mindful of more and more daily activities in more and more detail, slowing down all your actions and movements as much as possible. Because constant and continuous mindfulness for at least 10 minutes is very beneficial for a yogi to attain deep concentration and clear insight.

In Sri Lanka there was a Mahāthera, a senior monk, in about the sixth or seventh century AD. He practised mindfulness meditation for three years. Then, one day, some young monks came to him to see him and to pay respect to him. While he was talking with them he quickly lifted his hand up and then he put it down slowly. Then again he lifted it very, very slowly. The commentary describes the story of this mindful monk, but it doesn't say why he lifted his hand. It just says that he lifted his hand very quickly and then he put it down slowly, and then lifted it again very, very slowly and mindfully.

The young monks asked him what he was doing. The venerable monk, said to them, "Bhikkhus, since I began to practise meditation, I haven't done any actions or movements unmindfully. Now, because I was talking to you I forgot to be mindful of the lifting of my hand, so I lifted it quickly. Then, I came to be aware that my hand was lifted unmindfully. So, I put it down slowly and mindfully. Then I lifted it again very, very slowly and very mindfully". The young monks said, "Yes, Venerable Sir, such a meditator as you cannot fail to attain arahantship in a

short time”. Then they went away. He continued his practice. The commentary says this monk attained arahantship within a couple of days.

## **Continuous and constant mindfulness is very important to make progress**

So, you should also remind yourself not to fail to be aware of all daily activities here. When you do any action unmindfully, you should train yourself to be mindful of doing it again and again, repeatedly. Then, you are hopeful to attain arahantship or at least the lowest path knowledge. That’s why I repeatedly tell you to be mindful of all daily activities in more detail, slowing down all actions and movements. Continuous and constant mindfulness is a very important factor to make progress in concentration as well as in insight.

One of the meditators told me today in the interview, that before she had had doubt about the benefits of awareness of daily activities and walking meditation. Then she had some unusual experience in walking meditation as well as in daily activities. Her doubts passed away. Why? This doubt (one of the five hindrances) was driven away by her personal experience of meditation by being aware of daily activities and observing very precisely the movement of the foot when she was walking.

## **Noting is not meditation**

When you observe every movement of the foot very precisely and closely, you experience the specific characteristic of the wind element or air element, that is movement or motion, vibration, extension, contraction. When you lift the foot, you note, “lifting”, observing the very beginning of the lifting movement until the end of it very precisely and closely. In a day or two your concentration becomes deeper. But here you should be careful:

Just noting or labelling is not beneficial. Labelling or noting is not meditation. What is important is to know the movement of the foot, to be aware of the movement of the foot very closely and precisely. Noting, “lifting, pushing, dropping, touching, pressing”, and so on is not important, but it can help you to concentrate the mind on movement of the foot closely and precisely. That’s why we have to use it.

## **Noting will help you to concentrate your mind on the movement**

There may be some occasions when you are able to observe the movement of the foot, to be aware the movement of the foot, precisely and closely without noting. Then you should do it without noting. But when you are observing any mental process or physical process without noting it is natural for every meditator to have the effort relaxing, subsiding, and become weak. When effort becomes weak, concentration becomes weak and the mind goes out very often. Because you haven’t put enough effort in the noting, the mind doesn’t grip the object of meditation. It is not attentively aware of the movement of the foot. So it goes out and wanders and concentration becomes weak. If you experience this, you should note, “lifting, pushing, dropping-lifting, pushing, dropping” attentively, energetically, and deeply.

This noting will help you concentrate your mind on the movement of the abdomen. So, noting is not indispensable in meditation, but it is necessary in some cases. The beginning of the practice of meditation needs noting because you are not able to concentrate your mind on the object of meditation without labelling or noting. Only when you have attained, say, the fourth stage of insight knowledge, or the sixth stage of insight knowledge or the eleventh stage of insight knowledge, you need not label or note. It depends on you, you know yourself.

## Being aware of the movement of the foot

When you are walking by being aware of the movement of the foot and concentration becomes deep, you feel a series of very tiny broken movements of lifting. In the same way, a series of many broken movements of pushing, dropping and pressing. What you are realising is the specific characteristic of the wind or air element. When your insight penetrates into the specific characteristic of the wind element and becomes mature, then you are not aware of your leg or your foot or your bodily form. At that time what you are realising is the movement of the foot and the mind that notes it.

But even though you realise this series of the movements of the foot, if your concentration is not deep enough, you are still conscious of your bodily form, your leg, and your foot. You also you have the idea of an “I”, “my foot is lifting”, “I am noting”, and so on. But that idea becomes vague, not very distinct. When concentration becomes deeper, the idea of an I is also removed by the insight knowledge that realises the specific characteristic of the wind element, that is a series of broken movements of lifting, pushing, dropping and pressing. When you have realised the movement of the foot in this way, it is called *nāmarūpaparicchedañāna*, the insight knowledge that discerns *nāma* (mental processes) and *rūpa* (physical processes).

## The two characteristics of mental and physical phenomena

Here, I think I should explain briefly the two characteristics of mental and physical phenomena. In the Pāḷi texts as well as in the commentary, it is said that when a meditator realises *nāma rūpa*, bodily and mental processes, first of all he realises *sabhāva lakkhaṇa* and then he realises *sāmañña lakkhaṇa*. When he realises mental and physical phenomena very clearly, then he can re-

move the idea of a self, a person, or a being. When he has realised *sāmañña lakkhaṇa* of mental and physical phenomena, then he is not attached to any mental process or physical process at that moment.

*Sāmañña lakkhaṇa* means: the general or common characteristics of mental and physical phenomena.

*Sāmañña lakkhaṇa*, the general or common characteristics of mental and physical phenomena, is nothing but *anicca, dukkha, anatta* (impermanence, suffering and impersonal nature of the body-mind process).

*Sabhāva lakkhaṇa* means: the specific or individual characteristics of mental and physical phenomena.

*Sabhāva lakkhaṇa*, the specific or individual characteristics, is varied because every mental state has its own characteristics. Every emotional state has its own specific characteristics. Every physical process has its own characteristics. So *sabhāva lakkhaṇa*, specific or individual characteristics, varies. When we practise mindfulness meditation, most of the time we have to be mindful of the four primary material elements.

## The wind element

So, at least we should have some knowledge of the individual characteristics of these four primary elements. First of all *vāyo dhātu*, the wind or air element. The wind element, or air element has movement, motion, vibration, supporting, contraction, and extension as its characteristics. In other words: the specific characteristic of the wind or air element is movement, motion, vibration, supporting, contraction, extension, and so on. Whenever you are mindful of all your activities, most of the time you are realising the specific characteristic of *vāyo dhātu*.

## The earth element

Then, *paṭhavī dhātu*, the earth element. Earth element does not mean earth itself. It refers to its specific characteristics. The same for the other mental processes or physical processes. The earth element has hardness and softness as its specific characteristics. These characteristics are experienced by a meditator occasionally. You feel hard under your feet, you feel hard under your body, and so on. Sometimes you feel soft under your foot, you feel soft under your body, and so on. These experiences of softness and hardness are the specific characteristics of the earth element.

Only when your concentration is good enough will, you experience these characteristics. When your concentration is not yet good enough, you cannot experience these characteristics even though they exist. Even though you are mindful of, say, the lifting movement, pushing, dropping, touching, pressing, you are not experiencing the movement of the foot or the sensation of the foot very distinctly. Because when you observe the lifting of the foot, “lifting, lifting, lifting”, the mind goes out. Then the foot is already lifted. Then you get puzzled, “Shall I put down the foot or shall I note?” Then, what should you do? Yes, you should put it down mindfully and then note it. As soon as you put the foot down mindfully the thought has disappeared.

But sometimes if the thought process is very powerful, doesn't disappear. Then you observe the thought process. Making mental notes, “thinking, thinking, thinking”, somewhat quickly. Then you come again to the movement of the foot.

In this way, you can realise first of all the specific characteristics or individual characteristics of the earth element.

## The water element

Sometimes when your concentration is good to a certain extent, you feel a sticky sensation under your foot. Have you had that experience? Yes. Some of the meditators had that experience under their feet, the sticky sensation. Sometimes the meditator stops walking and checks his foot for what is sticking, but there is nothing. What he is experiencing is the specific characteristic of the water element, *āpo dhātu*.

Sometimes you have a tear in the eye. What's that? It is fluidity, isn't it? Fluidity is the specific characteristic of the water element. Fluidity, cohesion, and stickiness are the specific characteristics of the water element. You are experiencing the specific characteristic. Sometimes you feel watering of the eye. When you take a cloth to wipe it, you lift a hand to your eye very mindfully, "lifting, lifting, lifting". Then you touch the eye and wipe the tear, but there is no tear. What's that? That is also the specific characteristic of the water element you are experiencing, not externally, but internally, the internal fluidity of the water element.

## The fire element

Then, *tejo dhātu*, fire element. It is not fire. When we say "fire element", it refers to its specific characteristics. Heat and cold are the specific characteristics of *tejo dhātu*. We say temperature. Have you felt cold or heat? When? All the time. When you do not feel cold, you do not put on your sweater or your warm clothes. Because you put on your warm clothes it means that you feel cold. What's that? The specific characteristic of the fire element, *tejo dhātu*.

## When the idea of an I is not yet removed

What is the specific characteristic of *vāyo dhātu*, the wind or air element? Movement, motion, vibration, supporting, contraction, extension. Yes. Though we are realising movement, motion, vibration, or support, the idea of an I is combined with it. “I feel movement”, “I feel motion”, and so on. Your concentration is not deep enough to remove this idea of an I. In other words, it is because you are not able to thoroughly and clearly realise the specific characteristic of these elements. So, the idea of an I is not yet removed.

## When you are mindful of the rising and falling movement of the abdomen

When you are mindful of the rising movement and falling movement of the abdomen, and concentration is very deep, what you are knowing or perceiving is just the movement, the movement and the mind that notes it.

In the whole world, what you are aware of is this dual process. You are neither aware of your body, your abdomen, nor aware of your bodily form. At that time, what you are realising is just the dual process of the rising movement, the falling movement, and the mind that notes it.

At that time, you have removed the idea of an I or you, you don't take this to be yourself, a person, a being. You are realising the two processes, the rising movement and the mind that notes it; the falling movement and the mind that notes it. Your insight knowledge realises these dual processes very clearly and very deeply. So, you remove the idea of an I, a person, or a being. This is called *nāmarūpaparicchedañāṇa*, the insight knowledge that discerns the specific characteristics of *vāyo dhātu*, the wind element, and that of the mind that notes it.

## The specific characteristic of the noting mind

What is the specific characteristic of the noting mind or the consciousness that knows the object? It is just cognizing, cognizing the object. Consciousness cognizes the object when the object arises. Its function is to know the object or to lead the other mental states, which arise together with it to the object which is cognized. So, when you realise the rising movement, the falling movement, and the mind that knows it, cognizing is the specific characteristic of mind or consciousness.

## Realise the rising and passing away of the mind that notes

When your concentration becomes deeper and deeper, then you come to realise a series of broken movements of the rising process, a series of broken movements of the falling process and the mind that notes it. In that case you do not take the mind as permanent because when the rising movement arises, then the mind knows it. Then it disappears. You know it very clearly.

Then again, when the falling movement arises, the mind knows it. Then it disappears again. In this way, you come to realise the rising and passing away of the mind that notes the object. So you don't take this noting mind, which notes the object, to be a person, a being or an I. In other words, you do not identify either the noting process or the rising and falling process with yourself, with a person, or a being. Then, you remove the idea of an I.

But when your concentration is not deep enough, you may feel a very vague idea of an I, a person, or a being. This *nāmarūpaparicchedañña*, the insight knowledge which discerns the specific characteristics or individual characteristics of mental processes or physical processes, is called *ditṭhi visuddhi*. *Ditṭhi* means wrong view.

## **Knowledge of discerning *nāma* and *rūpa* is called purification of view**

*Visuddhi* means purification. Because of the insight knowledge which realises the dual process of mental and physical phenomena with their specific characteristics, the wrong view of personality or individuality has been removed, overcome, and abandoned. So, this stage of insight knowledge of discerning *nāma* and *rūpa* is called purification of view, *diṭṭhi visuddhi*, the third one. It can purify the mind from the wrong view of personality or individuality temporarily. It cannot uproot this idea of personality or individuality. But it can remove this wrong view of personality or individuality for the time being; it means as long as the meditator is realising this dual process very clearly and deeply.

It is only when he has attained the first path knowledge, *sotāpattimagga*, that he can totally remove this idea of a person, a being. But at this stage of insight knowledge that discerns *nāma* and *rūpa*, the idea of a personality and individuality becomes weaker and weaker, even though he cannot uproot it completely.

May all of you uproot the idea of a personality or individuality which is the seat of all defilements and attain the cessation of suffering.



# Purification of view

Today is the 7th of January, 1992. We will continue our Dhamma talk about the purification of view.

We dealt with the purification of morality, *sīla visuddhi*, and the purification of mind, *citta visuddhi* and some aspects of the purification of view, *diṭṭhi visuddhi*.

The seven kinds of purifications you have to go through

There are seven kinds of purifications in the course of mindfulness meditation. You have to go through one after another, higher and higher.

- The first one is purification of morality, *sīla visuddhi*. Sometimes it is translated as purification of virtue.
- The second is the purification of mind, *citta visuddhi*.
- The third is the purification of view, *diṭṭhi visuddhi*.
- The fourth is the purification by overcoming doubt, *kankhā vitarāṇa visuddhi*.
- The fifth is purification of knowing and seeing what is path and what is not path, *maggāmaggañānadassana visuddhi*.
- The sixth is purification of knowing and seeing the way of the practice, *patipadāñānadassana visuddhi*.
- The seventh is purification of knowing and seeing, or realisation, *ñānadassana visuddhi*.

When you have covered all seven kinds of purification, you have attained *maggāñāṇa*, the first path knowledge, and *phalañāṇa*, fruition knowledge, the first stage of enlightenment.

A *vipassanā* meditator should not be content with some degree of deep concentration

A *vipassanā* meditator should not be content with some degree of deep concentration, that is calmness, serenity, tranquillity, and happiness. As long as the mind is concentrated on any single object of meditation, it becomes calm, tranquil, serene, and peaceful. But when concentration is broken, all serenity, tranquillity, and so on, disappear.

When you are not content with deep concentration and proceed with your *vipassanā* meditation intensively and strenuously, then you are sure to realise bodily and mental phenomena as they really are. That is *vipassanāñāna*, the insight that penetrates into the true nature of mental and physical phenomena. Then you do not react to any mental or physical process which is observed very attentively. In that stage of experience your mind becomes calm, tranquil, and peaceful. Every time or every moment you are realising these mental and physical phenomena in their true nature very clearly and thoroughly, your mind becomes calm, tranquil, and serene.

What's the difference between tranquillity you have attained just through deep concentration and that which you have attained through the realisation of mental and physical processes? When you have attained calmness, tranquillity, and serenity through the realisation of bodily and mental processes you won't lose it even though you are not engaged in mindfulness meditation, say, at home. When you reflect on your experience of these mental states of tranquillity, calmness, and serenity which you have had in the course of your meditation, then the quality of the mind—this calmness, serenity, and tranquillity—becomes manifested in your mind as if you are experiencing it now. So even at home or at work, if you can reflect on your experience of the good qualities of *vipassanā* meditation, then you have it and you enjoy it.

This is one of the differences between the results of *vipassanā* meditation and *samatha* meditation. That's why I said that

you should not be content with deep concentration and as a result, tranquillity, serenity, and peacefulness. You should proceed with your meditation so that you can attain the higher stages of insight knowledge one after the other until you have attained enlightenment or path knowledge and fruition knowledge. So you have more variable benefits of your mindfulness meditation.

## **Purification of mind, *citta visuddhi***

The day before yesterday, and yesterday too, I explained the purification of mind, *citta visuddhi*. When a meditator's mind is concentrated for a certain period of time very deeply, then his mind is purified from hindrances or mental defilements for that period of time, or for as long as his mind is deeply concentrated on the object of meditation. When the mind is purified from mental defilements or hindrances, you attain the purification of mind, *citta visuddhi*.

When the mind is concentrated to a certain extent and purified from hindrances, there arises the insight that penetrates into the true nature of mental and physical phenomena. That is *vipassanāñāṇa*. In other words, as long as your mind is not yet concentrated on the object of meditation, you are unable to attain any insight knowledge that penetrates into the true nature of the body-mind process. If you have attained purification of mind with some degree of deep concentration, then insight knowledge that arises together with the deep concentration becomes penetrating and sharp. Then it begins to realise physical and mental processes in their true nature.

## **How insight develops in walking meditation**

When you are aware of the lifting movement, pushing movement, dropping movement, touching sensation, and the pressing movement in the walking meditation, when your mindfulness is

clear, energetic and attentive, the mind becomes gradually concentrated on the movement of the foot; the movement of lifting, the movement of pushing, the movement of dropping, the touching, and the movement of pressing.

When the mind is constantly concentrated on the movement of the foot, for five minutes, ten minutes, or twenty minutes, at that moment when you have attained a degree of deep concentration, you come to realise that the lifting movement of the foot is a physical process and the noting mind that knows it is a mental process. You differentiate between the object and subject.

The object is the physical process, the movement of lifting, pushing, dropping, touching and pressing.

The subject is the mental process that knows the process of lifting the foot.

Before your concentration was not good enough, you were not able to realise in that way. What you were thinking was, “I lift my foot and I note it. I push it forward and I note it. I drop it down and I note it. My foot touches the ground and I watch it. I press the foot, then I observe it”. In this way, the object (the movement of the foot, the lifting, moving, pushing) is taken to be a person, a being, an I. In the same way, the noting mind is also taken to be a person, a being, an I. So, you cannot remove the idea of a personality or individuality at that moment because your concentration is not yet good enough. You can’t differentiate between the separate processes of the two mental and physical phenomena.

When concentration becomes deep, you come to realise or differentiate between the lifting movement of the foot (the object) and the noting mind which is a mental process (the subject). As insight that realises in this way becomes more and more clear and penetrating, you lose the sense of your foot.

Sometimes you lose the sense of your bodily form while you are walking. What you are realising at that moment is that there is the process of movement and that there is the mind that notes it, or a mental process. Then you do not identify the movement

of the foot or the process of the movement with yourself, a person, or a being. Then, you do not identify the mind that notes it with yourself, a person, or a being.

The insight that penetrates into the true nature of the dual process of mental and physical phenomena as they really are removes the idea of a personality or individuality.

So you have the right view of the two natural processes. You don't take the natural process of mental phenomena to be a person, a being. In the same way, you don't take the natural process of the mind that notes it to be a person, a being. So your view is right, or your understanding is right because you understand physical processes and mental processes as they really are. You don't take them to be a person, a being, an I, or a you. So your view or understanding is purified. It is called purification of view because the idea of a person or a being has been destroyed by the insight that penetrates into mental and physical phenomena.

## **How it applies when observing daily activities**

The same applies when you are observing daily activities such as bending of the arms, stretching of the arm, lifting it, and putting it down. When you stretch out the arms normally, not slowly, you can be aware of it generally and superficially. In the same way, when you bend the arms normally and steadily, not slowly, then you are aware of the bending of the arm lightly and superficially. Your awareness is not deep enough, not profound. So, it takes you a very long time to realise the bending movement and the stretching movement or the arm separately and thoroughly.

Because you do not slow down these movements, your noting mind is unable to concentrate on each movement of stretching and bending very deeply and very closely. So, your knowing of the movement of the arm is with the idea of a person, a being, "I stretch out my arms, I bend my arms, I sit down on the seat,

I rise from the seat, I dress myself, I put my clothes on”, and so on.

When you slow down your actions and movements, say when you stretch out your arm, you stretch it out very, very slowly, as much as possible. Then you should note, “stretching, stretching, stretching, stretching”, not four or five times, but ten times, fifteen, or twenty times, while stretching out the arm. You have to slow down the stretching of the arm more and more. The slower you do the action, the deeper concentration you have because your noting mind can concentrate on each movement of the stretching of the arm very clearly and closely. When your concentration is deep enough for three minutes or five minutes, concentration becomes constant and deep on the movement of the arm. When your arms is stretched out or bent, you feel as if something is moving, not a hand, not yours. It is something. You can't identify it with any particular object or any particular person but you feel that something is bending and coming nearer and nearer to you.

At that moment, you don't take the thing which is moved, the thing which is bent, or the thing which is moved nearer and nearer to be your hand because you see it as something that is moved towards you.

It means that you see the five aggregates as something which is not connected to you or which does not belong to you. That something has no connection with you. That something has nothing to do with you. That movements of bending slowly approaching towards you is not identified with yourself, a person, or a being.

It means that you are realising one of the three characteristics of existence, *anatta*, no-soul, no self, or the selfless and impersonal nature of physical processes, the movement of bending. Then, you have removed the idea of a person or a being by realising the bending movement of the hand as that something which is moving gradually towards you.

With deep concentration, when you observe the bending movement of the arm very slowly and closely, then you come to realise just movements, or the process of movements without any substantial thing, substantial physical process. The process of the movements is rightly understood as it is.

So, this process of the bending movement is also not taken for a person, a being, an I, or a you. Then also here you haven't the view of individuality or personality. It has been destroyed, then the view is purified. So you see the purification of view, *ditṭhi visuddhi*.

That's why you need to slow down your actions and movements as much as possible so that you can realise one movement after another arising and passing away or a series of broken movements of bending and stretching.

It is not very difficult, if you take an interest in it. You try to put enough effort to watch your daily activities, slowing down as much as possible. Then you have it.

But if you do not slow down these activities as much as possible, if you think it unnecessary through your ignorance of the meditative experience, then you don't put in enough effort to slow down these activities. Then you are not able to realise them very thoroughly and closely.

In this purification of view, you realise mental and physical processes in two ways.

The first one is: you realise the specific or individual characteristic of physical processes and mental processes.

The second way is: you differentiate between mental processes and physical processes.

If you are able to rightly understand any mental or physical process which is observed at the moment in either of these two ways very deeply and very thoroughly, then you are sure to purify your view by removing the idea of a person, a being, or an I.

## Slow down all your actions and movements

In the same way, when you are observing all the actions and movements which are involved in the act of taking food or eating you can realise these movement in either of these two ways of realisation. That's why you need to slow down all your actions and movements so that you can observe them very closely and realise them in their true nature.

The five aggregates

I think you have a good knowledge of the Four Noble Truths:

1. The first truth is the truth of suffering.
2. The second is the truth of the cause of suffering.
3. The third is the truth of the cessation of suffering.
4. The fourth is the truth of the way leading to the cessation of suffering.

In the first sermon of the Buddha, Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta, the Discourse of the Setting in Motion the Wheel of Dhamma, the Buddha describes these Four Noble Truths, and also three types of realisation of them. There, the Buddha said, "The truth of suffering is the five aggregates of grasping, the aggregate of physical processes, the aggregate of perception, the aggregate of feeling, the aggregate of mental formations, and lastly the aggregate of consciousness".

When we divide these five aggregates into two, the first group is physical phenomena. The second, the third, the fourth, and the fifth aggregates are mental phenomena, mental processes. So, we can say that physical processes and mental processes are the truth of suffering in accordance with the discourse of Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta. There, any mental process or physical process is the truth of suffering (*dukkha*). Mental processes are suffering and physical processes are also suffering. Why? Because they never last very long, they are not permanent, they are subject to impermanence. So, they are *dukkha*, suffering.

Normally we are not able to realise these physical processes or mental processes and *dukkha*, suffering. So we take this dual process of mental and physical phenomena to be a person, a being, or an I. The Buddha said, “This twofold *dukkha*, mental processes and physical processes, must be thoroughly and completely realised in their true nature”. If you do not realise this suffering, as it really is, you take it to be not-suffering or happiness, enjoyable and pleasurable. Then you take them to be a person, a being, an I, and so on. Then there arise mental defilements, such as desire, craving, attachment, ill-will, anger, aversion, conceit, jealousy dependent on the idea of a person, a being, or an I. They are the causes of suffering.

When you have thoroughly and completely realised this truth of suffering, mental and physical phenomena, as they really are, you don't take them to be happy, enjoyable, pleasurable, or pleasant things. You don't take them to be a person, a being, because you know that this dual process of mental and physical phenomena is *dukkha*.

That's why the Buddha said, “The truth of suffering, mental and physical phenomena, is to be thoroughly realised”. This is called *pariññeyya* in Pāḷi. *Pariññeyya*, the Dhamma, mental and physical processes, which must be thoroughly and completely realised by observing this dual processes as it really is. That's why we need to realise any mental or physical process as it really occurs. To realise their true nature we need some degree of deep concentration. To attain some degree of deep concentration we need continuous and constant mindfulness and clear and powerful mindfulness for a certain period of time, at least ten minutes or twenty minutes. Better still for the whole day.

## To attain constant and continuous mindfulness

To attain constant and continuous mindfulness for a certain period of time, we need to be aware of whatever arises in our body and mind as it really occurs while walking, while sitting, while doing daily activities.

Then we need to put enough effort in our practise or noting to be mindful of each action and movement, thoroughly, precisely, and very closely. If our effort is slackening, then our concentration becomes weak. Then we can't realise any mental or physical phenomena in their true nature. If mental and physical phenomena are not rightly understood as they really are, then we will take them as a person, a being, or an I.

That I is attached to his family, his property, and so on. Then attachment arises. That person has a desire to be a prime minister, to be a governor, to be a king or a queen. That desire arises dependent on the idea of a personality or individuality. When these mental defilements, such as desire, craving, ill-will, aversion, conceit and jealousy arise, then it is sure that we suffer. That suffering arises depending on the idea of a personality or individuality.

This idea arises because you do not rightly understand the body-mind process, the mental and physical processes as they really are. To remove the idea of a personality or individuality, or to attain purification of view, we should strive our best to be aware of any mental or physical process or whatever arises in our body and mind as it really occurs. This is purification of view, *ditṭhi visuddhi*.

Causal relation of physical and mental phenomena

When you proceed with your practice, then you come to realise the causal relation of physical and mental phenomena. That is called *paccayapariggahañña*, the insight knowledge that realises the cause and effect of the body-mind process. When

you can concentrate your mind on the rising falling movement of the abdomen, easily, comfortably and concentratedly, you come to realise that because there is the rising movement you note it. Because there is a falling movement you note it.

When the rising and falling movements become faint and disappear, you cannot note it. The presence of the rising movement is the cause of the rise of noting. In other words: because the movement arises, then the mind notes it. So, the rising movement is the cause and the mind that notes it the effect. When the movement of rising has disappeared, there is no mind that notes it. So, the absence of the rising movement is the cause of the absence of the noting mind. The absence of the rising movement is the cause, the absence of the noting mind is the effect. In this way, you come to realise cause and effect of mental and physical phenomena.

Time is up. My Dhamma talk is not complete yet. May all of you realise these mental and physical phenomena in their true nature and achieve your goal.



# Insight knowledge of cause and effect

Today is the 8th of January 1992.

We are dealing with the seven kinds of purification.

1. The first one is purification of morality, *sīla visuddhi*.
2. The second is the purification of mind, *citta visuddhi*. Purification of mind can be attained through deep concentration.
3. The third is the purification of view, *ditṭhi visuddhi*. Purification of view is attained through the insight that discerns mental processes and physical processes in their true nature.

Then we come to the purification by overcoming doubt, *kankhā vitarāṇa visuddhi*. The purification by overcoming doubt is attained through the insight knowledge that realises the nature of cause and effect, or causal relation of mental and physical phenomena. Here, doubt should be overcome.

## What are we doubtful about?

What are we doubtful about? We doubt about our existence or we doubt about the presence or absence of a personality or individuality.

“Our existence” means: a person or a being in the past, at present and in the future. When you have realised the cause and effect of mental and physical phenomena through the realisation of this body-mind process in its true nature, you won’t have doubt about the existence of a person or a being in the past, at present, as well as in the future. I will clarify it later on.

Yesterday I stopped my Dhamma talk when I explained how a meditator realises the cause and effect of mental and physical phenomena during their meditative practice.

When you are observing the rise and fall of the abdomen, first of all the mind goes out very often. So you have to observe the mind until it has disappeared. When the wandering mind has stopped, the noting mind returns to the primary object and notes as usual, “rising, falling-rising, falling”. When you are aware of the rising and falling movement very closely and precisely, the mind gradually becomes concentrated on the process of movements. So, the mind becomes well concentrated on each movement of rising and falling. Then, concentration becomes deeper.

Insight that arises together with concentration becomes penetrating, powerful and sharp. Then you come to realise, “The rising movement is one process and the mind that notes it is another process. The same with the falling movement which is one process and the mind that notes it which is another process”. In this way, you come to differentiate between the physical process and mental process, the object and the subject. That is *nāmarūpaparicchedañāna*, the insight knowledge that differentiates between *nāma* and *rūpa*, *nāma* the mental process, and *rūpa*, the physical process.

When you can very clearly see these dual processes, then you don’t find the rising process with yourself or a person, a being. When you proceed with your practise diligently, strenuously and earnestly, you come to realise, “Because there is the rising movement there is the mind that notes it. Because there is the falling

movement there is the mind that notes it”. In this way, you come to rightly discern the two processes as the cause and the effect.

## **Realising cause and effect**

In other words: The rising movement gives rise to the mind that notes it. So, you realise, “The rising movement, the object, is the cause. The mind that notes it is the effect. Because there is the object, there is the mind that notes it”. In this way you come to realise cause and effect. Whenever you have causes, you have an effect that is caused by it. In the same way, because there is the falling movement, there arises the mind that notes it. The falling process, the falling movement, is the cause and the arising of the mind that notes it is the effect. In this way, you come to realise cause and effect.

In the same way, with awareness of daily activities, too. When you rise from your seat, you note, “rising, rising, rising, rising”—slowly and very mindfully—”rising, rising, rising”, the process of the rising movement is observed very precisely and closely. In the same way, when you sit, the process of the sitting down movement is observed very closely and precisely. With deep concentration you come to realise, “Because there is the rising process there arises the mind that notes it. Because there are the sitting down movements there arises the mind that notes it”. In this way, the rising movement is the cause, the mind that notes it is the effect. The sitting down movement is the cause, the mind that notes it is the effect. Then, the sitting down movements and the mind that notes it are related by cause and effect.

When you walk, you have to be aware of the movement of the foot very clearly and precisely and very closely. In the beginning of the practice the mind goes out often, wanders and thinks about something else. Then you have to be aware of the mind and observe it until it has disappeared. When you do not slow down your stepping you are not able to observe the ac-

tual movement of the foot very precisely. Sometimes the mind stays with the noting. In other words: The mind knows the noting, not the actual lifting movement, pushing movement, dropping movement of the foot. When you are aware that your mind knows just the noting, then you should put more effort into the practice, to be aware of the very movement of the foot. Then you come to realise the actual movement of the foot: lifting, pushing, dropping, touching, and so on. Then you come to realise—and to differentiate between—the two processes of mental and physical phenomena.

The lifting movement is one process, the mind that notes it is another process. In this way, you come to realise the two separate processes of physicality and mentality. That is *nāmarūpaparicchedañāṇa*, the insight knowledge that differentiates between the two processes of mental and physical phenomena.

Then, with deeper concentration, you come to realise: When the foot is lifted, the mind that notes it arises, or there arises the mind that notes it. When the foot is pushed forward or when there is the movement of pushing, there arises the mind that notes it. The noting mind arises because of the pushing movement, dropping movement, touching sensation, and pressing movement. When there is the object, there is the mind that knows it. When there is no object, then there is no mind that knows it.

## **When the concentration is deep enough, you find the intention**

As to intention: In the beginning of the practice, when your concentration is not deep enough, you do not find the intention before the movement, even the lifting movement of the foot. When you don't find the intention yet, then you don't have the mind

that notes it as intention. Because of the absence of the object there is no mind that notes it.

But when concentration is deep enough, you find the intention arising before lifting. Here also you have the insight knowledge of cause and effect. When you easily find the intention before lifting, you note it as “intention”, or “intending”. You find the intention before pushing or dropping noting it, “intending, pushing, intending, dropping, touching, intending, pressing”.

Because there’s intention, there’s the mind that notes it. The intention causes the noting mind to arise. The intention is the cause and the mind that notes it is the effect. In this way, you come to realise the causal relationship between mental processes and physical processes, or subject and object. When you note, “intending, lifting, intending, pushing, intending, dropping, touching, intending, pressing” very clearly, then the foot is lifted or the foot lifts itself. When you know, “intending”, the foot pushes forward itself.

Then you feel: The foot is lifted automatically, without anyone to make it lift. Suddenly the foot is lifted. Sometimes when you begin to know it, you feel surprised at the sudden movement of the lifting of the foot. Then again, when you note, “intending” the foot is pulled forward suddenly. You feel, “The foot is going automatically. I have not yet pushed it forward. Before I have pushed it forward, it was pulled by something, or it goes forward automatically”.

When you note, “intending”, the foot is dropped suddenly. At that time also, you are noting “intending”, and you are about to drop the foot, but the foot has already dropped of its own accord. Here also, you feel surprised and sometimes you are startled at the experience. You feel, “the movement of the foot is arising automatically”. When you do another step, you feel like being dead. Sometimes you feel like a puppet. Sometimes you feel like a toy which is moved by the power of a steel spring. Your body walks without your effort.

## Without intention, the foot is not lifted

Intention is *cetanā* in Pāḷi. This *cetanā* is normally translated as volition or motive. In the walking meditation, when you note, “intending, lifting, intending, pushing, intending, dropping, touching, intending, pressing”, you feel the way I mentioned. Because of deep concentration you come to know that only intention causes the foot to lift. In other words: Because there’s intention, the foot is lifted. Without intention, the foot is not lifted. Because there is intention, the foot is pushed forward. Because there is intention, the foot is dropped. Because there is intention, the foot is pressed. In this way, you come to know the entity or agent that causes the movement of the foot, every movement of the foot.

Then you feel as if you need not push forward, you need not drop down, you need not press it. When there’s intention, the foot lifts. When there’s intention, the foot pushes forward. When there’s intention, the foot drops. When there’s intention, the foot is pressed. Then you do not find any person or any being who walks, or who lifts the foot, pushes it forward, drops it, and presses it. In the process of the movement of the foot, one movement after another, you do not find any person or being who makes it walk, lift, push, or drop. What is it that makes the foot lift, push, drop, and press? When your concentration is deep enough in your walking meditation, you yourself experience it.

A few of the meditators here experienced it, but they cannot explain how it happens. But they know, “Because there’s intention, the foot is lifted”. They know through their personal experience, not through theoretical knowledge. Even though they have experienced it, they cannot explain it because they have little knowledge of the scriptures.

What I explained to you is scriptural knowledge mixed with experience. So you yourself experience it. To lift, push, drop, and press the foot, what is needed, is just intention, volition or motive. We call it *cetanā*. When you have the intention to lift the

foot, you lift it. When you have the intention to push it forward, you push it forward. When you have the intention to drop it, the foot is dropped. When you have the intention to go to the dining room, what do you do? You walk to the dining room. When you have the intention to sit down on a chair, you sit down. When you have the intention to look at the foot, you look at it. When you have the intention to take the spoon or the fork, you take it. When you have the intention to choose what should be eaten first, then you choose it.

## **The cause of the action, bad or good, is the intention**

In this way, every action (even the actions which are done automatically) has intention to do it. Every action is preceded by intention. Without intention, nothing is done. This is what the Buddha said, “Intention, *cetanā*, is *kamma*, the action”. When you have bad intentions, you do bad actions. When you have evil intents, you do evil things. When you have good intentions, you do good action. That action is *kamma*, because the intention causes action to arise.

That good intention is called, “Good *kamma*”. When you walk outside the meditation hall, then the flies come to you and hover around your face. What do you do? Do you have an intention to remove the fly? No! Because you are a mindfulness meditator, you must be mindful of it.

How can you be mindful of the hovering of the fly? Sometimes it rests on your face. What should you do? Note “tickling, tickling” sometimes “itching, itching”, sometimes “touching, touching”. Because of the fly sitting on your face concentration breaks. Then you get angry. So you brush it off. Then the fly drops down and dies. Then, what is the *kamma*? Good *kamma* or bad *kamma*? Bad *kamma*. Why? Because the intention is bad.

That bad intention is caused by anger. Is it right? Anger is the original cause. The intention is the secondary cause. That intention caused bad *kamma*. Bad *kamma* produces a bad result. Then you become aware, “Oh, the fly has died, because of my anger. Anger is very bad!” Then you are remorseful, unhappy about it. That remorse and unhappiness arises from bad *kamma*. Bad *kamma* produces a bad result.

Then you proceed with the walking meditation, but the mind is with the fly which is dead. Can you concentrate well? No. This is a bad result of bad *kamma*. Any action, bad or good, is preceded by intention. Without intention, nothing is done.

## **Whatever arises has its caused**

When you have completely realised this cause and effect of mental and physical phenomena through your personal experience of Dhamma or the realisation of mental and bodily phenomena, you come to realise, “Whatever arises has its cause, or everything is conditioned. Without condition nothing arises”.

Say, now I am talking, giving a Dhamma talk, then you hear it.

There’s a consciousness of hearing. Without consciousness you cannot hear. It is consciousness that hears the sound or the talk.

Why does consciousness of hearing arise? Because of the intention to listen. Yes, suppose you are deaf. There’s the sound of talking, there’s the intention to listen, and there’s consciousness: do you hear? Even though there is the intention and the sound, you can’t hear it. Even though there’s a sound, you don’t know that there’s a sound because you are deaf.

But you are here, sitting and listening to the Dhamma, I am talking. Then you know that there’s a sound. There’s always a sound. You try to listen to it, you have the intention, but you do not hear it, because: You are deaf. To hear, to make the con-

sciousness of hearing arise, you need sound, good ears—not deaf ears—and the intention to listen, and then?

Say, around me there's a very good glass house and I am sitting in the glass house. The roof is made of glass, the walls are made of glass, I sit in the glass house, and I am delivering a Dhamma talk. Do you hear? No! Why? Because there is not enough space and the glass is a very densely compounded thing. There's not enough space for the wind to go through the glass when I talk. If I drill a hole in the glass house, can you hear? Yes! Why? The air carried the sound through the hole to your ear.

What you need is: sound, good hearing, intention, and also space. These are the four conditions which make the sound arise. Everything is conditioned. This is called "*saṅkhāta*" in Pāḷi, conditioned things. Nothing arises without condition. Everything arises through its condition. *Asaṅkhāta* is the thing without condition. *Saṅkhāta* is conditioned. When a thing, a mental process or physical process, arises dependent on its condition, it is subject to passing away. In other words: Whatever arises is subject to pass away. Is it right? Whatever arises has its condition. Conditioned things are arising and passing away. Unconditioned things do not arise and do not pass away. That is Nibbāna, the cessation of suffering.

So, please remember, "*Saṅkhāta*, conditioned things, *asaṅkhāta*, unconditioned things".

May all of you achieve your goal, unconditioned things through mindfulness meditation.



# Insight knowledge of cause and effect, contd.

Today is the 9th of January 1992.

Yesterday I explained how you experience cause and effect while you are practising walking meditation by being aware of the lifting movement, pushing movement, dropping movement, touching sensation and pressing movement of the foot. Here in insight knowledge, sometimes the physical process is the cause and the mental process is the effect. At other times, the mental process is the cause and the physical process is the effect. I take the walking meditation as an example because it is very easy for a meditator to experience the movement of the foot and also to discern the specific characteristic of the physical process of the movement of the foot.

When you observe the movement of lifting, pushing, dropping, touching and pressing, you note, “Lifting, lifting, pushing, pushing, dropping, dropping, touching, touching, pressing, pressing”. When you find the intention before lifting very distinctly, you note, “Intending, lifting, pushing, dropping, touching, pressing”. You observe the movement of the foot very closely and precisely with enough attentiveness. Gradually the concentration becomes good. The mind doesn’t go out very often, it wanders occasionally. You feel that the foot is light. You enjoy the movement of the foot and the noting of it because you have gained some degree of concentration. Then you come to re-

alise, “The movement of the foot is one process, and the noting mind that knows it is another process”.

In this way, you come to differentiate between *nāma* and *rūpa* or mental process and physical process. Or you come to distinguish between object and subject. Whatever it may be, what is important is to realise that there’s the dual process of mentality and physicality, that’s all. Because we are not aware of or we are not rightly understanding the mental process and physical process as just a natural process of mental phenomena and physical phenomena, so we take them for a person or a being.

What we need is to realise that there is a physical process of movement and that there is the mental process of the noting mind. When we very clearly differentiate between the two processes, we don’t take the physical process of the movement to be a person. We don’t take the mental process of the noting mind to be a person. At that moment of realising the dual process of mental and physical phenomena, we have removed the idea of a personality, an individuality, *sakkāya ditthi* or *atta ditthi*. The view of a personality or individuality has been destroyed by realising the dual process of mental and physical phenomena. This is called *nāmarūpaparicchedañāna*, the insight knowledge that discerns *nāma* and *rūpa*, mental processes and physical processes.

When concentration becomes deeper, you come to realise, “Because there’s the lifting movement of the foot, there arises the mind that notes it. Because there is the pushing movement of the foot, there arises the mind that notes it. Because there is the dropping movement of the foot, there arises the mind that notes it. Because there is the touching sensation, there arises the mind that notes it. There is pressure, so there arises the mind that notes it”.

In this way, you come to realise the physical process as the cause and the mental process as the effect. The physical process of the movement of the foot is the cause and the mind that notes it, the mental process, is the effect. The physical process causes the noting mind to arise. Here, *rūpa* is the cause and *nāma* is the

effect. Physical phenomena are the cause, mental phenomena are the effect. The same with the movements of pushing and dropping as well as the pressing and touching sensation. Rūpa, the physical process is the cause and the noting mind is the effect. The noting mind arises on account of the movement of the foot.

When we try to note the intention, “intention, lifting, intention, pushing, intention, dropping, touching, intention, pressing”, first of all we find it difficult to find the intention before lifting, pushing, dropping, and so on. We are not able to note the intention, because we do not find it. Even though we do not find it, the intention is there before lifting. To know the intention clearly, we have to slow our stepping more and more.

Then the steps become slower. We come to realise the intention that arises before the lifting movement, pushing movement, dropping movement, touching sensation. When we walk fast, it is very difficult to find the intention because the mind is in haste to be aware of all the movements of the foot, “lifting, pushing, dropping, touching, pressing-lifting, pushing, dropping, touching, pressing”. When you walk fast, the mind doesn’t have time to know the intention.

When you slow down your steps, then you very steadily and calmly note the lifting movement while the foot is lifted, “lifting”, when it is pushed forward, “pushing”, when it is dropped, “dropping”, when it touches the floor or the ground, “touching”, when it is pressed, note, “pressing”. You note steadily and calmly, comfortably, without strain and stress. Because you need not hurry up to catch every moment of the foot, you very clearly and calmly find the intention before lifting. Then you note, “intending, lifting, intending, pushing, intending, dropping, touching, intending, pressing”.

The step should be the length of a foot, not longer than that. When your step is about the length of a foot, then you begin to lift the heel of the foot after you have pressed the foot very well. Then you begin to lift the heel of the back foot. Then you can find

the intention before lifting of the foot. In this way, you come to realise, “The intention is the cause, and the movement of the foot is the effect”.

The mental process is the cause and the physical process is the effect. But there is also another aspect, in which the mental process is the cause and a mental process is the effect. When you feel angry, what do you do? The principle of *vipassanā* meditation is to see things as they really are, to realise what is happening at the moment as it really occurs. So, you note, “anger, anger”. Then, why does this noting mind arise? Noting means knowing of the object. Why does this noting mind arise when you note, “anger, anger, anger”? Because anger arises, the noting mind arises and notes it. What is the cause and what is the effect?

A mental process is the cause and another mental process is the effect. The anger (a mental process) is the cause and the noting mind (also a mental process) is the effect. Here a mental process is the cause and another mental process is the effect. When your mind wanders, goes out, thinks about something else, you note, “wandering, wandering, thinking, thinking”. What is the cause and what is the effect? The mental process of the wandering and thinking mind is the cause and the mind that notes it is the effect, another mental process.

May all of you differentiate cause and effect and achieve your goal.

# Realising the thought process through noting it

Today is the 10th of January 1992.

When your thoughts become less, it means that your concentration becomes better and deeper. You come to realise that the thinking mind is one process and the mind that notes it is another process. The dual process of mental and physical phenomena are arising and then pass away. But you do not yet realise the passing away of the thought, you do not realize how the thinking mind disappears. Actually, the thought process is not a single process.

The thought process consists of a series of moments of thought which are arising and passing away one after another. But you do not yet realise it as a series of thought processes which are arising and passing away. Later on when your concentration is deep enough, you will be able to realise it. But just now, at this stage of experiential knowledge, what you know is, “There’s a thinking process” when you note “thinking, thinking, thinking”. Then, there’s a noting process. There are two separate processes of mentality you find there. In the beginning of the practice you do not differentiate between the two processes of mental phenomena. You think, “I am thinking, I am noting. My mind is thinking, my mind is noting: ’thinking, thinking,

thinking””. When you begin to note the thinking process, the noting should be attentive and energetic, somewhat quick.

Here, I will explain how a meditator realises the thought process when he notes the thinking mind. When you note “thinking, thinking, thinking”, then you know there’s a thinking process and there’s the mind that notes it or the noting process. We think that the two processes are going on at the same moment. There is the thinking mind and then there’s the mind that notes it.

Actually, two mental states or consciousnesses do not arise at the same moment. When the thinking process is arising, then the noting process doesn’t arise. Only a moment of thought arises and then passes away. Then a moment of noting mind arises and then passes away. Then, a moment of thought arises and then passes away. Then, a moment of noting mind arises and passes away.

In this way, the two processes of the thinking mind and noting mind are arising and passing away, arising and passing away, alternately, very, very swiftly. The Lord Buddha said that there is no simile for the swiftness of the arising and passing away of consciousness. A commentary to the Pāli text says, “In a blink of an eye many thousands of consciousnesses have arisen and passed away”. The arising and passing away of a moment of consciousness is too swift to compare with anything.

A thought moment arises and passes away and then the noting mind arises and passes away. In this way, when the dual process of noting mind and thinking mind is arising and passing away very, very swiftly, we think that there are two processes of mental and physical phenomena arising at the same time.

For example, say, you are happy with your meditative experience because concentration is very good and insight is also clear and sharp. You are experiencing some new things in sitting as well as in walking, so happiness arises. There is the happy state of mind arising and passing away, the process of happiness arising and passing away, arising and passing away. Actually, you do

not realise this arising and passing away of happiness. What you are feeling is just, “happy, happy, happy”, that’s all. But actually the process of happiness arises one after another. You do not know it. Then one of the meditators rises from the seat and walks by near you. The floor makes a cracking sound and your concentration breaks. The happiness becomes weak and then it disappears.

Then anger arises. The anger arises immediately after the happiness has disappeared. Sometimes you do not think that the happiness has disappeared. You think that the anger arises while you are feeling happy. But actually, the happiness disappears and then the anger arises. Anger can’t arise unless the happiness has disappeared. Then again you note, “anger, anger, anger”. The anger disappears because your concentration was good enough even though it was broken momentarily.

In this way, you can retain your concentration, deep concentration. Then happiness comes back.

Here it is evident that happiness is not permanent. When you have practised for about ten days you feel that your concentration is good. Every meditator’s concentration was good in some cases, in some moments. If the happiness were permanent, then you would not feel aversion, you would not feel anger, you would not feel disappointment, you wouldn’t want to go back home because you are always happy here. Then, is happiness permanent or impermanent? It is impermanent, so it is subject to arising and passing away, it is ever-changing.

If you see this example, then you know: None of the mental states are permanent. Every mental state or emotional state arises and then passes away very swiftly, very swiftly.

When you note, “thinking, thinking, thinking”, you know the thinking process and the noting process, but actually the two processes of mentality do not arise at the same moment. One moment of thought arises and passes away, and a moment of noting arises and passes away, then a moment of thinking mind arises and passes away. In this way, they are arising al-

ternately and passing away. But because their arising and passing away is too swift to realise for an ordinary mind we can't realise them. One is the thinking process, the other is the noting process. Apart from these dual processes, what do we find here while we are noting "thinking, thinking, thinking"? Apart from this dual process of noting and thinking, is there anything, any being in between? Do we find something there?

# Purification by overcoming doubt

Today is the 11th of January.

When our concentration is somewhat good, we can observe the thought process precisely and closely. The noting mind knows it clearly. Then, my question is: when you find this dual process arising and passing away, do you find anything else apart from these dual processes at this moment? That's the question: do you find any mentality or physicality or any ever-lasting entity except for this dual process?

I'll take another example: You observe the rising and falling movement of the abdomen. When the abdomen rises, you note, "rising", when the abdomen falls, you note, "falling". You have practised meditation for 16 days, so your concentration becomes deeper. You very clearly realise the rising movement and the falling movement of the abdomen from the very beginning, the middle, and the final phases very clearly. While your noting mind is realising the process of the rising movement and the falling movement, do you find any other things except for this dual process of the object and the subject? While you are observing the rising movement, then you know there's the rising movement and there's the mind that notes it. So, you are realising the dual process of rising movement and the mind that notes

it, the noting process. At that moment, do you know any other thing except for this dual process of mentality and physicality?

Please reflect upon your experience of the rising and falling of the abdomen while you are meditating on it. You should reflect upon your own experience. What you are realising at that moment is just the rising movement and the mind that notes it. When you observe the falling movement, then you find the falling movement and the mind that notes it. When concentration becomes deeper, you are not even conscious of your bodily form or yourself. Only this dual process exists in the whole world, in the whole universe, because you lost the sense of your bodily form and yourself. There's nothing else apart from this dual process of mental phenomena and physical phenomena while you are realising very clearly and distinctly.

When concentration became deeper and deeper, some of the meditators here in this retreat experienced a series of many tiny broken movements of physical process. That's the rising movement and also the mind which notes it. They do not realise that the noting mind is comprised of a series of thought moments which are arising one after another and knowing the object and then pass away. They do not have this experience now, but in some other aspects of meditation they have some experience of mental processes which are impermanent. When you are realising a series of many tiny broken movements of rising and many tiny broken movements of falling, do you take this process to be permanent or impermanent?

It is impermanent because many broken movements mean: one movement arises and then passes away. Then another movement arises and passes away. Then another movement arises and passes away. In this way, the process of many tiny broken movement arising and passing away.

## **Every physical process or phenomenon is subject to impermanence**

What we realise is that none of the physical processes are permanent. Every physical process or phenomenon is subject to impermanence.

When we practise walking meditation, we observe first of all, the intention, “intending”. Then, “lifting, lifting”, the lifting movement of the foot. Then, “intending”. Then, “pushing”, the pushing movement of the foot. Then, “intending”. Then “dropping”, the dropping movement of the foot, or the placing. Then, “touching”, the touching sensation of the foot. Then, “intention”, and then the pressing movement of the foot. In this way, we are very carefully and mindfully aware of each movement of the foot together with the intentions which are preceding.

Gradually, our foot becomes light. Then what we are realising is: when we note, “lifting” we are realising one movement after another arising. When we observe the pushing, one movement after another is pushed forward, successively, as a process. In this way, the dropping movement is also the same.

Many of the meditators here who take keen interest in the walking meditation and are aware of the movement of the foot very attentively and energetically have experienced it. There are at least four or five meditators who experienced in this way; many movements of lifting, many movements of pushing, many movements of dropping, and many movements of pressing. Then, could you say: all these movements of lifting, pushing, dropping, pressing are permanent? No.

## **They are an ever-changing process**

The lifting movement is impermanent. Pushing, dropping, pressing movements are also impermanent. They are an ever-changing process, the arising and passing away of physical phe-

nomena. If these physical phenomena of movement are impermanent, should we take them to be an ever-lasting entity? No.

Should we take the pushing movement as a physical phenomenon to be an ever-lasting entity? No.

In the same way, the dropping movement, the touching sensation, and the pressing movements cannot be taken for an ever-lasting entity. This can be realised through personal experience by a meditator who has put enough effort into his practise.

Now it is clear that none of the physical processes are permanent and so they are not an ever-lasting entity. Is it right? If they are not an ever-lasting entity, are they a person, a being, and individual? No. Why? What we take to be a person, is a process of rising movement, pushing movement, dropping movement, and pressing sensation. But actually they are not a person. Neither a first, a second, nor a third person. It is very clear through your experience. We should notice that at the moment of realisation of lifting, pushing, dropping, touching and pressing, there's no person, no being, no "I" or "you". What really exists is just a physical process which is ever-changing and passing away.

## **The mental process**

Then we should look at mental process, the intention and the mind that notes the object. Is the intention permanent or impermanent? Impermanent. When it arises we observe it as intention, then it disappears. There's impermanence, very evident.

The noting mind notes one movement of lifting, then it disappears. Then another movement arises, it is noted and it disappears. But to our meditators it is not yet very clear. When the foot is lifted, then the mind knows and notes it. The foot is pushed forward, then the mind knows and notes it.

When meditational experience is mature and whenever you note the lifting movement, there is not only a single mind but many tiny minds. It is as if the noting mind drops into the foot

and notes the movements one after another as if seeing a trickling of water. Have you experienced that? Not yet. But it is very rare to experience it this way. Only when your concentration is very deep and your insight clear and sharp and penetrating, can you experience in that way. Very interesting.

Let's take the lifting movement. The noting mind has to note the intention to lift "intention". Then it has to note the lifting movement. In this way, the mind notes one object after another very instantly arising and passing away. Could you say that the mind that notes the intention is the same that notes the lifting movement? No, not the same, a different one. A different process of noting knows the intention and another process of noting knows the lifting movement. You can easily realise it through your experience because when you note "intention" this noting mind passes away. Then the mind notes the lifting movement. Then, the noting mind passes away.

In this way, you come to realise: the noting mind that knows the intention and the noting mind that knows the movement are different, they are different processes. If these two minds are different processes, could we say that the noting mind is permanent? Impermanent. It arises and then passes away.

Some of the yogis here have experienced the appearance and disappearance of mental states when they were very carefully aware of all daily activities. They reported their experience. If they reflect upon their experiences they will remember it. Everything is subject to impermanence.

## **Volition, intention, *cetanā***

What really exists is the dual process of mentality and physicality. The movement, the wind or air element, does its function, which is to move, or vibrate. The function of the mind is to know the object. The noting mind knows the object one after another.

There's a law for these mentalities to do their functions. Do you know that law? That's intention, motive, volition, *cetanā*.

Because intention arises, you lift the foot. Because the intention arises, you push it forward. Because the intention arises, you drop it down. But for the touching sensation there's no intention. Whether you have the intention to touch or not, if the foot drops, it will touch the floor. Because you drop the foot, it touches the floor. Because intention arises, you press the foot. In this way, we say in conventional terms: we make a step.

These are conventional terms to communicate with each other. We use them. Then, the foot is about to lift. Then intention arises, you note in this way "intention, lifting, intention, pushing, intention, dropping, touching, intention, pressing". Then another step is made. Who made it? I or you? Who made it? Without intention, could you note? Without intention, can you make any step? No. It is the intention which causes the stepping.

It is intention a person or a being, an "I" or a "you"? No. It is a mental process, a mental state.

## **The law of causal relation**

In the walking, do we find any person or being, an "I" or a "you"? No. What's that? The law of causal relation. Because there is a cause, there arises an effect. When another cause arises, there is another effect.

In this way, the causes and effects are related to each other and do their function. Could we say: in this present existence there's a person who is an "I"? No.

If we cannot say that there's a person in the walking or in this existence, can we then say that there was a person who walked in a past existence? No.

Can we say that there will be a person in a future existence? No.

What do you find here if you do not find a person or being?  
Cause and effect.

When you have realised cause and effect of the body-mind process in this way, in a deeper sense you don't find any everlasting entity, any person or being in this existence. And in the past existence? No. In the future? No.

Can we have doubt about the existence of a person in the past, present, or future? No. Then this doubt has been purified. It has been expelled, it has been destroyed, we have no doubt about the existence of a person or a being.

No person or no being exists in the world. What really exists is the law of causal relation. This is called: purification by overcoming doubt. Is it clear? Very clear, because you experienced some of it.

If you are able to experience more and more stages of insight knowledge, you will be very pleased with this purification by overcoming doubt. This insight knowledge of discerning conditionality is sometimes called *paccayapariggahañāṇa*. Sometimes we call it *paccayapariggahañāṇa*, the insight knowledge discerning causal relation. Sometimes we call it *paccayapariggahañāṇa*, the insight knowledge of cause and effect.

To fully realise cause and effect of the body-mind process, you need to be mindful of the intention before every action in the walking and in the daily activities too. That's why I instruct you to be mindful of the intention as much possible.

In the interview I asked you too, could you note the intention? Sometimes I asked you, "Could you experience the relationship between the intention and the movement or the action that follows?" But you cannot answer this question because you have not yet experienced it clearly. Some have experienced it, but not very clearly. Later on, you will be able to experience it very, very clearly. Then you will be able know.

With somewhat deep concentration you can realise this cause and effect if you note your experience. When the abdomen rises, you note "rising". When the abdomen falls, you

note “falling”. When the abdomen rises, you can’t help noting it. You have to note it. Why? Because there’s the object which is to be noted. If there is an object, you must note it because you came here to be mindful, to be aware. Here, you have nothing else to do, just to be aware, just to be mindful, just to note when there arises an object. The rising movement, if it is distinct, you have to note it. Then, the rising movement disappears. Then, the abdomen falls. Then, you have to note the falling movement. There’s the object to be noted. So you have to note. This is a very simple and very clear experience. Let it be.

## **Awareness of daily activities**

A meditator lays emphasis on the awareness of daily activities and tries to be aware of more daily activities in more detail, slowing down all actions and movements as much as possible.

For example, in the dining room. Why do you go to the dining room? Because of the desire to eat. Because the desire to eat arises, you go. You have to take your fork, your plate, and you have to take food and put it on the plate and then you go to the table and sit down on the bench or the chair. All these activities you have to note.

When you very carefully observe them, you have a great number of activities to observe: When you have the intention to reach out your hand to the plate, you note “intention”, then you note “reaching, reaching, reaching”. When your hand is near the plate you want to hold it and you note “intention, intention”. Then you touch it “touching, touching”, then you hold it “intending, intending”, then you take it. Again, you have to reach for the fork. Then “intending, intending, reaching, reaching”, and when approaching the fork “intending, intending, holding, holding” or “touching, touching” and “holding, holding”, and so on.

Does your mind note one object or many objects? One. At each moment the mind notes only one object. But it doesn't stay with it. Why? Because the next object arises. Then, it notes it but it doesn't stay with it long. Then the next activity arises and you note it.

Here you find cause and effect. What's the cause? The activities. The objects are the cause. The mind that notes them is the effect. What we find is: when there's an object, there arises the mind that notes it. The object is the cause, the noting mind is the effect.

When does the noting mind arise? When the object arises, the noting mind arises. Yes. Before the mind notes the object, there's intention to note it, but that intention is not distinct. Because the object arises, the mind that notes it arises and knows it. The object is the cause and the noting mind is the effect.

In this way, you can realise the law of cause and effect or causal relations of mental and physical phenomena. When you realise this, you know that world is just cause and effect. Then you have no idea of a person or a being who is ever-lasting.

The so-called person is taken to be ever-lasting from the time when he was born until he is dead. But actually, when you observe mental and physical processes, do you find anything which is ever-lasting? Where does this person or being exist? It doesn't exist, so it doesn't disappear. When you observe the so-called person or being, what you find is just mental and physical processes which are impermanent. Then you don't have any person who is ever-lasting.

Then you have removed the idea of a person, a being, a self or a soul, *atta*, through the realisation of cause and effect of bodily and mental phenomena. With this realisation you can discern this causal relation of the body-mind process in sitting meditation, walking meditation, or in the awareness of daily activities. Where can you realise this cause and effect? Everywhere, every moment, in everything.

In sitting too, you have this insight knowledge which discerns cause and effect. In walking too, you have this insight knowledge discerning conditionality. In the awareness of daily activities too, you have this insight knowledge of cause and effect.

Then, walking meditation. Does walking meditation produce any benefit? You know the benefit of mindful walking, not the benefit of unmindful walking, mindful walking. Then, does awareness of daily activities produce benefits? A lot!

You have to be mindful of mental and physical processes in the sitting, in the walking and in the awareness of daily activities. Then you will have continuity of mindfulness for the whole day. Can you have it? Not yet, but could you have it if you put enough effort into the practice? In order to realise this law of causal relation and the other experiences of insight meditation, the most important factor is what? There must be a cause.

What is the cause of constant and continuous mindfulness? Effort. Not only effort. Not only strenuous effort, but also patience. Effort, patience, and perseverance, these factors are the most important ones to realise the body-mind process. Strenuous effort, patience and perseverance. If you put more effort, it is somewhat satisfactory. But you may have less patience. So you have to try to be patient with everything and everyone, so that you can put enough effort into the noting and the practice.

May all of you strive your best to be mindful of all mental and physical phenomena and realise them and attain the cessation of suffering, Nibbāna.

# Purification by overcoming doubt, contd.

Today is the 12th of January 1992.

When concentration is very, very deep, you are not aware of your abdominal form. You have lost the sense of the abdomen and you also have lost the sense of your bodily form. So, in the whole universe, what you are realising is just the natural process of the rising process and the mind that notes it. The same with the natural process of the falling movement and the mind that notes it. You do not find anything which is ever-lasting apart from this dual process of the rising movement and the mind that notes it. Except for this dual process you do not find anything.

What you are experiencing is the process of the rising movement and the process of the noting mind, the process of the falling movement and the process of the noting mind. Apart from this dual process of mentality and physicality you do not find anything which is ever-lasting, so you can judge that there's no ever-lasting entity apart from mental phenomena and physical phenomena which are arising and passing away from moment to moment.

What you have is just the mental process and the physical process which constitute the so-called person or being. Then again, you see the rising movement, the process of very tiny, broken movements one after another. A movement arises and then

instantly passes away; immediately after its disappearance another movement arises and also instantly passes away. Soon after its disappearance another movement arises and passes away. In this way, many tiny, broken movements are arising and passing away. Then the mind knows them and realises them as impermanent.

## **Mind is also realised as appearance and disappearance**

When your concentration is deep enough, the noting mind is also realised as appearance and disappearance one after another. When a movement arises the mind notes it and then disappears. Then another movement arises and the mind notes it and disappears. Then another movement arises and the mind notes it and then it also disappears. In this way, you come to realise the noting mind also as arising and passing away, ever-changing, transient. We do not take the rising movement to be a person, a being, an “I”, a self or a soul which is ever-lasting. And the noting mind is not identified with our self. We don’t take it to be a person, a being, an “I” or a “you”, a self or a soul. There’s no ever-lasting entity besides this dual process of mental and physical phenomena.

Every mental or physical process is subject to impermanence, they are *anatta*

Every mental or physical process is subject to impermanence, they are *anatta*. *Anatta* means egolessness, impersonal nature, or no-self. Through your own experience you know whether there is an ever-lasting entity besides this dual process of mental and physical phenomena. There is no ever-lasting entity independent of the mental and physical processes. And mental or physical processes are also not ever-lasting entities, a self or soul, an ego, *atta*.

Then we come to realise the third characteristic of existence very clearly, that's *anatta*. There are three characteristics of existence or of mental and physical phenomena: *anicca*—impermanence, *dukkha*—suffering or unsatisfactoriness, and *anatta*—impersonal nature or egolessness, selflessness.

When we observe the rising and falling of the abdomen or any mental or physical process which is arising at the moment, we come to realise that none of these mental or physical phenomena are permanent. They are not an ever-lasting self or soul, a person or a being. There's no ever-lasting entity, independent from, or apart from, or besides this dual process.

If there's no self or soul, at the death of a person what transmigrates to another existence?

There's a problem for some thinkers: if there's no everlasting entity, person, being, self, or soul, at the death of a person what transmigrates to another existence? If there is nothing to transmigrate to another existence, there will be no life after death. This is what some thinkers consider as a problem. But for a meditator, a Buddhist meditator who practises *vipassanā* meditation, who clearly sees the mental process and physical processes arising and passing away from moment to moment that's no problem. It is a very easy question to answer. Usually this question arises among Westerners. Though some of meditators have very clearly and deeply experienced the appearance and disappearance of mental and physical processes from moment to moment, they may still cling to the notion of an entity which transmigrates to another existence.

On my last visit here, on the last day, when our meditation retreat was over at this retreat centre, one of the meditators asked a question, "If there's no soul which is an ever-lasting entity, then what is rebirthing"? Her wording was "rebirthing". I gave that question a very good answer, "When your concentration is deep enough, you see a series of lifting movements, many broken movements from the very beginning of lifting to the end of it. When you begin to realise them, you see a couple of broken

movements. Later on, when concentration becomes deeper and deeper, you see many tiny broken movements of lifting”.

Today, when Vivianna had an interview with me, she showed me a very good drawing to demonstrate how she experienced the movement of lifting: many series of lifting movements. But I think that the ever-lasting entity will still be with her even though she experienced it. When you see a series of movements of lifting, a series of broken movements of rising and falling, or a series of broken movements of pushing, then you see here that one movement arises and then passes away.

Does the physical process stop there? One movement arises and passes away. Then another one arises and passes away. Then, another one arises and passes away. In this way, a series of broken movements of lifting is clearly, very deeply realised.

The same with the noting mind. Sometimes, some meditators discover the intention among these movements, “intending, lifting”, one movement “intending, lifting”, another movement, “intending, lifting”, another movement, in this way. Some meditators discover the intention among these movements. But, it is very, very difficult to find this intention among the movements. But they are there. What I want to tell you is: what about the mental process? When you note, “rising-falling” or “lifting, moving, dropping”, does only a single mental process know the object or does a series of consciousnesses arise and pass away and know the objects? What would you say? Is there a series of mental consciousnesses arising and passing away or does a single mental process arise and know the objects? How do you experience it?

Some meditators see it, but some do not. The lifespan, so to say, of a mental process is seventeen times swifter than the lifespan of a physical process according to the Abhidhamma. During the moment when a physical movement arises and passes away, seventeen mental processes arise and pass away. Some meditators do not see that clearly. Were, what I want you to know is that none of mental processes or none of consciousnesses stops after

its appearance and disappearance. It continues to arise, one after another, arising and passing away, moment to moment.

When you are aware of daily activities, you very carefully observe each activity with intention. You note “intention”, then “lifting”. You know the intention of stretching, then you note “intention”. Could you only note one intention or could you note many intentions? Many intentions. Intentions arise and pass away, do they stop there? No. Another intention arises and then passes away. After that, another one, another one, and another one. Many processes of intentions are arising and passing away. You know that. What you should remember is: why does another intention or another mental process arise? Why does another movement of lifting arise? To find the cause we’ll take a very good example. Very recently, the prime minister of Australia resigned. After his resignation there was no prime minister in Australia. Is there a prime minister now? Oh, a new one arose! When Hawke disappeared, Keating arose. Why did Keating arise? In dependence of Hawke’s disappearance. Yes, if we say it very frankly and directly: because of the disappearance of Hawke, Keating arose. If Hawke had remained until now, then Keating would not have arisen. Why has Keating arisen? Because Hawke has disappeared. That’s natural.

When one thing has disappeared, another thing arises. When that also has disappeared, then another thing arises. That is: when one intention has disappeared another intention arises. When one movement of lifting has disappeared then another movement arises and then finishes. What is the cause of the arising of new things? Because the old thing has disappeared. In the same way, consciousness arises and passes away.

Why does a new consciousness arise? Because the old one has disappeared. The disappearance of the old one is the cause and the arising of the new one is the effect. We should notice this point: according to the law of nature nothing stops when it has disappeared. Another thing arises because of disappearance.

## Two types of view examined by the Buddha

There are two types of view examined by the Buddha in the Pāli texts. One is a view which holds that everything is eternal and permanent. So, there is an ever-lasting ego entity. It is eternal. It never dies. It can never be destroyed. So it is ever-lasting and eternal. When a man dies, that ever-lasting entity, or self, or soul does not die. It goes out of the dead body and transmigrates into another existence. Then, is this view right or wrong?

I ask you this question, based on your personal experience by means of this mindfulness meditation, not just theoretical knowledge. We have seen that when we observe any mental or physical process, what we are discovering is: the physical process is arising and passing away from moment to moment. The mental process that notes the object is also arising and passing away. So, none of the mental or physical processes is ever-lasting. They are impermanent, instantly arising and very swiftly passing away. Does any mental process or physical process transmigrate to another existence? If it is ever-lasting, it will transmigrate to another existence. If it is not ever-lasting it is impermanent and subject to appearance and disappearance. Then it can't transmigrate to another existence. Does any mental process or physical process transmigrate to another existence? No.

Suppose that there is something which is ever-lasting. It may be called a soul, a self, a person, or a being. If there is something which is ever-lasting and independent of this dual process of mental and physical phenomena, does this thing transmigrate to a next existence? Yes.

Is there any so-called ever-lasting ego entity besides this mental and physical phenomena? No.

## **Nothing transmigrates to another existence**

Cause and effect cannot transmigrate. The cause arises and passes away, the effect also arises and passes away. They cannot transmigrate. What we can say is: there is nothing which transmigrates to another existence. Only things which are everlasting can transmigrate to another existence. If anything is arising and passing away, it cannot transmigrate to another existence because it arises and then passes away. Do you follow? Yes?

Now we have seen how a series of broken movements of lifting arises one after another and also how a series of consciousness arises and passes away one after another. When the last consciousness the present existence disappears, is there anything immediately after it? Yes. There must be another consciousness, because it is natural.

## **When consciousness has disappeared, there must arise another consciousness**

It is the law of nature. When consciousness has disappeared, there must arise another consciousness immediately after the old one's disappearance. When the last consciousness of the present existence has disappeared, there must arise another consciousness in accordance to the natural law. The consciousness that arises after the disappearance of the previous consciousness is not in the same existence. Then, what can we say? The consciousness is in another existence. A new life arises. Does anything migrate from this existence to the next one? No. There are only causes. What is the cause? The disappearance of the last consciousness of the previous existence is the cause. The appearance of the new existence is the effect.

Because the last consciousness of the previous existence has disappeared, or passed away, the new consciousness of another

existence has arisen. Do we need something which is everlasting to transmigrate to another existence? No. This is cause and effect.

This is why I said: when you have very clearly realised this cause and effect of mental and physical phenomena, then you have many benefits from your studying the Dhamma.

Only when you have realised this cause and effect in a series of lifting movements and a series of consciousnesses arising and passing away from moment to moment, you come to rightly understand how a new existence comes to be.

When you are not able to realise the arising of the new consciousness after the disappearance of the old one through your experience, you have the idea that there must be an ever-lasting entity which transmigrates to another existence. Only when you have realised this cause and effect in the series of lifting movements and the series of consciousnesses arising and passing away from moment to moment, you come to rightly understand how a new existence comes to be.

Do you follow? Is it possible to have a new existence without an ever-lasting entity? Yes. When a person holds that there's an ever-lasting entity, which transmigrates to another existence, that view is called eternalism, *sassata ditṭhi* in Pāli. The Buddha rejected this view.

This view is not right because we see mental and physical phenomena which are arising and passing away one after another, from moment to moment. So, nothing is eternal, everything is transient and impermanent.

## **Annihilationism**

Another view is: there's an ego entity which is temporarily lasting and which dissolves at the time of death of a person. This ego entity which is lasting for the whole life, is annihilated at the time of death of a person. Because the body dissolved at the

time of death, the same happens with that temporarily lasting ego entity. It also dissolves with the death of the body. It is annihilated at the time of death of a person, so there's no life after death. If there's no life after death, is there any life before birth? No. So, life is between womb and tomb.

That ego entity which is lasting temporarily is annihilated at the time of death. This is called annihilationism. We call it *uccheda diṭṭhi*. The Buddha rejected it because there's nothing which dissolves at the time of death of a person. When a person dies, consciousness has disappeared, but another consciousness arises immediately after. Why does another consciousness arise? Because the last consciousness of the present life, or the present existence has disappeared. The disappearance of the present consciousness is the cause and the arising of the new consciousness is the effect.

In this way, the two are connected as cause and effect. Nothing transmigrates to another existence. This is what the Buddha taught. Then, *uccheda diṭṭhi*, annihilationism, is also not right. *Sassata diṭṭhi*, eternalism, is also not right.

## **Dependent origination, *paṭiccasamuppāda***

What is right? There are mental and physical processes which are arising and passing away, ever-changing from moment to moment, they depend each other as cause and effect. So, it is called "causal relation". Here, what the Buddha teaches us is dependent origination, *paṭiccasamuppāda*. It is in accordance with the link between the previous existence and the next one. We shall explain this dependent origination, *paṭiccasamuppāda*, which is included in the insight knowledge that discerns cause and effect, conditionality. Because of the disappearance of the previous consciousness there arises the following consciousness. It is called *natthi paccayo* in the Buddhist Abhidhamma.

*Natthi* means absence, *paccayo* means cause. The absence of the previous consciousness is the cause and the arising of the following one is the effect. This is called *natthi paccayo*, the cause of absence. There are 24 causes. We call them interrelated causes as expounded by the Buddha in the Abhidhamma scriptures. Because the previous consciousness has disappeared or because of the absence of the previous one, the new or the following one arises, and so on.

## **There doesn't arise a new consciousness in some cases**

No single cause can make any mental process or physical process arise. There are at least three or four causes. Even though the last consciousness of the present existence has disappeared, there doesn't arise a new consciousness in some cases. You have some knowledge of the noble ones, *ariya puggala*, according to Buddhism. The first one is the *sotāpanna*, the second one is *sakadāgāmī*, and the third one is *anāgāmī*. The fourth one, the last one, is the arahant. Even though the last consciousness of an arahant has disappeared, there's no other consciousness arising. After the disappearance of the arahant, there's no life after it for an arahant.

This is against the natural law. Do you agree with me? Yes. The natural law is: when the first one has disappeared, then the second one must arise. That's the natural law. But when that last consciousness of the arahant has passed away, there doesn't arise any new consciousness, so it is against the natural law. He has no other existence.

Why? That is craving for existence as another cause. We call it *bhavaṭaṇhā*. Say, everyone wants to live, no one wants to die. This means everyone has craving for existence. Because of craving or attachment to existence, that cause motivates the consciousness to arise after the last one has disappeared.

We can say that because we are willing to live we have another existence. Because we are attached to our life, we have another life. That is called *bhavataṇhā*, craving for existence.

An arahant who has attained all the four stages of path knowledge and the four stages of fruition knowledge hasn't any craving or attachment at all. All craving and attachment has been destroyed by the four stages of enlightenment which is very powerful and penetrating. So he hasn't any craving, attachment, or desire to be reborn again or for another existence. That's why he hasn't any existence after his passing away.

Even though the last consciousness has disappeared, there's no other consciousness arising. This is not against the natural law. Why? Because naturally the arahant has destroyed all attachment and craving and desire.

So here we find another cause. There is not only the disappearance of the consciousness of the last existence, but there's also craving for another existence which makes another life arise. How many causes? Two causes. One is the disappearance of the last consciousness of the present existence, another one is craving for existence.

*Kamma* is also one of the causes to make another life arise

There is also another cause. Action, *kamma*. *Kamma* is also one of the causes to make another life arise, to give rise to another existence. What do you mean by *kamma*? Action. Bad action or good action. Bad action gives rise to good existence. Good action gives rise to good existence. This *kamma*, action, is also one of the causes. When these three causes are combined together, they give rise to another existence.

What you should do is to observe every intention before every action. You should also try to try to realise every movement the foot, every movement of the rising and falling movement, and every movement of the other actions very specifically and precisely, so that you can realise these things through your experience.

May all of you become enlightened and achieve the cessation of suffering.

# The Noble Eightfold Path

Today is the 13th of January 1992.

## The cause of craving for another existence is ignorance

If we have craving, we are sure to be born again. Because we crave for being reborn, there is a next existence. Unless we have craving for being reborn in the next existence, we won't be reborn. The arahant who has completely removed mental defilements beginning with ignorance, attachment, craving, and so on, hasn't any desire or craving of being reborn in another existence. So he is not reborn in another existence.

The Buddha said: Craving or desire is known as *taṇhā* in Pāḷi. Ignorance is called *avijjā*, ignorance of the natural processes of bodily and mental phenomena. You take this dual process to be a person, a being, an I, or a you. Then *sakkāya diṭṭhi*, *atta diṭṭhi*, the view of a personality, an individuality, arises. When that concept of a personality or individuality arises, that person has a desire for existence.

Ignorance of the natural processes of mental and physical phenomena is the cause.

The arising of the concept of a personality is the effect.

The concept of a personality or individuality is the cause, the arising of desire or craving for existence is the effect.

When desire or craving for existence, together with passing away of consciousness of the previous existence is the cause, then the arising of the first consciousness of the following existence is the effect.

## **The truth of suffering, *dukkha sacca***

The original cause of another existence which is full of a great deal of suffering is ignorance of mental and physical phenomena. To put it in another way, it is ignorance of the truth of suffering, the first truth, *dukkha sacca*. Mental and physical phenomena are the truth of suffering, *dukkha sacca*. When you have mental processes or mental phenomena, you are sure to suffer from them. When you have physical phenomena, you are sure to suffer from them. All these mental and physical phenomena are suffering or the truth of suffering, *dukkha sacca*.

Ignorance of these mental and physical phenomena means ignorance of the truth of suffering. When you want to destroy desire or craving for existence, first of all you have to endeavour to destroy the ignorance, *avijja*. When you want to destroy ignorance, *avijja*, you have to thoroughly realise mental and physical phenomena in their true nature, the truth of suffering.

Mentality and corporeality which is the truth of suffering is to be thoroughly realised. It is called *pariññeyya*. In the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta, the Discourse of Setting in Motion of the Wheel of Dhamma, the first sermon expounded by the Buddha, he says, “Thus I have vision, thus I come to have insight, thus I become enlightened”.

All these words refer to enlightenment which penetrates into the truth of suffering, bodily and mental phenomena in their true nature. What the Buddha means is that unless you are able to realise bodily and mental phenomena which are the truth of suffering, *dukkha sacca*, you cannot get rid of suffering. If you do not rightly understand suffering as suffering, you take

it to be non-suffering, happiness, pleasure, and so on. Then you are attached to it.

When you are attached to suffering, you won't strive to get rid of it because you are attached to it. In your meditation practice, when you are attached to calmness, tranquillity, or serenity experienced in your practice, then you are afraid of losing it. So you become attached to it, you grasp at it.

Because of attachment or grasping, you can't attain the higher stages of insight knowledge because you are delayed by attachment to the calmness and tranquillity which are very trivial things compared to the cessation of suffering. But you don't know it, so you are attached to it.

Then you don't strive to go up the other stages, the higher stages of insight knowledge. Then you stay there. Attachment to calmness, serenity, or tranquillity is also subject to impermanence. If the concentration becomes weak, tranquillity is gone, quietness is gone, and serenity has disappeared. Then again, you go down to the foundation of your meditation, the base of your meditation.

You have to try to concentrate your mind more and more deeply by being mindful and attentive very deeply, so that you can concentrate on the object of meditation. If you do not realise or rightly understand the body-mind process, psycho-physical phenomena, as just suffering, then you are attached to it.

When you are attached to this suffering, you won't strive to be free from it. You take it to be happiness, to be desirable, pleasurable, and so on, because you do not rightly understand suffering as suffering. So you do not put enough effort into your practice to get rid of this suffering. You even don't meditate in order to get rid of this suffering because you take it to be a good thing, happiness, pleasure, enjoyment, and so on.

Only when you have rightly understood this body-mind process as suffering, or the truth of *dukkha sacca* do you want to be free from it.

When you want to be free from it, you will find out the way which leads to the extinction of all kinds of suffering, because you do not want to suffer.

If you have rightly understood *dukkha sacca*, the truth of suffering, that is mental and physical phenomena, it means that you have destroyed ignorance, *avijja*, of the body-mind process. When ignorance of the body-mind process has been destroyed, you won't have craving for existence.

Because you have rightly understood the body-mind process as just suffering, you won't have any craving or desire for existence which constitutes mental and physical phenomena, the truth of suffering. To destroy, to remove, or to eradicate ignorance, *avijja*, of bodily and mental phenomena, you must rightly understand or realise bodily and mental phenomena as they really are.

## ***Samma diṭṭhi*, right understanding**

Right understanding of bodily and mental phenomena is to see them just as a natural process of mentality and physicality which are subject to impermanence, suffering and no-self, no-soul, or impersonal nature. Then, ignorance has gone. That right understanding is called *samma diṭṭhi*, one of the eight factors of the noble path which leads you to the cessation of suffering. You rightly understand bodily and mental phenomena, the truth of suffering, *dukkha sacca*, as just suffering.

That right understanding or right view exterminates ignorance. When ignorance is absent in your mind, then you won't crave for another existence. Then you won't be reborn again. Right understanding of mental and physical phenomena is the most important factor to destroy ignorance and craving for another existence.

How can you rightly understand mental and physical phenomena in their true nature? Yes, there's a way expounded by

the Buddha to rightly understand mental and physical phenomena as they really are. That way is called the middle way or the middle path, *majjhimā paṭipadā* in Pāli. This *majjhimā paṭipadā*, this middle way or middle path, is also mentioned by the Buddha in the first sermon, the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta, “These two extremes, bhikkhus, should not be adopted by one who has gone forth from the home life. Which two? On one hand, the devotion to hedonism towards *kāma*, which is inferior, vulgar, common, *anāriya*, deprived of benefit, and on the other hand the devotion to self-mortification, which is *dukkha*, *anāriya*, deprived of benefit. Without going to these two extremes, bhikkhus, the Tathāgata has fully awakened to the *majjhimā paṭipadā*, which produces vision, which produces *ñāṇa*, and leads to appeasement, to *abhiññā*, to *sambodhi*, to *Nibbāna*”.

## The Noble Eightfold Path

What is that noble path? The noble path or noble way consists of eight factors. What are they? *Sammā ditṭhi*, *sammā saṅkappa*, *sammā vācā*, *sammā kammanta*, *sammā ājīva*, *sammā vāyāma*, *sammā sati*, *sammā samādhi*.

The first factor is *sammā ditṭhi*, right understanding. The second one is *sammā saṅkappa*, right thought—these two factors (*sammā ditṭhi* and *sammā saṅkappa*) are included in the group of wisdom. The third one is *sammā vācā*, right speech. *Sammā kammanta*, right deed or right action is the fourth one. *Sammā ājīva* is right livelihood, the fifth one. These three factors belong to the group of *sīla*, virtue or moral conduct. Then *sammā vāyāma*, right effort, *sammā sati*, right mindfulness, *sammā samādhi*, right concentration. These three belong to the group of concentration.

In this way, the Noble Eightfold Path is classified into three trainings. The first one is training in wisdom. The second one is training in *sīla* or virtue. The third one is training in *samādhi*, concentration.

This Noble Eightfold Path is known as the noble path or the noble way which leads a person to the cessation of all kinds of suffering. The Buddha said that you must develop this Noble Eightfold Path, the middle way, so that you can get rid of all kinds of suffering, eradicating the original cause of suffering, ignorance, and its effect craving or desire. In this way, you can become free from all kinds of suffering.

This middle way was expounded by the Buddha as *magga sacca*, the truth of the way leading to the cessation of suffering. If you develop this Noble Eightfold Path in you by means of mindfulness meditation, there arises right understanding, *sammā ditṭhi*, which realises all mental and physical phenomena as they really are. When the body-mind process is rightly understood or realised, you have no desire for it, you have no craving for it. So, you have no craving for another existence which consists of mental and physical phenomena, the truth of suffering.

To eradicate ignorance and craving or desire, you have to completely realise or rightly understand *nāma* and *rūpa*—materiality and mentality which is the truth of suffering, *dukkha sacca*. *Dukkha sacca*, the truth of suffering, materiality and mentality is to be completely realised, *pariññeyya* in Pāḷi.

Why do you need to exterminate craving for existence or craving for existence with mental and physical processes? Because you want to get rid of suffering.

How can you do away with this ignorance and craving? By rightly understanding the truth of suffering as just suffering.

How can you rightly understand this truth of suffering, materiality and mentality? By developing the Noble Eightfold Path, *magga sacca*, the truth of the way leading to the cessation of suffering.

When you develop the Noble Eightfold Path, then the main factor of the Noble Eightfold Path, which is right understanding, realises mental and physical phenomena, the truth of suffering, as just suffering. Then you have eradicated ignorance. When you have eradicated ignorance, then you have also eradicated

craving or desire as a result. When you don't have craving or desire for existence then you get rid of suffering. What should we do with craving or desire? Should we try to possess them, to have them, should we try to develop craving or desire? No. We should note them. We should destroy them, we should abandon them, we should eradicate them, we should exterminate them. Because they are the cause of suffering, the immediate cause of suffering.

This desire or craving is to be completely abandoned or to be completely destroyed. In Pāli we call it *pahātabba*. The Buddha said,

*Tarī kho paṇ'idaṃ dukkhaṃ ariyasaccaṃ pariññātaṇ'ti  
me, bhikkhave, pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu  
cakkhuṃ udapādi, ñāṇaṃ udapādi, paññā udapādi, vijjā  
udapādi, āloko udapādi*

in the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta, the Discourse of the Setting in Motion the Wheel of the Dhamma. Most Burmese Buddhists memorize this Sutta in Pāli. Many of them do not understand the meaning of it. They memorize and chant it with a view to accumulate meritorious deeds. This is what the Buddha said, this is the teaching of the Buddha in their mind, then they chant.

The Buddha said, “*pahātabban'ti me, bhikkhave*”. *Pahātabba* in Pāli means that desire or *taṇhā* is to be abandoned or to be destroyed. If desire or craving is not destroyed it causes suffering to arise, both mental and physical. If anyone does not want any suffering, mental or physical, he must endeavour to abandon or destroy *taṇhā*, attachment, or craving. So, this is *pahātabba*, which must be abandoned or destroyed. Then, how can we destroy this *taṇhā*, desire or craving? Here, I forgot to tell you. What is the cause of suffering? Do you know that? What is the cause of all kinds of suffering? Ignorance is the original cause.

There's also an immediate cause. What is the immediate cause of suffering? Attachment, desire, or craving. This is the cause of suffering. You brought your car when you came here

to the retreat. Your car is very useful in your life, so you are attached to it. Then suppose that the car is taken away by someone. When you look for it, you don't see it. The car is gone. Suffering! You are unhappy and worried about it. Sometimes sadness arises. "How shall I go home? On foot?" That unhappiness is suffering, mental suffering. What causes this mental suffering? "I" or "you"? Attachment to the car causes suffering to arise. Attachment, craving, or desire is the immediate cause of suffering. Do you agree with me? If you agree with me, it means that you agree with the Buddha. Because the Lord Buddha teaches us that attachment, desire, and craving are the causes of suffering. *Samudaya sacca* we call it.

## Four kinds of *sacca*, truths

There are, as you know, four kinds of *sacca*, truths. The first one is the truth of suffering, *dukkha sacca*. The second is the truth of the cause of suffering, *samudaya sacca*. The third is the truth of the cessation of suffering, *nirodha sacca*. The fourth is the truth of the way leading to the cessation of suffering, *maggā sacca*.

I have explained the first one, *dukkha sacca*, the truth of suffering. With the word "the truth of suffering", the Buddha refers to all mental and physical phenomena. Because they are subject to impermanence and because they are arising and passing away they are suffering. The word *samudaya sacca*, the truth of the cause of suffering, refers to *taṇhā* in Pāli, attachment, desire, craving, lust, greed, clinging and so on.

All these mental states which have the nature of clinging to the object are *samudaya sacca*, truth of the cause of suffering. When you have developed the Noble Eightfold Path perfectly, then you have rightly understood bodily and mental phenomena as just suffering. Then, you are not attached to any mental or physical process. You are not attached to your son. You are not attached to your daughter. You are not attached to your wife.

You are not attached to your husband. You are not attached to your car. You are not attached to your house.

Why? Because *taṇhā*, attachment, craving, or desire has been destroyed by right understanding, *samma ditṭhi*, the right understanding of mental and physical phenomena. When you have done away with *taṇhā*, desire, or craving, then, will you have suffering, *dukkha*? No. Why? Because the cause, desire or attachment has been destroyed, there won't arise any suffering at all.

## **Cessation of suffering is known as *nirodha sacca***

Here, *dukkha*, suffering, ceases to exist. You have obtained the cessation of suffering because you have completely destroyed the attachment, desire or craving. The cessation of suffering is known as *nirodha sacca*. *Nirodha sacca*, the truth of the cessation of suffering.

*Nirodha* means cessation, disappearance, passing away, extinction, or end. The truth of the end of suffering is *nirodha sacca*. You don't want it? Would you like it? Yes. That is *nirodha sacca*, the truth of the cessation of suffering. This can be attained through right understanding of mental and physical phenomena which destroys the attachment or desire or craving by means of mindfulness meditation. When you rightly understand mental and physical phenomena as just suffering or as *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*—impermanence, suffering and impersonal nature.

## **Three types of *dukkha***

Here, I forgot to explain the three types of *dukkha*: cessation of suffering is known as *nirodha sacca*. Now I won't explain it because there is no time, only five minutes. *Anicca*—impermanence, *dukkha*—suffering. Here, *dukkha*—suffering

refers mainly to *saṅkhāradukkhatā*, one of the three types of *dukkha*.

*Saṅkhāradukkhatā* means the nature of being constantly oppressed by constant arising and passing away—this is *dukkha*. Please be careful to grasp the sense of this word *dukkha*. The word *dukkha* is wrongly understood most of the time. It should be understood as, “the nature of being constantly oppressed by the instant arising and passing away”. We should realise: *anicca, dukkha, anatta*.

When you are able to observe all daily activities in more and more detail, you do not carry out any activity unmindfully. Each and every activity is very specifically and precisely observed. When your mind is well concentrated on each activity, you come to know, “There are many activities to be observed and to realise”. You are also able to note every intention before every action and movement.

When you, say, sit at the table on a chair to eat your meal at lunchtime, first of all you have to sit on the chair and note it. When the body touches the chair, note it. When you look at the plate, note it. When you see it, note it. When you have the intention to take the food, note it. When you have the intention to lift your hand, note it. When the food is lifted, note it. When you intend to stretch out, note it. When you stretch it out, note it. How many activities do you have? Innumerable activities you have to note.

With deep concentration as a result of enough effort, you realise that there’s one activity, then it passes away, then another activity arises, you note it, then it passes away, then the following one arises and passes away, you note it.

What do you feel? You get tired of it or fed up with. It means the nature of being oppressed—being constantly oppressed—by the constant arising and passing away of mental and physical phenomena. It is *dukkha*, suffering. To realise this kind of *dukkha* you have to develop the middle path, the Noble Eightfold Path

by being aware of all mental and physical phenomena, by being mindful of all mental and physical phenomena.

In this way, gradually the mind gets concentrated and insight knowledge becomes sharp and penetrating. It realises impermanence, the nature of being constantly oppressed by arising and passing away, and the impersonal nature. Then you have destroyed ignorance. Then you have destroyed desire and craving. Then you don't have any desire for existence, so you have got the cessation of suffering, *nirodha sacca*.

May all of you rightly understand what the Buddha teaches us as the way of deliverance and strive for it and achieve it.



# The Noble Eightfold Path, contd.

Today is the 14th of January 1992.

*Nirodha sacca* is the cessation of suffering. *Brahma loka*, *deva loka*, hell or heaven, what is that? When you are reborn in the brahma world, any world of devas or deities, can you extinguish your suffering, can you destroy your suffering? Difficult. As long as you have *taṇhā*, craving, attachment, you are not able to attain the cessation of suffering, wherever you are reborn, be it in the human world, hell, heaven, or in the realms of brahmas or devas.

The cessation of suffering means Nibbāna. When all suffering ceases to exist, you are liberated from suffering. It is also called liberation or deliverance, emancipation from all kinds of suffering. This *nirodha sacca* is Nibbāna, the cessation of suffering. When you would like to do away with all kinds of suffering, what should you do? You should destroy its cause, the cause of suffering, *samudaya sacca*, which is *taṇhā* or attachment. Can you destroy this *taṇhā* or attachment? What is the answer? Can you destroy this *taṇhā* or attachment, the cause of suffering? Yes, you can. When? Now or later? How many years later?

As long as you are not able to thoroughly realise mental and bodily phenomena in their true nature, then you are not able to realise the three characteristics of materiality and mentality. What are they? Impermanence, suffering, and impersonal nature of materiality and mentality. They must be thoroughly re-

alised, when you want to destroy *taṇhā*, attachment, which is the cause of suffering.

To do away with *taṇhā* or attachment, *samudaya sacca*, the cause of suffering, you have to rightly understand bodily and mental phenomena in their true nature. *Taṇhā* arises from ignorance in the true nature of mental and physical phenomena. The Noble Eightfold Path is the way leading to the cessation of suffering through abandonment of *taṇhā*, attachment, or craving. When you have fully developed the Noble Eightfold Path, you are sure to destroy the cause of suffering.

When you develop the Noble Eightfold Path, and when concentration is deep enough, there arises right understanding. This means that the insight that arises together with the concentration becomes penetrating and rightly understands the body-mind process as it actually is. Right view, *samma diṭṭhi*, or insight knowledge has realised mental and physical phenomena by means of developing the Noble Eightfold Path. Ignorance has been replaced by right understanding.

The Noble Eightfold Path leads to rightly understand the body-mind process, *nāma* and *rūpa* in its true nature. It destroys attachment or *taṇhā* and then leads to the cessation of suffering. The Noble Eightfold Path is the way which leads to the cessation of suffering, *nirodha sacca*.

## The truth that needs to be fully developed

The Buddha said that the Noble Eightfold Path is *bhāvetabba*. In Pāḷi, *bhāvetabba* means the truth that needs to be fully developed. *Bhāvetabba*, the truth that must be fully developed. When the Noble Eightfold Path is fully developed, there arises right understanding of mental and physical phenomena which destroys *taṇhā*, that is, *samudaya sacca*. Then it enables the meditator to attain the cessation of suffering, Nibbāna.

These are the Four Noble Truths: *dukkha sacca*, *samudaya sacca*, *nirodha sacca*, *magga sacca*.

*Dukkha sacca*, the truth of suffering. *Sacca* is truth, *dukkha* is suffering. So, *dukkha sacca* means: the truth of suffering.

With *dukkha sacca* the Buddha refers to *nāma* and *rūpa*. What is *nāma*? All mental processes, all mental phenomena. What is *rūpa*? All material phenomena. All these material and mental phenomena are *dukkha*, suffering. If you know suffering very clearly, you won't be attached to it. But we are attached to it to some extent because our knowledge of suffering is not very clear yet.

*Samudaya sacca*, the truth of the cause of suffering. *Sacca* is truth, *samudaya* is the cause. *Samudaya sacca* means the truth of the cause of suffering.

With *samudaya sacca* the Buddha refers to *taṇhā*, attachment, desire, or craving. *Taṇhā*, attachment, desire, or craving is the cause of suffering. *Samudaya sacca*, the cause of suffering, is *taṇhā* in Pāḷi, attachment, desire, craving, and so on.

*Nirodha sacca*, the truth of the cessation of suffering. *Nirodha* means cessation, or extinction, or end. *Sacca* means truth. The truth of the cessation of suffering. But, the full term for this truth of the cessation of suffering is: *dukkha nirodha*. *dukkha* is suffering, *nirodha* is cessation. *dukkha nirodha* is the cessation of suffering. So, *nirodha sacca* is the cessation of suffering.

Where can you find the cessation of suffering? The Buddha said that you can find it within you, not outside you. How can you find it in you? When *samudaya sacca*, *taṇhā*, or attachment, is destroyed, what do you have in you or outside you?

At the Buddha's time, a rich man realised life or existence as a burning fire, so he wanted to get rid of it. He was married, he had a baby. He got the permission from his wife to become ordained, but his wife very reluctantly gave him her permission. The Omniscient Buddha told the Saṅgha to ordain him and he was ordained as a bhikkhu.

Then he went to a forest and practised *vipassanā* meditation, mindfulness meditation, very strenuously without sleeping at night. In a couple of days, he had attained arahantship, the fourth stage of enlightenment which destroys all kinds of mental defilements such as desire, craving, hatred, ignorance, anger, aversion, and so on. He became an arahant.

Having destroyed all kinds of mental defilements, he went to the Jetavāna monastery where the Buddha was residing at that time. He was accommodated in a *kuti* at the edge of the monastery compound. Then he sat under a tree near his *kuti*, meditating.

His wife came to him. Four times she requested him to return to her, but he was not moved. Then, his wife, ex-wife, requested it repeatedly. Yes, ex-wife, or former wife. Because now he was a monk and monks are not married. So, he had no wife.

The monk did not open his eyes. He concentrated the mind on whatever was arising in his body and mind as it really is. The wife cried because he did not respond to her request. But the monk was not moved, he did not open his eyes. Then the wife had some thoughts, she had a good plan what she would do and went back home. What did she do? She came back to the monk with her baby. Very good plan. The baby is the focal point. When she reached the monk, she placed the baby before the monk. Then she said, “Venerable Sir, this is your baby. He is longing for his father”. But the monk was not moved, not affected. He did not open his eyes.

Then his wife twisted the baby’s hand and the baby cried very loudly. The monk was not moved, not affected, he did not open his eyes. He felt happy and peaceful. The woman went away and standing behind a tree peeked. The baby was crying but the monk stayed peaceful, not affected. This took a very long time. The woman was disappointed. This technique did not work either. So, she took the baby and went back home.

Then, after a long meditation, the monk rose from his seat and practised walking meditation. He felt peaceful and happy.

Nothing could affect him. Nothing could move him. Why? Because he had no suffering. Why? Because the *taṇhā*, attachment, *samudaya sacca*, the truth of suffering, had been totally destroyed through enlightenment. Then, where is the cessation of suffering, within or outside? Inside.

This cessation of suffering can be experienced within you through the development of the Noble Eightfold Path.

## The Noble Eightfold Path

- *Sammā diṭṭhi* means right understanding or right view.
- *Samma saṅkappa* means right thought.
- *Sammā kammanta* means right deed or right action.
- *Sammā ājīva* means right livelihood or right living.
- *Sammā vācā* means right speech.

The first two are in the group of wisdom. The second three are in the group of morality.

- *Sammā vāyāma* is right effort or right energy. Effort is better.
- *Sammā sati* is right mindfulness.
- *Sammā samādhi* is right concentration.

These three are in the group of concentration, *samādhi*. *Sīla*, *samādhi*, *paññā*. *Sīla* is moral conduct, *samādhi* is concentration, and *paññā* is wisdom or enlightenment.

*Sammā diṭṭhi* means right understanding. Right understanding of mental and physical phenomena in their true nature; this means right understanding of the three characteristics of materiality and mentality.

*Samma saṅkappa* means right thought. It is not thinking about something else. It is not thinking. It means a mental state that directs the mind to the object of meditation repeatedly. If there's no *samma saṅkappa*, you can't concentrate your mind well

on the object of meditation because the mind tends to go out very often. It is one of the mental states that arises together with mindfulness and it leads or directs the mind to the object of meditation.

*Sammā vācā* means right speech; abstention from unrighteous speech or evil speech.

*Sammā kammanta* means right deed; abstention from unrighteous deeds or actions, or evil deeds or actions.

*Sammā ājīva* means right livelihood; abstention from unrighteous livelihood or bad livelihood, evil livelihood.

These three can be attained through abstention or refraining. When you refrain from evil speech you have *sammā vācā*, right speech. When you refrain from evil deeds or actions, you have *sammā kammanta*. When you refrain from bad or evil livelihood, you have *sammā ājīva*. In refraining from bad speech, bad deed, and bad livelihood, you can be endowed with these three mental factors of the Noble Eightfold Path.

## **How can we refrain from bad speech, bad deed, and bad livelihood?**

How can we refrain from bad speech, bad deed, and bad livelihood? Very easily, by observing the precepts. When you observe five precepts or eight precepts, you can refrain from bad speech, bad deed, and bad livelihood. Then you have these three factors in you. From the time you fully observe your precepts, you are endowed with these three mental factors of the *sīla* or morality group.

## How the Noble Eightfold Path is part of daily practice

When you practise mindfulness meditation, you are observing the movement of the foot while you are walking: “lifting, pushing, dropping, touching, pressing”, and so on. Suppose your concentration is very good because you have continuity of mindfulness for a certain period of time through your strenuous effort. When the mind is concentrated on each movement of the foot—lifting movement, pushing movement, dropping movement, touching, and pressing—then gradually, because of deep concentration there arises insight. It means that you are realising each movement of lifting, each movement of pushing, and each movement of dropping without awareness of the form of the foot or the sense of the foot.

What you are realising is just upward movements, pushing movements, dropping movements, touching sensation, and pressing. You do not take these movements to be your leg, your foot, or yourself, because you have lost the sense of the form of the foot and yourself, too. When you realise a series of small movements of lifting, that it is right understanding because you see it as it is. You see the movements as just movements, a natural process of movements. It is just a natural process of movements.

When you observe the movement of the foot, you have to make a mental effort to note or to observe the movement. That mental effort is right effort. Why? Because it leads you to the realisation of the natural process of movement. Because of effort you observe it.

You are mindful of the movement as it is. That mindfulness is right because it leads you to the realisation of a natural process. That is right mindfulness, *sammā sati*.

Because of powerful *sammā sati*, right mindfulness, the mind becomes concentrated to a large extent. That concentration is

right because it leads you to the realisation of a natural process. This is right concentration, *sammā samādhi*.

Sometimes the mind tends to go out. Sometimes it goes out very shortly, for a moment or for a second or two. One of the mental states which arises together with mindfulness directs the noting mind to the object of meditation, that is, the movements. The mental state that directs the mind to the object of meditation is *sammā saṅkappa*, right thought.

In this way, the mind is more and more concentrated. Then there arises the insight that realises the movement as a series of movements of a natural process. This is right understanding.

Then, you have five factors. The first is: *sammā vāyāma*, right effort; the second is: *sammā sati*, right mindfulness; the third is *sammā samādhi*, right concentration; the fourth is, *sammā saṅkappa*, right thought; the fifth is right *sammā diṭṭhi*, understanding. *Sammā vācā*, *sammā kammanta*, and *sammā ājīva*, these three are already with you because you are observing precepts. In this way, your mindfulness meditation consists of the Noble Eightfold Path. It leads you to the cessation of suffering.

So may this Noble Eightfold Path lead you to the cessation of suffering, Nibbāna.

# The Noble Eightfold Path, contd.

Today is the 15th of January 1992.

When you fully develop this Noble Eightfold Path within you by being mindful of what is happening to your body and mind as it really occurs, then you realise the truth of suffering, this body-mind process as it really is. That realisation removes the cause of suffering, *taṇhā*, attachment or craving. When the cause of suffering, *taṇhā*, has been removed, there's no suffering at all. The suffering ceases to exist. Then you have attained the cessation of suffering. In this way, the Four Noble Truths are interrelated.

Here, the truth of suffering, the body-mind process, is the effect. The truth of the cause of suffering, *samudaya sacca*, *taṇhā*, is the cause. *Taṇhā* or attachment causes suffering to arise. Every suffering is caused by attachment, craving, desire, lust, or greed. The truth of suffering, the body-mind process, is the effect and the truth of the cause of suffering, *taṇhā*, attachment, is the cause.

These two kinds of truth are mundane. They are connected with worldly affairs. To attain the cessation of suffering, deliverance, emancipation, or eternal peace, you have to remove the cause of suffering.

## To do it you have to realise the body-mind process in its true nature

To realise this body-mind process in its true nature you have to develop *magga sacca*, the truth of the way leading to the cessation of suffering. This is the Noble Eightfold Path.

When you fully developed the Noble Eightfold Path by being mindful of whatever arises in your body and mind as it really occurs, then, eventually, you attain the cessation of suffering.

*Magga sacca*, the truth of the way leading to the end of suffering is the cause, and *nirodha sacca*, the cessation of suffering, is the effect. These two kinds of truth are supramundane. We call them *lokuttara*. It means that they are beyond the world, *lokuttara*.

The first two truths, *dukkha sacca* and *samudaya sacca*, are mundane. They are connected to worldly affairs, they are in the world. *Magga sacca* means the Noble Eightfold Path. But it is divided into two parts. The first one is the Noble Eightfold Path connected with the world.

The second part is not connected with the world, but it is beyond the world. The second part is called supramundane. When we are mindful of any mental and physical phenomena very clearly and precisely, then we have to make a mental effort.

This mental effort is *sammā vāyāma*, right effort. Because of effort you are mindful of what is happening to your body and mind as it really occurs. This is mindfulness. This mindfulness is right mindfulness, *sammā sati*.

Gradually, the mind becomes concentrated to a certain extent on the object of either a mental process or physical process. That concentration is apt, so it is right concentration, *sammā samādhi*.

When the mind goes out, one of the mental factors directs the mind to the object of meditation, any mental process or physical process. This is *sammā saṅkappa*, right thought.

In this way, gradually, with deeper concentration, you come to realise the mental process as just a natural process of mentality. You come to realise the physical process as just a natural process of physical phenomena. They are neither a person nor a being. What are they? They are natural processes of mentality and physicality. This is right understanding, realisation. It is *sammā ditṭhi*, right understanding or right view.

In this way, while you are practising *vipassanā* meditation, mindfulness meditation, you are cultivating these five factors of the Noble Eightfold Path: right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration, right thought, right understanding—*sammā vāyāma*, *sammā sati*, *sammā samādhi*, *sammā saṅkappa*, *sammā ditṭhi*.

You also have the other three mental factors of the Noble Eightfold Path which are in the group of *sīla*, moral conduct. You are refraining from bad speech while your mind is well concentrated on the movement of the foot, a mental process, or a physical process. Then you have *sammā vācā*, right speech.

You are refraining from bad deeds or actions. Then you have *sammā kammanta*, right deed or action. You are refraining from bad livelihood. Then you have *sammā ājīva*, right livelihood. By refraining from bad speech, bad deeds and bad livelihood you are endowed with these three factors of virtue: *sammā vācā*, right speech; *sammā kammanta*, right action; and *sammā ājīva*, right livelihood. In this way, you are developing this Noble Eightfold Path while you are mindful of whatever arises in your body and mind as it really occurs.

But this Noble Eightfold Path is mundane. It is included in the world, not beyond the world.

Only when you have fully developed the mundane factors of the Noble Eightfold Path can you attain the first stage of enlightenment.

As long as you have not reached the first path knowledge, the first stage of enlightenment, *sotāpattimagga*, you are developing the mundane factors of the Noble Eightfold Path. When you have

reached the first stage of enlightenment, *sotāpattimagga*, you also developed this Noble Eightfold Path.

At that moment you have also these eight factors of the Noble Eightfold Path. But the consciousness or knowledge which is called the path knowledge or the first stage of enlightenment is called beyond the world. None of the supramundane factors of the Noble Eightfold Path can be attained without the mundane factors. Only when you have fully developed the mundane factors of the Noble Eightfold Path, can you attain *magga*, path knowledge, the first stage of enlightenment. It is only then that you have attained the cessation of suffering, *nirodha sacca*. You experience it at the moment of the first stage of enlightenment.

The cessation of suffering is to be experienced by a meditator who develops the supramundane factors of the Noble Eightfold Path

What you should know is that the Four Noble Truths can be divided into two groups:

The first group is the truth of suffering, that is the body-mind process, and the truth of the cause of suffering, that is *taṇhā*, attachment or craving.

The second group is *nirodha sacca*, the cessation of suffering, and *magga sacca*, the way leading to the cessation of suffering.

In the first group, the truth of the cause of suffering, *taṇhā* or attachment, *samudaya sacca*, is the cause. The truth of suffering, *dukkha sacca*, the body-mind process is the effect. The suffering of mental and physical phenomena is caused by attachment, *taṇhā*, *samudaya sacca*. In the second group, *magga sacca*, the way leading to the cessation of suffering, is the Noble Eightfold Path, is the cause of the cessation of suffering. The cessation of suffering, *nirodha sacca*, is the effect.

But, there is a little difference between the two causes and effects. *Samudaya sacca*, *taṇhā*, or attachment is the immediate cause of suffering. But *magga sacca*, the way leading to the cessation of suffering, the Noble Eightfold Path, is not the immediate cause of the cessation of suffering. Without the development of

the Noble Eightfold Path you can't attain the cessation of suffering. But this is not an immediate cause or condition.

Because you have developed the Noble Eightfold Path, observing all mental and physical phenomena which are arising at the moment, you come to realise the body-mind process in its true nature. Because the body-mind process has been thoroughly realised you don't have any attachment to either bodily processes or mental processes. Then, attachment has been destroyed.

Only when attachment has been destroyed is there an end to suffering

Only when attachment has been destroyed can you be free of suffering. In this way, the Noble Eightfold Path, though it is the cause of the cessation of suffering, is not the immediate cause of the cessation suffering.

## The immediate cause of the cessation of suffering

According to the Abhidhamma philosophy of Buddhism the immediate cause is called *padatṭhāna* in Pāli. Attachment, *taṇhā*, is the immediate cause of suffering. So, it is the *padatṭhāna of suffering, dukkha*.

*Magga sacca*, the Noble Eightfold Path is not the immediate cause of the cessation of suffering. So, it is not the *padatṭhāna* of the cessation of suffering. But with the development of this Noble Eightfold Path you can attain the cessation of suffering. Therefore, the Noble Eightfold Path is the way leading to the cessation of suffering, the cause of the cessation of suffering.

What we know is whenever we are mindful of the rising—falling of the abdomen, the lifting, pushing, dropping, touching, pressing of the foot, the bending of the arm, or the stretching of the arm, false ideas, opinions, mental images, or painful sensa-

tions, then whatever we are mindful of, this mindfulness consists of the Noble Eightfold Path.

## **In practice**

When you began to practise mindfulness meditation, could you concentrate your mind well on the object of meditation? No. But the mind is concentrated on each object of mental and physical processes momentarily. Then you have momentary concentration. But it is not strong enough. When you are able to be mindful of “rising, falling, sitting touching” or “rising, rising, falling, falling” very precisely and closely, concentration becomes somewhat good. When you are able to observe very easily, say, the movement of the foot, “lifting, pushing, dropping, touching, and pressing”, without strain, and comfortably, then you can observe the movement of the foot precisely and closely. Even though you walk for an hour by noting these movements you do not feel tired. You feel pleased with your practice. The reason is that concentration is good enough.

The mind doesn't go out very often. It goes out very occasionally. But as soon as you know it, you note it. Then the thought disappears in a short time. In this way, gradually, your mind becomes concentrated more and more deeply.

You are also able to be mindful of some of the daily activities, say, about forty percent of the daily activities with some intentions before the actions too. Then the mind becomes concentrated to a certain extent in that field, in that respect, too. Then you get deep and good momentary concentration to a large extent.

In the sitting, your mind is concentrated on each object of rising, falling, pain, sitting, and so on, say, for about five minutes or ten minutes with very few thoughts which are noted and disappear very instantly. Then you come to know the rising movement and the falling movement very precisely; not just as ab-

dominal rising, not just as abdominal falling. What you are realising at that moment is the rising movement and the falling movement without the form of the abdomen. Sometimes you are not conscious of the bodily form or yourself. Then you very clearly realise the natural process of the rising movements and the natural process of the falling movements.

The same happens with the movement of the foot. You come to realise the lifting movement without the form of the leg or the foot. The same with the pushing movement, dropping movement, touching sensation, and pressing. You come to rightly understand the natural process of the lifting movement, pushing movement, dropping movement, touching sensation, and pressing movement. These are natural processes. You do not take them to be “I” or “you”, a person, a being. What you are seeing is just the natural process of movements.

When you observe a painful sensation in the sitting, then you very carefully observe the painful sensation, attentively and precisely. The mind penetrates into the centre of the painful sensation. You feel the pain somewhere, but not connected with your body or yourself. The mind knows it as it is. You have nothing to do with the pain.

There’s the painful sensation. You note it, you observe it, and you know that there is pain. Because the pain is not connected with you or with your person, you don’t feel displeased about it. You are not affected by the unpleasantness of the painful sensation, because you know it separately from your body or your person. It means that you do not identify the pain with yourself, so the pain is neither a person nor a being. What is there is the unpleasant feeling of a natural process. Then you come to rightly understand it.

That is *sammā ditṭhi*, right view or right understanding. Before you begin to rightly understand the pain, the movement of the foot, or the abdominal movement, you are accumulating your concentration so that it becomes deeper and deeper. At that moment you have not yet realised these natural processes of

rising movement and falling movement, these natural processes of lifting movement, pushing movement, dropping movement, or the natural process of unpleasant sensation. At that moment you have not yet realised, you have not yet right view or right understanding, *sammā diṭṭhi*. What you are having within you is just seven factors of the Noble Eightfold Path without *sammā diṭṭhi*.

In such a case you have developed only seven factors of the Noble Eightfold Path. When you are mindful of any mental or physical process and the mind begins to be concentrated on the object to a certain extent, then you don't yet have right understanding or realisation. In such a case, you have developed only seven factors of the Noble Eightfold Path.

Later you begin to rightly understand the rising movement as a natural process and the falling movement as a natural process and the mind that notes it. In the same way, you understand the lifting movement, pushing movement, and dropping movement and the mind that notes it. In the same way, you understand the painful sensation which is separate from your body, which is nothing connected with your body. It feels as if it is somewhere, say, about two feet from your body or yourself. Then you are rightly understanding these natural processes.

At that moment you have developed the Noble Eightfold Path including right view, right understanding, *sammā diṭṭhi*. In this way, in some cases you have developed seven factors of the Noble Eightfold Path. In some cases you have developed all the full eight factors of the Noble Eightfold Path.

If you have just concentration, then it is not realisation or right understanding. In this case, you have only developed seven factors without right understanding, *sammā diṭṭhi*. Only when you begin to realise or rightly understand bodily and mental processes in their true nature, then you have *sammā diṭṭhi*, right understanding. You see that it is easy for a meditator to know the meaning of the Noble Eightfold Path because you are developing the Noble Eightfold Path practically.

## The group of virtue or moral conduct

Right speech, *sammā vācā*; right deed, *sammā kammanta*; right livelihood, *sammā ājīva*. Right speech means abstention from four kinds of speech. We call it evil speech. It is classified into four aspects.

The first aspect is false speech. It is bad speech. If you speak false speech, you don't have *sammā vācā*.

The second aspect is usually translated by Pāli scholars as slandering and backbiting. What do they mean by that? Speaking badly about another person. For this one, the Pāli word is *pisuṇāvācā*. The speech which crushes the loving kindness between two persons is called backbiting, slandering. I asked some English people about these words, slandering and backbiting, and wanted to know if these words convey the desired sense of *pisuṇāvācā*. But they said that there's no word equivalent to that word *pisuṇāvācā*, the speech which crushes loving kindness between two persons. That is bad speech, very bad speech. Another aspect is rude and impolite speech or language. If you abstain from rude and impolite language, then you have *sammā vācā*, right speech.

The fourth aspect is called *samphappalapa*. *Samphappalapa* is useless talk, disadvantageous talk, or unbeneficial talk. It is also translated as frivolous speech. You talk, but it is of no use in worldly affairs or mundane affairs. This is called *samphappalapa*, frivolous speech.

Then there is *sammā kammanta*, right deed or action. Here too, you have three kinds of bad deeds to abstain from. The first one is abstention from killing, or abstention from harming or taking life. This is *sammā kammanta*. Harming or taking life is one of three bad deeds. The second one is illegal sexual contact. This is also a bad deed, a bad action. The meaning of this precept is very complicated. It depends on the customary law and different laws in many different countries. But according to Buddhist law it is very clear.

You may know the last one, the third one. Taking what is not given. Yes. Taking what is not given is also a bad deed, a bad action. This precept is also very superficially translated as stealing in Burma by some Buddhists. Actually, it is not so. Not only stealing, but also other actions which take what is not given.

These are the three types of bad deed. If you abstain from all these three kind of bad deeds, then you have right deed or right action, *sammā kammanta*. *Kammanta* is action or deed, *sammā* is right.

What is the last one? Right livelihood, *sammā ājīva*. All living based on bad speech and bad deed is bad livelihood.

If you earn your livelihood by killing any living being, this is bad livelihood. If you earn your livelihood by taking what is not given, that is bad livelihood. If you earn your livelihood by telling false speech, telling lies, then that is bad livelihood. In this way, if your living is based on the four kinds of bad speech and the three kinds of bad deed, it is called bad livelihood. Sometimes a businessman may tell lies so that he can get a great deal or profit. Sometimes a shopkeeper may tell lies. Then this livelihood is bad livelihood.

If you abstain from bad speech and bad deeds when you earn your living, then your livelihood is right livelihood. You also have to abstain from selling poisons and lethal weapons such as daggers and automatic rifles. You have to abstain from selling liquor or drugs. These are bad livelihoods. You must refrain from them so that you can have *sammā ājīva*, right livelihood.

That's why some Buddhists say this Noble Eightfold Path is the way of Buddhist life.

It is right. If you abstain from these things, your life is very good, very purified. You live a good life, you are a real Buddhist. You will be always live happily, peacefully and blissfully.

Remember: Abstention from false speech, slander, backbiting, rude and impolite speech, and frivolous speech. Then, abstention from harming or taking life, illegal sexual contact, and

taking what is not given. When you earn your livelihood you should refrain from all these things. Then you have *sammā ājīva*.

May all of you be able to abstain from bad speech, bad deeds, and bad livelihood in your daily life, purify yourself and live a happy and peaceful life.



# Progressive stages of practise

Today is the 16th of Jan. 1992

We have explained the four kinds of purification. The first one is purification of moral conduct, virtue, *sīla visuddhi*. The second one is purification of mind, *citta visuddhi*. The third one is purification of view, *diṭṭhi visuddhi*. The fourth one is purification by overcoming doubt, *kaṅkhavitaranā visuddhi*. When you have fully observed the precepts, your deed and speech, or moral conduct, is purified, so you have purification of moral conduct.

When concentration on the object of meditation is good enough, then the mind is purified from hindrances and mental defilements. So, you obtain purification of mind. When you realise conditionality or cause and effect of the body-mind process, you have purification by overcoming of doubt. Purification by overcoming of doubt is called *kaṅkhavitaranā visuddhi* in Pāli. *Kaṅkha* is doubt. *Vitaranā* is overcoming. *Visuddhi* is purification. So, *kaṅkhavitaranā visuddhi* means purification by overcoming doubt.

This purification, the fourth purification, can be attained through *paccayapariggahañāṇa*, the insight knowledge which discerns conditionality or cause and effect. When a meditator has realised the conditionality or the cause and effect of the body-mind process, his concentration is good, deep enough. When he

practises meditation patiently and diligently, concentration becomes deeper and deeper.

Then he comes to realise bodily and mental phenomena and the three characteristics, that is, *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*—impermanence, suffering, and impersonal nature or egolessness. He begins to realise appearance and disappearance of mental phenomena and physical phenomena for a period of time, maybe say, thirty seconds, one minute, or two minutes in the previous stages of insight knowledge such as the insight knowledge that discerns *nāma* and *rūpa* and the insight knowledge that discerns conditionality.

In those stages your insight is not so clear, not so sharp. But with deeper concentration you come to realise the arising and passing away of the mental process which is observed and the physical process which is observed.

## **When you observe the rise and fall of the abdomen**

For example, when you observe the rise and fall of the abdomen, you very clearly realise the beginning of the rising movement, the middle, and the end of it.

After the rising movement has disappeared, you come to realise the very beginning of the falling movement, the middle of it, and the end of it. In this way, you realise the initial, middle, and final phases of the rising movement and falling movement very clearly. After the falling movement has disappeared, you realise it very clearly. It has gone. Immediately after it has disappeared the rising movement begins to arise. You realise the beginning, the middle, and the final stage of the rising movement. When the rising movement has disappeared, you very clearly see it.

Sometimes, after the falling movement has disappeared, you find a gap, a small gap before the rising movement. Before you

did not note that there's a gap between the falling movement and the rising movement. Because you clearly realise the disappearance of the falling movement you find the gap. If you do not realise the disappearance of the falling movement very clearly, you don't find the gap before the noting of the rising movement. You find the gap because you have thoroughly realised the disappearance of the falling movement. Then you come to judge, "The rising movement arises and passes away. The falling movement also arises and passes away. They appear and very instantly disappear".

You come to judge that they are impermanent, they are transient. This is the insight knowledge that comprehends the impermanence of physical processes. In the same way, you come to realise the noting mind. When you find the rising movement you note, you observe it rising from the very beginning to the end. Then the mind notes it, "rising".

With deeper concentration, it is not a single noting mind that knows the rising movement from the very beginning to the end. Then the mind has to note "rising, rising, rising, rising", and so on. It repeatedly notes, observes, one rising movement after another. Then you come to know that you have to note the rising movement from the very beginning to the end three times or four times.

It means that one noting mind knows the beginning and then passes away. Then another noting mind knows the middle part of the rising. Then it passes away. Then another noting mind knows the final part of the rising movement. Then it passes away.

In this way, you clearly realise that there are three noting minds knowing the object of the rising movement one after the other. One after the other means that one noting mind arises and passes away, then another noting mind arises and passes away. In this way, you come to realise the impermanence of the noting mind which is a mental process.

Then the meditator clearly comprehends the initial, middle, and final stages of the rising movement and its disappearance

and also all the noting minds which are arising and passing away. Here he sees *anicca*, impermanence.

In the same way, he realises the movement of the foot, the lifting, pushing, dropping, touching and pressing movements. Every movement arises and passes away. It means that he sees the impermanence of the movement of lifting, pushing, dropping, the touching sensation, and the pressing movement.

If he notes the thinking mind, because concentration is deep enough, not long after the thought arises he knows the thought, notes it, and the thought disappears in a short time, very instantly. After the thought has disappeared he returns to the primary object, the rising-falling or sitting-touching.

Whenever a thought arises, not long after its arising, he is aware that there is a thought. Then he notes it, “thinking, thinking, thinking”. After about three or four times of noting the thought has disappeared. In this way, the thinking mind or the thought process is also subject to impermanence, arising and passing away.

When you are observing thoughts you come to realise that sometimes when you are about to note the thought, it has disappeared because you know it.

Sometimes you are surprised at the quick disappearance of the thought itself. It means that you clearly realise the passing away of thoughts, the impermanence of thoughts. This is *anicca*, impermanence.

When you observe a painful sensation your noting mind becomes more and more concentrated on the painful sensation. You persistently and perseveringly note it. The more effort you make in the noting, the deeper the noting mind gets into the pain. Then you do not feel the painful sensation but you know that there’s pain, an unpleasant sensation. The pain is not connected with you. The pain is far from you, or the pain is separate from you or yourself.

Sometimes when the pain becomes more severe, your noting mind becomes deeply concentrated on it. You lose the sense of

your bodily form, sometimes even the sense of yourself. What you are realising at that moment is the unpleasant feeling of the painful sensation.

Sometimes you realise the appearance and disappearance of the pain like waves of the sea. One wave arises and then passes away or is dispersed, then another wave arises and then is dispersed. Then another wave arises and dissipates. In this way, you see the waves of painful sensation arising and passing away one after another.

Sometimes you see it as layer by layer, one layer after another arises and passes away. You see the painful sensation which has the nature of unpleasantness. Whenever you realise waves of painful sensation, you come to judge, “The pain is not permanent. It also arises and passes away”.

Even inside the pain, the nature of the pain is also not permanent, arising and passing away. You come to realise it.

When your concentration is very deep on the painful sensation, then you can stand it because you don't feel it as painful. It feels as if the painful sensation is separate from your bodily form or from your person. So you don't identify it with yourself.

When the pain is something which is separate from you, you know the pain as just pain, the pain as just unpleasant sensation, the pain as suffering, and the pain as *dukkha*. And also, this *dukkha* or the pain is also arising and passing away. So it is impermanent and *dukkha*.

But occasionally, when you put your effort in the noting mind which pierces into the centre of the pain, then the pain becomes gradually disintegrated and dispersed. Here also, you come to realise the impermanence of the painful sensation, the insubstantiality of the painful sensation. You do not find any solidity or substantiality in the painful sensation. What you are finding is the disintegrating of the feeling or sensation which is unpleasant.

Sometimes when your noting mind penetrates into the pain, the pain becomes like a bubble. You find it as a bubble of water.

You are realising that the pain itself is just many tiny particles of materiality that are disorderly composed.

But actually, this material compound is not the pain itself. It produces the painful sensation. When you penetrate into the nature of the pain, you come to realise the painful sensation as bubbles and so on. Sometimes it explodes like a drop of water that falls on a bubble. Then the bubble disintegrates. In this way, you come to see the pain. Then you see that the pain is impermanent, *anicca*.

The Buddha said: When a meditator's concentration is very deep, he realises *rūpakhandha*, the aggregate of materiality. Material processes are like a sponge in water. Do you find any hole in the sponge? Any essence? Do you find it? No. The Buddha said, "In this way, in these material processes, there's nothing in them". What you find is just arising and passing away. *Saṅkhāta dhamma*, arising and passing away. Whenever you see any physical processes, the rising movement, the falling movement, the lifting movement, the pushing movement, bending or stretching of the arm, and so on, whatever physical process you observe, what you find is just arising and passing away. Nothing is substantial and nothing has essence. So it is like a sponge.

Then, *vedanākkhandha*, the aggregate of *vedanā*, the aggregate of feeling or sensation such as pain, aching, stiffening, happiness, unhappiness, and so on. These feelings or sensations are like a bubble of water. When you see them with your mindful attention, then you see them disintegrating or dispersing and disappearing, exploding. When you throw a stone into the water, then there's a bubble, but very instantly it is dispersed and disintegrated. In this way, this painful sensation, feeling or sensation, *vedanākkhandha*, aggregate of feeling or sensation, doesn't last even a millionth of a second. It arises and then very instantly passes away.

The same with happy feelings and unhappy feelings. Every pleasant sensation, unpleasant sensation, or neutral sensation is arising and passing away. They are like bubbles.

There's another aggregate, the aggregate of perception. We call it *saññākkhandha*. Most Pāḷi scholars who have a command of English translate *saññākkhandha* as perception. But actually, *saññā* means the mental state that memorises or recognises the object repeatedly. That's *saññā* which is translated into perception. This translation is not good, I think. Let it be. *Saññā*, recognising or memorising the object, this mental state is like a mirage, the Buddha said. A dreamer. Where can you see a mirage? Not in the sky. It is above the earth when the sun is very hot, very shaking, that's a mirage.

In Burmese, there's a saying: Somebody who is very thirsty sees water in the distance. So he runs to the place where he thinks the water is. After he has reached that place there's nothing. What's that? A mirage. He thought that it is water. When you see it from very far away, you think that it is water. So, the Burmese say: The deer with illusion of a mirage runs to the place where he thinks that there's water. Then he doesn't find any water. A living being thinks that these mental and physical phenomena are substantial things which are ever-lasting and permanent. Then he finds out by being mindful of them. He doesn't find anything substantial or an essence. What he finds is arising and passing away of all mental and physical phenomena.

So, you are like a deer. Not only you, but also I. This *saññākkhandha*, the aggregate of perception, is like a mirage. This is what the Buddha said.

*Saṅkhārakkhandha*, the aggregate of mental formations. Except for feeling, perception, and consciousness all mental processes are called mental formations, the aggregate of mental formations. This includes mindfulness, concentration, insight, wisdom—these mental states are included in the aggregate of mental formations.

In the aggregate of mental formations there are fifty types of mental states. In these fifty mental states desire, craving, lust, greed, hatred, aversion, jealousy, sloth and torpor, mental sluggishness, distractions and remorse are included.

When you observe the rising and falling, there's the mental formation of mindfulness. When the mind is concentrated on the movement of the abdomen, there's the mental formation of *samādhi*, and so on. There are fifty mental states in the aggregate of mental formation. The Buddha said, that *saṅkhārakkhandha*, the aggregate of mental formations, is like a trunk of a banana tree or a plantain.

Do you know bananas? Have you seen a banana tree? Yes. When you cut the trunk of a banana tree and peel away the layers one after another, can you use this peel? Peeling one layer after another, do you find a substantial thing which can be used for building or furniture? Peel off one layer. You didn't find a substantial thing? Then take off another layer. Then take off another layer, take off another layer, take off another layer, take off another layer, then finish. Did you find it? You won't find a core.

When you peel these fifty mental states one after another, you cannot find anything substantial or an essence. This is what the Buddha said. *Saṅkhārakkhandha*, the aggregate of mental formations is like the trunk of a banana tree. The simile is very good.

The last one is *viññāṇakkhandha*, the aggregate of consciousness. The aggregate of consciousness is like a conjurer because consciousness deceives you as a conjurer deceives you. How? You think that you have a mind. When you note "thinking, thinking, thinking, thinking", with deeper concentration it also disappears, you do not find anything in the mind. But you think, "I am thinking. It's the person who is thinking". In this way, consciousness deceives you. So, it is like a conjurer.

All these five aggregates are suffering, impermanent, unsubstantial, and impersonal. The Buddha said that what is impermanent is suffering. And what is impermanent and suffering is impersonal, selfless, egoless, or soulless. Because these five aggregates are impermanent they are suffering.

When I explained the meaning of *dukkha*, suffering, I explained that *dukkha* has the nature of being constantly oppressed

by arising and passing away. That's why the Buddha said, "What is impermanent is suffering".

Then you come to realise and to comprehend all the three characteristics, impermanence, suffering, and the impersonal nature of the body-mind process.

When you are mindful of whatever arises in your body and mind with deep enough concentration, find these things as the Buddha said: like a sponge, like bubbles, like a mirage, like a banana trunk, like a conjurer.

What is distinct to the meditator's mind is *vedanākkhandha*. *Vedanākkhandha* is very distinct. It is like a bubble. Try to penetrate into the centre of the painful sensation with very sharp mindfulness and with sharp noting. Then you will find bubbles, sensations. You come to comprehend all these characteristics: impermanence of materiality or physical processes; impermanence of feeling, impermanence of perception, impermanence of mental formation and impermanence of consciousness.

Then you comprehend the two other aspects or characteristics, too. What is impermanent is suffering. What is impermanent and suffering is of an impersonal nature.

You know *anicca*, *dukkha*, and *anatta*, the three characteristics of existence. When you clearly comprehend, realise, or are fully aware of these three characteristics of mental and physical phenomena which are observed at the moment, you have attained the insight knowledge of clear comprehension. Clear comprehension of mental and physical phenomena is called *sammāsanañāṇa* in Pāli. *Sammāsanañāṇa*, the insight knowledge of clear comprehension.

In this stage of *ñāṇa*, you have a great deal of pain. If your concentration is deep enough, you don't feel the painful sensation very much because you know the pain separate from you. You do not identify the pain with your person or with yourself. Sometimes you see it distant from your person or body. Sometimes you feel this pain is about three feet away from you. Can you identify the pain with yourself? No. Because the pain is

there and you are here. The pain is neither you nor a person nor a being.

You realise it, when your concentration is deep enough. To have deep concentration you need continuity of mindfulness, incessant mindfulness or sustained mindfulness. To have sustained mindfulness you need strenuous effort, undaunted effort, or courageous effort. You need undaunted effort to have sustained mindfulness which is the cause of deep concentration. This can support the noting mind to penetrate into the centre of the painful sensation.

So, may all of you put some more effort, which is courageous and undaunted, into your practice and achieve your goal.

# The seven benefits of mindfulness meditation

Today is the 17th of January 1992.

The discourse on the Four Foundations of Mindfulness (Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta) was expounded by Lord Buddha about two thousand five hundred and seventy three years ago. In that discourse he talked about mindfulness meditation, *vipassanā* meditation.

When you practise mindfulness meditation or *vipassanā* meditation, you should have some knowledge of the benefits of mindfulness meditation. Even though you don't have the theoretical knowledge of these benefits, you have had the practical benefits of this mindfulness meditation to a certain extent. You will be able to put a balanced effort into the practice of meditation, because you have had some experience through your mindful awareness of mental and physical phenomena. Based on these unusual experiences of mental and physical phenomena, you have some inspiration and you are encouraged by your own experience in meditation. But it is better for any meditator to have a theoretical knowledge of the benefits as expounded by the Buddha.

In the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta, the Buddha said, "One who has developed this mindfulness meditation, or one who has developed the Four Foundations of Mindfulness can attain these seven benefits:

## The first benefit is purification of beings

The first benefit is purification of beings, *sattānaṃ visuddhiyā* in Pāli. *Sattānaṃ* means being. *Visuddhiyā* means purification. The first benefit is purification of beings. One who practises this mindfulness meditation can be fully purified from all mental defilements. But in the beginning of the practice you do not purify yourself from these defilements because your mind is not yet concentrated sufficiently.

When you have practised mindfulness meditation very diligently and honestly in the three aspects of sitting, walking and mindfulness of daily activities, then you are sure to gain some degree of concentration gradually.

After you have practised for about a week, then you gain some degree of concentration of mind. When the mind is concentrated on the object of meditation to a certain extent, it is purified from some of the mental defilements. Then you have purification of mind. But, you have to put enough effort into the three aspects of sitting, walking, and awareness of daily activities.

Especially, you have to put enough effort into the awareness of daily activities such as rising from the seat, sitting down, turning, bending of the arms, stretching of the arms, taking something, holding something, and so on.

## Clear comprehension or awareness of daily activities

In the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta, the omniscient Buddha expounded a separate chapter on clear comprehension or awareness of daily activities. There he taught us: when you go forward, you should do it mindfully. When you go backward, you should do it mindfully. When you stretch out your arms, you should do it mindfully. When you bend your arms, you should do it mind-

fully. When you look straight, you should do it mindfully. When you look aside, you should do it mindfully, and so on. It means that if you go forward you should be aware of your walking, your stepping. When you go backward, you should be mindful of your stepping or the movement of your foot. When you stretch out your arm, you should be aware of the movement of stretching. When you bend it, you should be aware of the movement of bending. When you put it down, you should be aware of the movement of putting down. When you lift it, you should be aware of the movement of lifting.

## **When dressing**

The Buddha said, “When you dress yourself do it mindfully. While you are holding your robes, while you are touching your robes, you should be aware of all the movements and the actions involved in the acts of holding, dressing, putting on, taking off”, and so on.

Similarly for laypeople, whenever you put on your dress, whenever you put on your shoes, whenever you take off your shoes, you must do these things mindfully. You must be aware of the movements and actions involved in the act of putting on the shoes and taking off the shoes.

Then the Buddha said, “When you answer the call of nature or when you go to the toilet and answer the call of nature, you should be mindful of whatever you do in the toilet or the bathroom”. Why does the Buddha teach us to be mindful of what we doing even on the toilet, in the bathroom?

Because he is compassionate and very kind to us. He takes much trouble to teach us to be mindful of whatever we are doing in more and more detail. In this way, we can have continuity of mindfulness for the whole day, deeper and deeper concentration, and clearer and clearer insight which penetrates into the true nature of mental and physical phenomena. This is the Bud-

dha's purpose when he teaches us to be mindful of these things in the bathroom, even in the toilet. I want to ask you, "Do you follow what the Buddha teaches to do in the toilet and the bathroom"? Yes? Then, you are *sāvakas*.

*Sāvaka* is Pāḷi. The root of the word *sāvaka* is "su", "ka" is a suffix. The root "su" means to listen to or to obey. The suffix "ka" means one who does something. When the two words are compounded it becomes "*sāvaka*". "Su" changes into "*sāva*". Then "*sāva*" is combined with "ka" to "*sāvaka*". It means "one who listens to the teaching of the Buddha" or "one who listens what the Buddha teaches him". In other words, "One who obeys what he is told by the Buddha to do". That's a *sāvaka*. If you follow the teaching of the Buddha in more and more detail and as much as possible, even in the toilet and in the bathroom, you can be a *sāvaka*.

If you try to be mindful of all daily activities as much as possible you are a good *sāvaka*. We can roughly say that we can translate *sāvaka* as follower. One who follows the path on which the Buddha walked. The Noble Eightfold Path, the middle path, the middle way. You are good *sāvakas*, you try to be mindful of all actions and movements involved in the acts of answering the call of nature even in the bathroom and the toilet.

When you lay emphasis on awareness of all daily activities in more and more detail, it is sure for your noting mind to be deeply concentrated on each object of concentration. While concentration becomes deeper and deeper, the mind is more and more purified.

Only at that stage of meditational experience can you purify yourself from some of the mental defilements. Not in the beginning of the practice. That's why the Buddha said that one of the benefits of meditation is the purification of beings. If one practises, one is purified from mental defilements stage by stage.

At the final stage of enlightenment you will be fully purified from all these mental defilements, be free from suffering,

*dukkha*. Then you are liberated. From what? From the cycle of suffering.

As long as you are not yet fully purified from these defilements you cannot expect any liberation. The mind is purified gradually, step by step. Here, gradually means “sluggishly” or like a snail. When you are like a snail, your progress is sluggish. This is the first of the seven benefits.

## The three types of removal of mental defilements

### Partial removal

Here I want to tell you the three types of removal of mental defilements. The first one is called *tadaṅga pahāna*. Most Buddhist scholars take it to be momentary removal. Actually, it is not momentary removal, but partial removal, partial removal of defilements. That is *tadaṅga pahāna*. You can remove some mental defilements, but not all. Some of the mental defilements or some degree of mental defilements are removed.

Say, you have \$100 and a thief comes to your room and steals \$20, this is partial removal because you have \$80 left. If your mind is well concentrated on the object of meditation and insight becomes penetrating and sharp, at that time you are purified from some of the mental defilements, but temporarily.

When you see a rose, do you like it or do you dislike it? You like it, you love it, you are attached to it. The Buddha said, “When you see something, you should be aware of it. You should be mindful of what you see, you should be mindful of what you hear, you should be mindful of what you smell, you should be mindful of what you taste, you should be mindful of what you touch, you should be mindful of what you think about”.

When you see a rose, what should you do? You pick it up. You note it, “seeing, seeing, seeing, seeing”, constantly and at-

tentively. When you note, “seeing, seeing, seeing”, it seems that the two processes of the consciousness of seeing and also the noting mind take place at the same moment.

Actually it is not so. There’s the consciousness of seeing and there’s the process of the noting mind. If we do not note “seeing, seeing, seeing” very well, we’ll see the colour, the form, the texture of the petals, and so on. The more we know its quality, what will happen? We are attached to it. Without considering anything, we reach out a hand and pick it. Then what happens? The thorn pierces. The suffering happens because we are attached to it. Because you are attached to it. Why are you attached to it? Because you knew the quality of the rose more and more distinctly. If you note, “seeing, seeing, seeing”, the consciousness of seeing cannot see the rose well because the noting mind disturbs it, knocking at the consciousness of seeing.

When the noting mind becomes more and more powerful, then the seeing mind becomes weaker and weaker. The quality of seeing becomes weak so that it is blurred. Then, later on, you don’t even know that it is a rose. What you are knowing is just the visible object, that’s all, the physical object.

When the mind cannot see the rose very well, it cannot see its quality. It even doesn’t know that it is a rose. What it knows is that it is a visible object, that’s all. Then can we have attachment to it? No. Why? Because of the noting. At the moment that our noting becomes powerful and attentive we note the object rose as a “rose”. So, we don’t have any desire to get it. Then the attachment, or desire, or any mental defilement has been purified at that moment.

Why? Because we do not know the quality of the rose very well. Why are we not able to know its quality? Because the consciousness of seeing is disturbed or gets broken by the noting mind, so it doesn’t see the object very well. Then it cannot differentiate between the desirable and the undesirable qualities of the object. What it sees is just a visible object.

The Buddha said, “When you see something, your mind should see what is seen”. That’s all. “When you see something, your mind should see what is seen”. Not beyond that. This passage is very famous among Pāli scholars. But they do not realise what it means. But for a meditator it is not difficult to realise the sense of what the Buddha said in this passage, “When you see something, your mind should see what is seen”. That’s all. The mind doesn’t judge the quality of the object because the capacity to judge the object becomes very weak. Why? Because of the noting mind.

When you want to follow what the Buddha said, “When you see something you should see only what is seen”, then what should you do? Note it, be mindful of it. What I want to say is: at the moment we are able to be mindful of the consciousness of seeing very well, then we don’t have any attachment, desire, craving, aversion, ignorance, conceit and so on about this object. But when we do not note it and when we are not mindful of it, then we see it. When we see, the quality of the rose becomes more and more evident, more and more clear. Then the mind knows the quality, “Ah, this rose is very good, it has a very good scent”, and so on. Then you are attached to it.

Then attachment, a defilement, comes in. Why? Because you are not observing it. Because you are not noting it. Because you are not mindful of it.

When you are not mindful of the consciousness of seeing, there will arise mental defilements, either desire, attachment, craving, aversion, or anger and so on. Because you are mindful of the consciousness of seeing, the mind doesn’t see it very well. It can’t differentiate between the bad or good quality of the rose and then the mind sees what is seen, that’s all. It means that it just sees the visible object. It doesn’t go further. Then you don’t have any of the mental defilements at that moment. So you are purified from mental defilements which may come into your mind when you are not mindful. Those defilements are desire,

craving, attachment, anger, or aversion. Mindfulness destroys some qualities of desire, craving, hatred, or anger.

There are a great deal of qualities of these mental defilements which have not been destroyed by mindfulness. Do you understand? It means partial removal of defilements by mindfulness meditation. So, this is *tadaṅga pahāna* in Pāli. It is difficult to grasp the sense of the word *tadaṅga*, even for learned Buddhist monks, if they do not practise meditation, if they do not have any experience of meditation. So they translate *tadaṅga pahāna* as momentary removal. It is partial removal. The commentary defined this word in a very definite way.

### **Temporary removal**

Another type of removal is temporary removal. Temporary removal is called *vikkhambhana pahāna*. When your mind is well concentrated on each object of meditation, the mind doesn't go out very often. It may go out occasionally, but you know it. When you note it the mind comes (back) to the object. But the concentration is not deep enough. The insight that arises together with the concentrated mind is not penetrating enough, so it cannot realise any mental process or physical process. But because the mind is well concentrated on the object of meditation, it is purified from the defilements. None of the defilements can come into the mind because it is absorbed into the object of meditation. Then, it is purified from defilements.

When a meditator wants to come into the meditation hall and opens the door very roughly, then there are noises. That noise disturbs your concentration, breaks your concentration. When your concentration is broken, mental defilements are arising. That means that as long as your mind is concentrated on the object of meditation, you are purified temporarily. When the concentration is broken then the defilements come in. This is temporary removal, *vikkhambhana pahāna*.

You can say that this is temporary purification.

## Total removal

The third type of removal is: total removal. Actually these removals are of five types, but I chose only three to make you understand. All mental defilements are fully destroyed, then purified. That's total removal. The mental defilements can only be totally destroyed by path knowledge, *maggañāṇa* in Pāli.

There are four kinds of path knowledge. Path knowledge here means enlightenment. According to Buddhism there are four stages of enlightenment. The first stage of enlightenment is known as *sotāpattimaggañāṇa*. To make it easy: the first stage of enlightenment is *sotāpatti*, that's all. The second stage is *sakadāgāmī*. The third stage is *anāgāmī*. The fourth stage is *arahatta*. *Sotāpatti* is translated as stream enterer. Stream enterer is the literal translation.

Here, stream means: the Noble Eightfold Path. Enterer means: one who has attained the first stage of enlightenment. He has entered the path knowledge or the first stage of enlightenment.

The second stage is called *sakadāgāmī*. Here, *saka* means “once”, *dāgāmī* means “returner”. *Sakadāgāmī* means once-returner or who has attained the second stage of enlightenment. After death he will go to a higher celestial realm, like *devaloka* or *brahmaloka*, the realm of deities or the realm of Brahmas; but he may return to this earth, the realm of sensual desire, once. After he has returned here, he will attain the third path and the fourth path. Then he is totally purified from all defilements. He doesn't return again, he is gone. That's the *sakadāgāmī*. But it is of no use only to know the meaning of this word. But for your theoretical knowledge I explained it to you.

Then third stage is *anāgāmī*. *Anāgāmī* means “non-returner”. When he has attained the third stage of enlightenment or the third path knowledge, after his death he may be reborn in the higher world of the Brahmas. But he never returns to this world of sensual pleasure.

The fourth stage is called arahatta. Arahatta means, “One who has completely destroyed all defilements”. That’s the arahatta. So, he is worthy of full honour. All defilements are uprooted by these four stages of enlightenment.

In other words, these four stages of enlightenment totally destroy all qualities of each of the mental defilements. The first stage of enlightenment can destroy only some of the defilements, then the second one some, then the third stage some, then the fourth stage destroys all mental defilements.

When the first stage of enlightenment destroys defilements, it destroys *sakkāya diṭṭhi* and *vicikicchā*, the idea of personality or the wrong view of personality and sceptical doubt. These two defilements are totally destroyed by the first stage of enlightenment. One who has attained the first stage of enlightenment has no *sakkāya diṭṭhi* and *vicikicchā* at all. He has no idea of personality, individuality, self, or soul. He has no doubt about the Triple Gem at all. These two kinds of mental defilement have been uprooted by the first stage of enlightenment. It is not only some of the qualities of these two defilements that have been destroyed, but all the qualities of these two defilements have been destroyed by the first stages of enlightenment. This removal is called total removal. We call it *samuccheda pahāna* in Pāli; the total removal of defilements.

When you see the rose and when you are mindful of the consciousness of seeing as “seeing, seeing, seeing”, then you don’t have any desire, attachment, aversion, or anger. But when you are not mindful of it, you see the rose very well and then desire arises. But at the moment you are mindful of the consciousness of seeing, you have removed some qualities of desire, craving, anger, aversion, and so on. Because you do not differentiate the bad and good qualities of the rose you see it as a visible object. If you are not mindful, if you do not note it, there may be attachment, desire, or aversion. Because now you are mindful, they do not arise. Because the mind doesn’t know the quality of the

rose. What it knows is just the visible object, what is seen. Just the visible object.

In this case, you remove a partial quality of these defilements. But there are a great deal of qualities of defilements left undestroyed by this knowledge. That's why we call it partial removal of defilements.

Actually I did not intend to go into all this. What I wanted to explain are the seven benefits of mindfulness meditation. The first type is partial purification, the second is temporary purification, and the third one is total purification. Then, what kind of purification do you want to have? You want total purification. Then you should stay here at least for one year. Continue your meditation intensively, strenuously. If you practise this mindfulness meditation intensively, also you are not wasting your valuable time.

In our Chanmyay Yeiktha meditation centre, the Yogis have to get up at 3:30. From 3:30 until 10:00 o'clock at night they do not take rest, say for about thirty minutes or one hour. They may take rest for fifteen minutes after lunch. Apart from that we do not allow them to take rest. After resting they continue their practice for the whole day by being more and more aware of more and more activities in more and more detail. Some of the meditators practise until eleven, twelve, or one in the morning. They have to get up at 3:30. They do not waste their time.

If you do not waste your time, you are sure to purify yourself. You will attain total purification in three months' time. If you do not believe in your ability to attain total purification in three months' time, you should practise for three months. You'll see.

May all of you strive your best in this mindfulness meditation, purify yourself completely and attain the cessation of suffering.



# The story of Visākha and Dhammadinā

18th of January 1992.

I'll continue to explain the four stages of enlightenment.

I would like to correct a term I used when I dealt with the five similes for the five aggregates. On that day, I referred to the simile of the aggregate of physical phenomena as a sponge. It is not sponge. It is foam. In the foam you cannot find any core or any substance that you can use. On that day I was not sure of the word sponge but I couldn't find the word foam. This morning, U Paññā told me that he remembered that once I explained the five similes with foam. The problem lies in the language. In Burmese, sponge and foam are referred to by the same word. So, the simile of the aggregate of physical processes is foam.

Each of the four stages of enlightenment uproot some of the mental defilements

I'll continue to explain the four stages of enlightenment. Each of the four stages of enlightenment uproot some of the mental defilements concerned. The first stage of enlightenment is called *sotāpatimaggāñāna*, stream enterer, because a *sotāpanna*, the first noble person, begins to enter the current or the stream of the Noble Eightfold Path. When he realises the Noble Eightfold Path, he realises Nibbāna, the cessation of suffering.

It happens in the same way at the other stages of enlightenment. When the noble person realises the second path, he re-

alises the cessation of suffering, Nibbāna. The same happens at the third and fourth stage of enlightenment.

The first stage of enlightenment, *sotāpattimaggañāna*, destroys two kinds of mental defilements: *sakkāya diṭṭhi* and *vici-kicchā*, in Pāli. *Sakkāya diṭṭhi* is the false view of personality, individuality, self or soul. This false view is destroyed by the first stage of enlightenment.

## Thirteen stages of insight knowledge

Before you have attained the noble path you have to go through thirteen stages of insight knowledge through your personal experience. During the course of your meditative practise you have to go through these thirteen stages, realising impermanence, suffering, and impersonal nature of mental and physical phenomena. Only after you have attained these stages or you begin to enter the stage of the noble ones, with the realisation of path knowledge, *sotāpattimaggañāna*.

Even while you are practising *vipassanā* meditation and are going through all these thirteen stages, you have thoroughly realised these three characteristics of existence: impermanence, suffering, and impersonal nature. When you are mindful of pain in the back or in the thigh, noting, “pain, pain, pain”, your concentration is already good and deep so the noting mind penetrates into the centre of the pain. It doesn’t go out very often, but sometimes it tends to think about the pain. If you put more effort into the noting, it doesn’t think and then it penetrates into the centre of the pain. Then you realise the nature of the pain: unpleasant physical sensation. You know that because there is pain, the mind that notes the pain arises.

There is the dual process of the noting mind and the painful sensation or unpleasant feeling. When you realise the pain in this way, you do not find it in your body, in your thigh, or in your back. You do not find it. Where do you find it? You find it sepa-

rate from your body. Sometimes you lose the sense of your body. What you realise at that moment is just pain and the mind that notes it.

In this case, do you identify the pain with yourself? No. Actually, you do not feel painful at this moment. You just realise the process of unpleasant physical sensation, the pain, and the mind that notes it, that's all.

Even at this stage of insight knowledge during the course of *vipassanā* meditation you can partially destroy the false idea of a person, a being, an "I", or a "you". Would you have this idea of a person or a being, when you are enlightened? No.

The first stage of enlightenment destroys the false idea of a personality, individuality, self, or soul.

*Sakkāya diṭṭhi*, this false view of personality, has been destroyed by the first stage of enlightenment.

When the pain still exists, you continue to penetrate and to observe it. Then, inside the pain you find some tingling sensations, sometimes waves of heat, sometimes waves of cold. Eventually, the pain gradually disintegrates.

What you know is that the pain is impermanent. It is subject to arising and passing away. You come to realise impermanence of the painful sensation, the unpleasant sensation, or the physical process, *anicca*. When you see the pain or the unpleasant physical sensation as unbearable, do you regard it as happiness? No. *dukkha*. You do not regard it as *sukha*. *dukkha*, suffering, a lot of suffering. "I am afraid of it so I don't want to sit. I want to walk and walk".

There you find the suffering, of feeling or sensation, *dukkha vedanā*. This is *dukkha*. However, this realisation of *dukkha* is not very deep. Because if an insect bites you, do you have *dukkha* or *sukha*?

## Saṅkhārā dukkha

I have already told you one type of *dukkha*, *saṅkhāra dukkha*. I told you that *dukkha* means the mental state which is being constantly oppressed by the constant arising and passing away of mental and physical phenomena. This *dukkha* is essential to be realised, indispensable to be realised. When you see the constant arising and passing away of mental and physical phenomena you, come to feel that these phenomena are oppressing by constant arising and passing away. This is *dukkha*, *saṅkhāra dukkha*.

When you continue to observe the painful sensation and penetrate into the pain, then you come to realise one wave of painful sensation arising and then passing away, dispersing, dissipating. Then another wave comes up and disappears. Then another wave of pain comes up and disappears. Sometimes some of you describe it as layers and layers of painful sensation that you experience. If you feel layers and layers of painful sensations, appearing and disappearing, it means impermanence and suffering, *anicca* and *dukkha*. You do not take it to be a person, a being, a self, or a soul because it is ever-changing and subject to arising and passing away. You know that. So it is neither a person nor a being, a soul, or a self. Then you come to realise *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*.

While you are realising mental and physical processes in their true nature in the course of *vipassanā* meditation you can destroy this false idea of a person, a being, an “I”, or a “you”. When you have attained the first noble path or the first stage of enlightenment, you don’t have any idea of a person or a being.

You see these mental and physical phenomena as just ever-changing phenomena of impermanence, suffering, and impersonal nature. These are the characteristics of existence. The mind is purified because the concentration is very deep. Why is the mind purified? Because of mindfulness meditation.

Why can mindfulness purify the mind? Because this is the correct technique of meditation.

Where can you find this technique? Inside you! In Burma! Yes. Because a Burmese Mahāthera revived it. Yes. You can find this way of purifying the mind in the discourse of the Mahāsatiṭṭhāna Sutta, in the teaching of the Buddha.

## ***Vicikicchā*, sceptical doubt is destroyed**

If you believe in this teaching you must also believe in the Buddha. Then you must also believe in his disciples who have attained path knowledge, walking on this path. These disciples are called *saṅgha*. Then you have no doubt about the teaching, the Buddha, and his disciples. Do you have doubts? This doubt has been destroyed by the first stage of path knowledge. It is called *vicikicchā*, it is one of the mental defilements. *Vicikicchā*, sceptical doubt, is destroyed by the first stage of path knowledge. I want to explain the cause and effect of the destruction of *vicikicchā*, sceptical doubt.

## **The two types of mental defilements**

These are the two types of mental defilements: the first one is *sakkāya diṭṭhi*, the false idea of personality or individuality, and the second one is sceptical doubt about the Triple Gem. These are destroyed by the first stage of enlightenment, path knowledge.

If you believe in the Triple Gem, especially in the teaching of the Buddha and also if you reflect your own experience while you are meditating, do you have the false idea of a person, a being? No. But, while you are not reflecting or recollecting your personal experience in meditation, you may have some vague idea of “I” or “you” in conventional terms.

If you reflect on your experience of, say, the pain which I have explained you, you don’t have the idea of a person or a being. Then you do not have mental defilements arising dependent on

the idea of an “I” or “you”, a person or a being. When you have this “I”, this “I” has a great desire to be a prime minister, this “I” has a desire to be rich, a millionaire or billionaire, this “I” has a desire to be a handsome man or a pretty girl. This desire arises dependent on the idea of a person or a being. When you have no idea of a person or a being and when you see the body-mind process as just a natural process of mentality and physicality which are arising and passing away, do you have any defilements? Not at that moment.

When you are not reflecting or recollecting your experience while you are practising *vipassanā* meditation, you may have some vague idea of “I” or “you”, a person or a being in conventional terms. Conventional terms or names are necessary to know the object and to communicate with each other. So the name is not reality, it is a concept. So, we have to name. This is our Buddha. The Buddha refers to one who has been enlightened about 2,578 years ago. So, to talk about him, we have to name him Buddha. That’s a name.

Is the name “Buddha” reality or concept? Concept. Absolute realities except the cessation of suffering, *Nibbāna*, are subject to change, arising and passing away.

## **We classify ultimate reality into four groups**

According to Buddhist philosophy we classify absolute reality or ultimate reality, *parāmatṭha*, into four groups:

The first is physical phenomena or material phenomena, materiality.

The second is consciousness, pure consciousness without any mental concomitants or mental associates.

The third is *cetasika*, we call it mental concomitants, mental states that arise together with consciousness. *lobha* or greed is a mental concomitant.

When consciousness cognizes a desirable object, then one of the mental states will judge it as desirable. Then you feel that it is good. When you feel that it is good, then desire arises. Then greed arises. These mental concomitants are arising together with consciousness, so they are called mental concomitants. Sometimes I use mental associates. They constitute the third group, altogether 52 in number.

The fourth is Nibbāna, the cessation of suffering. Of these four kinds of absolute reality, *parāmaṭṭha*, except Nibbāna the other three are subject to impermanence. Matter, material processes, consciousness, and mental concomitants, all these are subject to impermanence, they are ever-changing. Why are they impermanent? Because they arise and pass away.

Why do they arise and pass away? It is the law of nature. Because there are causes to give them rise.

Because they are conditioned they arise. If they arise, they should last forever. Do they last forever? No. Why?

Because they arise, they pass away. Unless they arise, they won't pass away. If you are not born, you won't die. Because you are born, you will die.

Everything which arises must pass away. This is the nature of *parāmaṭṭha*, absolute reality. Except for the cessation of suffering, Nibbāna, every *parāmaṭṭha* or absolute reality arises and passes away, it is subject to impermanence. Then we should consider names.

## Concept and reality

Does a name arise? For instance, the word "Buddha". Does the name "Buddha" arise? When does it arise? According to tradition, in any universe, you have Buddhas, they say. Suppose a name is an absolute reality: when it has arisen, then does it pass away?

Now the Buddha has passed away 2550 years ago. His mental and physical phenomena also have disappeared, they ceased to exist. Does the name “Buddha” pass away? If it had passed away, you wouldn’t say “Buddha” now. Now you say “Buddha”. Did it pass away? No. It doesn’t pass away. Even though the Buddha has passed away, the name “Buddha” doesn’t pass away. Then, is it absolute reality or concept? Concept.

As long as you conceive the name “Buddha”, it exists. As long as you are alive, there’s Buddha in your mind, the name “Buddha”. Why? Because the mind creates the name “Buddha”, so you have it. It is a concept, conceived. That’s the difference between concept and absolute reality.

Absolute reality arises and passes away. The concept never passes away, never disappears. Then, I’ll go to the second stage of enlightenment.

## The second stage of enlightenment

Yesterday I told you the literal meaning of this one: once-returner. I forgot. When you have no idea of a person or a being, and when you reflect on your good experience in your meditation, then you don’t have the defilements that have been destroyed by the first stage of enlightenment. Even though you have a vague idea of a person or a being, because you haven’t recollected your experience, then you don’t have any strong mental defilements. No strong mental defilements at all.

This stage of enlightenment doesn’t destroy anger, aversion, sense-desire, or sensual desire. You may have them, but, they are not very strong. The first stage of enlightenment doesn’t destroy desire or greed, *lobha*, so you have *lobha*, greed even though you have attained the first stage. But that *lobha*, greed, is not so strong. Say, you have desire. This desire is also not so strong. Say, you have a desire to take something which is desirable, which is another person’s property. Then, would you steal it, would you

take it by force? If your desire is very strong, you can kill the owner and take the property. But because you have attained the first stage of enlightenment, even though you have this desire, the desire is not strong, not so strong that you can kill the owner or take it forcibly.

Because of your weak defilements or subtle defilements you abstain from taking what's not given. You abstain from killing. You abstain from illegal sexual contact. You abstain from telling lies. You abstain from using any kind of intoxicant. It is very important for Westerners to attain at least the first stage of enlightenment so that they can abstain from intoxicants. So, try to attain it.

When you are able to abstain from bad deeds such as killing and stealing, bad speech such as telling lies, backbiting, slandering and so on, you won't have the very bad results of your *kamma* because your *kamma* is not so evil and not so gross.

The text says that when you have attained the first stage of enlightenment, you won't be reborn in the lower worlds such as apāya, hell. You won't be reborn in the animal world. You won't be reborn among the hungry ghosts. We call them *peta* in Pāli. Because you abstain from all the evil deeds and speech such as killing, stealing, telling lies, and so on. When you have attained the second stage of enlightenment, it destroys the gross quality of sensual desire, anger, hatred, or aversion.

Although the gross qualities of anger or aversion, have been destroyed, it cannot destroy the tender or subtle qualities of sensual desire and anger. They are left untouched by the second stage of enlightenment. Then your desire or greed becomes weaker and weaker, more and more subtle. In the same way, anger also becomes weaker and weaker.

Because you are not able to totally destroy anger, you sometimes have anger arising when you are insulted by someone or when you think about undesirable things. You may have anger arising, but it is very subtle. You may not even know it as anger because the second stage of enlightenment has destroyed the

gross qualities of sensual desire and anger. That is *sakadāgāmī magga*.

## The third stage of enlightenment

Then, *anāgāmī magga*, the non-returner. The third stage of enlightenment destroys all of sensual desire and all of anger, hatred, aversion, or ill-will.

He is called *anāgāmī*, the third noble person. *Sotāpatti* is the first noble one. *Sakadāgāmī* is the second noble one. *Anāgāmī* is the third noble one.

He has no sensual desire at all. He doesn't love good food. He doesn't love good sights. He doesn't love good perfume. He is never angry even though he is insulted. His mind becomes calm, serene, and quiet.

In the time of the Buddha a rich man named Visākha went together with King Bimbisāra to the Veļuvāna monastery where the Buddha was residing at that time and listened to a discourse.

The Buddha taught about the Four Noble Truths and especially about the fourth truth, *magga sacca*. He explained the way leading to the cessation of suffering, that's the Noble Eightfold Path.

Because in *magga sacca* there's mindfulness, he described how to be mindful of bodily and mental phenomena, how to realise them, and how to attain *magga* and *phala*, and so on.

Visākha was a young man, maybe 25 or 30 years old. He had a very beautiful wife. While listening to the discourse he was mindful of whatever arose in his body and mind, his feeling about the Dhamma, hearing the Dhamma, and so on.

When the discourse was about to finish, he had attained three stages of enlightenment. All the stages of enlightenment until the third stage. All sensual desire and all anger gone.

Then, did Visākha have sensual desire? No. Even though he didn't have any sensual desire he didn't have other sensual de-

sires either. That is, very coarse desire. It means that he didn't love anything. He didn't love property. He didn't love living beings. He didn't love no non-living things. He didn't have any anger arising.

Then he went back home. At the gate of the house as usual his wife came and greeted him holding his arm. Visākha, very gently, pushed it away.

Then again, the young wife held his arm. Then again Visākha very tenderly pushed it down. The wife was very much surprised at this. But she didn't ask any questions. She looked at his face.

The face was very shining, very gracious, calm, tranquil. Then she judged that nothing was wrong. There must be some reason. She was very wise. She did not ask any question.

Then they went into the house. She prepared food for him. He didn't take the food because, having attained the third stage of enlightenment, he had no sensual desire, so he had no desire for food.

Then the wife got puzzled.

Time is up. We will continue tomorrow.

May all of you be able to attain the third stage of enlightenment in this retreat and achieve the cessation of suffering.



# Visākha and Dhammadinā, contd., story of Sujampati

Today is the 19th of January 1992.

After dinner, what did she do? She asked her husband, “Please tell me, if I have any defect or any fault. Or do you have any other affairs outside”? Then Visākha couldn’t help explaining because if he didn’t tell her of his attainment of the non-returner path knowledge she might be upset. So he explained the attainment of the non-returner path knowledge, the third stage of enlightenment. His wife was called Dhammadinā.

“Dhammadinā, when I went to the monastery and listened to a discourse expounded by the Buddha, I was mindful of what was happening to me as taught by the Buddha. Then I attained the noble Dhamma which is known as *anāgāmi magga*, the path of the non-returner. So, I have no desire for any sensual pleasure, all kinds of sensual desires have been removed by me through the third stage of enlightenment. I have renounced all worldly affairs including all of my wealth and also you, too”.

If Dhammadinā had not been a wise lady, she would have been very upset at what he said about the renunciation of her and his wealth. But Dhammadinā was very wise and capable of these stages of *magga* if she practised as taught by the Buddha.

So Dhammadinā asked Visākha, “The noble Dhamma which you have attained today I also want to attain. Is it possible for a woman to attain such a noble Dhamma?” Then Visākha said, “Whoever practises this Dhamma as taught by the Buddha can attain this noble Dhamma which is known as *maggañāna*, path knowledge, irrespective of sex, irrespective of age, irrespective of nationality, and so on. Anyone who practises as taught by the Buddha can attain this noble Dhamma”.

Dhammadinā was very pleased with what her husband had said. She asked permission from her husband, “Please permit me to be a bhikkhuni”. A Bhikkhuni is a female monk at the monastery. “I request you to send me to the monastery to get the bhikkhuni ordination”.

He was very pleased with what his wife asked. So he said, “Yes, tomorrow I’ll send you to the monastery to ordain as a female bhikkhu, a female monk when I have got permission from the king”.

The next morning he went to King Bimbisāra and told him that his wife asked for permission, and so on. The king who was a sotāpanna, one who had attained the first stage of enlightenment, was very glad to hear this. The king said, “Very good Visākha, please send your wife to the monastery. Let her be ordained as a female bhikkhu”. And he also said, “Please arrange a celebration for the ordination ceremony”.

Visākha sent his wife to the Veļuvāna monastery. Then he requested the Buddha to ordain his wife as a female bhikkhu. We call it bhikkhuni in Pāli. In Sanskrit, it is Bhikshuni. It is not like a nun today. In these days, Buddhist nuns observe only eight precepts or ten precepts, that’s all. But the rules of bhikkhunis in the monastic code are more than 227 rules. So nuns and bhikkhunis are very different. Nowadays some Pāli scholars use the word “nun” or “Buddhist nun” for the word bhikkhuni. I think it is not a very good term.

The Buddha sent Dhammadinā, the wife of Visākha, to the *bhikkhuni saṅgha* and made them ordain Dhammadinā. After

her ordination she went to a monastery in the forest far from Rājagaha. There she practised meditation. Visākha was very much pleased. He went back home happily and peacefully.

Within a couple of days Dhammadinā, the bhikkhuni, came back to the Veḷuvāna monastery. Visākha wanted to know why she had come back from the forest. So he went to Dhammadinā in the monastery and asked some questions about the Dhamma. He had thought that Dhammadinā had come back because she couldn't live in a monastery after having enjoyed great wealth at home. Now she had to take very poor food, she had to stay in a cottage, she could not sleep very well at night because she had to practise meditation until midnight as the other meditators did. Visākha was very much disappointed about her coming back, but he wanted to know the reason why.

He quizzed her on the Dhamma, "What is *sakkāya* which is expounded by the Buddha?" Dhammadinā said, "Āvuso Visākha". The word "āvuso" is an address to a person who is equal in rank or who has a lower rank. But Dhammadinā used this word, "Āvuso Visākha, the five aggregates of grasping are *sakkāya*". *Sakkāya* here means absolute reality. The answer satisfied him.

He asked, "Then what is the cause of *sakkāya*, Dhammadinā?" Dhammadinā answered "*Taṇhā* or attachment is the cause of *sakkāya*". (*Sakkāya* means absolute reality. It is both physical and mental phenomena, *nāma rūpa*. "What is the cause of *sakkāya*?" means: what is the cause of *nāma rūpa*, mental and physical processes). Dhammadinā answered, "*taṇhā*, attachment, is the cause of *sakkāya*, Āvuso Visākha".

Visākha was very satisfied because this is correct. Any *sakkāya* or mental or physical process, all the suffering is caused by *taṇhā*, attachment. So *taṇhā*, attachment, is the cause of *sakkāya*.

Then the third question, "What is, the cessation of *sakkāya*?"

Dhammadinā gave this answer, "Āvuso Visākha, the cessation of *sakkāya* is the extinction of *taṇhā*, attachment; the total

extinction of attachment” When *taṇhā* is totally destroyed, or when attachment is totally destroyed, *sakkāya* ceases to exist. It doesn’t arise again. It is Nibbāna.

Nibbāna has no attachment at all. When attachment ceases to exist you attain Nibbāna, emancipation, liberation. Here *sakkāya* means, mental and physical phenomena. Mental and physical phenomena cease to exist when their cause, *taṇhā*, has been destroyed.

This answer also satisfied Visākha.

Then he asked a fourth question, “How can you destroy this *sakkāya*? Is there any way in which you can destroy this *sakkāya* or make it stop?”

Dhammadinā said, “Āvuso Visākha, there’s a way which leads to the cessation of all *sakkāya*. That’s the Noble Eightfold Path. If you develop the Noble Eightfold Path fully, then all kinds of *sakkāya* cease to exist. This Noble Eightfold Path is the way leading to the cessation of all *sakkāya* or mental and physical phenomena”.

Visākha had asked four questions. All the four questions were perfectly answered by Dhammadinā, his wife. Then Visākha judged, “Yes. This girl is very clever. She has attained arahantship”. She had attained the four stages of enlightenment. He had attained the third stage of enlightenment. Who was senior? The wife was senior.

Then, Visākha continued to ask, “Yes, Dhammadinā I am very satisfied with your answers to my four questions. Let me ask you some more questions”. Dhammadinā kept silent which means that she agreed to be asked.

Visākha asked one more question, “Dhammadinā, what is *sakkāya diṭṭhi*?”

She had realised what *sakkāya* means. As answered by Dhammadinā *sakkāya* means mental and physical processes, the five aggregates of grasping. The five aggregates of grasping are mental and physical phenomena except path knowledge and fruition knowledge. When he asked the fifth question, “What is

*sakkāya diṭṭhi*?” Dhammadinā answered this question too, “*Āvuso Visākha, sakkāya diṭṭhi* means the wrong view of personality, individuality, self, or soul which is based on *sakkāya*, mental and physical phenomena. This false view of personality arises dependent on the misunderstanding of physical and mental phenomena, *sakkāya*. If *sakkāya*, mental and physical phenomena, is rightly realised or rightly understood as just natural processes of arising and passing away, then there won’t arise any false view of a self or soul because he doesn’t take this mental and physical process to be a person, a being, an “I”, or a “you”. Dhammadinā said. “*Sakkāya diṭṭhi* means the false view of personality, individuality, self, or soul which is based on misunderstanding the body-mind process of mental and physical phenomena which is called *sakkāya*.”

This view about mental and physical phenomena is wrong because the false view takes mental and physical phenomena to be a person, a being, or an I. It doesn’t see it as it really is. The false view of personality or individuality which is based on the misunderstanding of the body-mind process is called *sakkāya diṭṭhi*.

Visākha was very satisfied with Dhammadinā’s answers to these five questions. He thought, “It is enough for me. Now I know that she has attained the fourth stage of enlightenment and has become an arahant. She has nothing more to do because all defilements in her have been destroyed by the fourth stage of enlightenment”. Then, Visākha, went back home with great pleasure.

When a meditator has practised under my guidance in this retreat and goes back home, he should try to persuade their wives, daughters, or sons to practise mindfulness meditation and attain arahantship.

I have explained the third stage of enlightenment which totally destroys or uproots sensual desire and anger. *Sakkāya diṭṭhi* has been destroyed by the first stage of enlightenment. All mental defilements which have been left untouched by the

three lower stages of enlightenment have been destroyed by the fourth stage of enlightenment. So, when you have attained the fourth stage of enlightenment, arahantship, you have no defilements at all.

Dhammadinā, who had attained the fourth stage of enlightenment, had no defilements at all and she lead a peaceful and calm life. But Visākha still had one stage of enlightenment to attain. He would have to strive for the attainment of the fourth stage. In the third stage of enlightenment, he couldn't uproot all desire, even though he had eradicated sense desire and anger. But he had some desire for the attainment of *jhāna*, *rūpa jhāna* and *arūpa jhāna*. *Rūpa jhāna* means the *jhāna* which is based on physical phenomena.

## ***Rūpa jhāna* and *arūpa jhāna***

*Rūpa jhāna* means material *jhāna*, material deep concentration of mind. It is based on both physical processes and mental processes. But *arūpa jhāna* means immaterial *jhāna* which is based on mentality, only mentality not materiality. Some Pāḷi scholars translate the two *jhānas* as material *jhāna* and formless *jhāna*.

*Arūpa jhāna* is translated into “formless *jhāna*” because they translate physical phenomena into the word form. So, *arūpa jhāna* means just immaterial *jhāna* which is based just on mentality, not materiality. They translate it into formless *jhāna*.

We are not concerned with these things which are worldly things, not supramundane.

At the stage of the third path knowledge Visākha had destroyed sensual desire and anger, hatred, aversion, and ill-will. But he had desire to attain the material and immaterial *jhānas*. So he had some *lobha*, desire.

The desire for the attainment of material *jhānas* and immaterial *jhānas* is destroyed by the fourth stage of enlightenment, arahantship, path knowledge. The fourth stage of enlightenment,

*arahatta magga* destroys all kinds of desire for *jhānas* and also the remaining mental defilements such as restlessness, distraction, and conceit. Also ignorance.

At the fourth stage of enlightenment you destroy all mental defilements. A person who has attained the fourth stage of enlightenment has no defilements at all. So he is called arahant. Arahant means one who has killed all enemies. “*Ara*” means “enemies”, “*hanta*” means “killer”. “*Arahanta*” means “the killer of all enemies”. The noble one killed his enemies. When he hasn’t yet killed his enemies, he is still defiled. When he has killed his enemies, he has purified himself.

*Arahanta means* “one who has killed all the enemies”. But *arahanta* means also, “one who is worthy of noble honour”. He is completely purified from all kinds of defilements. Because he has been practising mindfulness meditation so he could purify himself from all kinds of mental defilements. That’s what the Buddha said, “Purification of beings is the first benefit of mindfulness meditation”.

Now, you are also practising mindfulness meditation. How many types of defilements have you killed?

Practising mindfulness, we are afraid of being killed by our defilements. Why? Because we did not put enough effort into our practise.

The second benefit of practising mindfulness meditation is overcoming worry and regret. When you practise mindfulness with enough effort and time, you can concentrate your mind deeply on the object of mental or physical processes. Then occasionally, you may think about your failures in your life, and you may have worries about it. You may feel sorry for it. But your concentration is good enough at that moment.

As soon as the worry or sorry arises you note it very attentively, energetically, “worry, worry, worry, sorry, sorry, sorry”. Because of deep concentration the worry and sorry becomes weaker and weaker and then stops. Then the noting mind comes to the rise and fall of the abdomen as the primary object and

notes as usual. Then the mind is well concentrated. You feel serene, quiet, and tranquil. That worry and sorry could not disturb you. Why? Because of mindfulness meditation. You can say because you experienced some worry, regret and sadness by being mindful of them.

Every meditator has this experience. The Buddha said that the second benefit of practising mindfulness meditation is overcoming of worry and regret.

Even though you are able to overcome this worry and sorry while your concentration is good enough when you are out of retreat your concentration is not good, not as good as in the retreat. Then, can you overcome this worry and sorry? Yes. If you persistently observe this worry and sorry, then you can overcome it even outside of a retreat. If you do not believe me you should practise it outside.

Mindfulness meditation is not only to practise in the retreat, but it should be applied to your daily life.

It is very beneficial. If mindfulness meditation were beneficial and useful only in retreat, you should not come and practise, you should go. You must apply mindfulness to what you are doing in your daily life, especially when there's worry and sorry.

Then you should remember, "I must observe it". Then observe and note, "worry, worry, sorry, sorry", persistently. Then it will go away. The Buddha said, "The second benefit of practising mindfulness meditation is overcoming sorry and worry". The commentary to the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta mentions a story.

There was a celestial being. We call it deity. His name was Sujampati. Sujampati lived in the upper realm of the *devas*, Tāvatiṃsa. He had many female deities, many wives, one thousand. Five hundred on the left side and the other five hundred on the right. There is a very beautiful garden in the realm of Tāvatiṃsa, its name is Nandanā. Nandanā means "pleasure garden". All deities go to that garden and enjoy picnics and so on. Sujampati also went to the garden, Nandanā, together with his thousand wives. Nowadays you have only one wife, and even

with only one wife you are always embarrassed, annoyed, or disturbed by her. You worry about her. Sometimes you feel sorry for her. But now a thousand! A thousand is ... I don't know. You may know.

In the garden, they enjoyed many pleasurable things. But in the morning, 500 of the thousand, plucking flowers in the garden, died. All of the 500 died. That is according to the scriptures. When a deity dies no body is left. The whole body evaporates. Then no one can see the dead body.

Sujampati, enjoying the other deities, did not know. Those deities who had died were reborn in hell. All the five hundred had been reborn in hell, suffering a great deal. When Sujampati was about to go back home he took roll call; one, two, three, four, five, and so on. Then he came to know, "Five hundred are lost".

So, he searched in all corners of the garden. He looked for them in all the six realms of the *devas*. He couldn't see them. Then he looked down to the earth, the human world. He couldn't see them. Then he looked down further to hell. There he found his five hundred deities suffering a great deal. He was shocked and felt sorry for them, he worried about them. Then, at the same time he saw how long he could live in the *deva* world.

He saw that he himself would die after a week. Then he was very worried about his own death. In this way, he was stricken with worry, sorry, and so much suffering. How could he overcome this worry and sorry? By mindfulness. But he did not know mindfulness meditation because he indulged in sensual pleasures a great deal. Then he felt helpless.

No one consoled him. He was stricken with a great deal of grief and worry and sorrow. The remaining five hundred wives also couldn't help him. But one of the female deities who seemed to be wise advised him, "We have the lord of deities, the king of *devas*. You should go to him and ask what he advises to quench this suffering".

Sujampati went to the king of *devas* and asked for a way to quench his suffering, sorrow, worry, and grief. The King of *Devas*

is called Sakka in Pāḷi. The King of Devas told him, “Sujampati, I am also not able to advise you how to quench your suffering. Yet, what I can do for you is one thing. You should go down to the earth, the human world. There is the enlightened Buddha. You should go to him and ask for advice”.

Then Sujampati came to the Buddha as advised by the king of devas, not alone but with 500 female deities. Could he overcome his worry and sorry? No. Helpless. Time is up. We will continue tomorrow.

May you strive to overcome your worry and sorry by means of mindfulness meditation and achieve the cessation of suffering.

# The seven factors of enlightenment

Today is the 20th of January 1992.

We will continue our Dhamma talk about the overcoming of worry and sorrow, one of the benefits of mindfulness meditation.

The deity, having lost five hundred wives, went to the Buddha for advice which might help to quench the great fire of desire, attachment, worry, and sorrow. He asked the Buddha, “Venerable Sir, I am stricken with grief because five hundred of my thousand female deities have died and now are suffering in hell. I am sorry for these deities because I loved them”.

Yes. If he did not love them he would not have to worry about them. He would not need to be sorry for them. You know through your own experience. “When I see my lifespan, I know that I will have to die in a week’s time and suffer in hell, the same hell as those female deities suffer. I am worried about it. I am stricken with great grief and suffering. Please help me to get rid of this suffering”.

The Buddha advised him with this stanza which consists of 32 syllables, “Without the development of the seven factors of enlightenment, and without observing moral conduct or precepts, without closing the six doors of the sense bases, and without the attainment of Nibbāna which abandons all mental defilements, nobody can attain eternal peace”.

## How to develop the seven factors of enlightenment

Do you know how to develop the seven factors of enlightenment?

You know how to observe the precepts so that you can purify your morality. You are observing, Abstention from killing, not taking what is not given, abstention from incelibacy, abstention from false speech, abstention from any kind of intoxicants, abstention from taking substantial food after midday, abstention from any kind of entertainment and any kind of adoration which beautifies one's person, abstention from using high beds and luxurious beds. When you fully observe these precepts, you are hopeful to have deep concentration because you do not have a guilty conscience about your deed and speech. Your deed and speech is purified by means of observing the eight precepts.

Then, "Without closing of the six sense doors". Do you know how to close your six sense doors? By noting and being mindful of what is seen, what is heard, what is smelled, what is tasted, what is touched, and what is thought about. Then your sense doors have been closed. None of the mental defilements can come into the mind because the six doors are closed.

Do you know how to close the doors? Some of the meditators don't know how to close the doors without making noise. When they enter the hall or leave the hall, they close the door making a great noise which is not very helpful to the concentration of the other meditators.

## The seven factors of enlightenment

The first factor of enlightenment is *sati sambojjhaṅga*. The second is *dhamma vicaya sambojjhaṅga*. The third is *virīya sambojjhaṅga*. The fourth is *pīti sambojjhaṅga*. The fifth is *passadhi sambojjhaṅga*. The sixth is *samādhi sambojjhaṅga*. The seventh is *upekkhā sambojjhaṅga*. You don't know because you haven't heard these words.

Yes. These seven *bojjhaṅga* belong to the 37 requisites of enlightenment. *Bojjhaṅga* translates as “factors of enlightenment” or “factors of the enlightened ones”. Unless these factors are developed, you cannot be enlightened or you cannot attain any path knowledge or fruition knowledge which is known as enlightenment.

### **Mindfulness (*sati*)**

The first factor of enlightenment is *sati sambojjhaṅga*. It means *sati*, mindfulness. If you are mindful of whatever arises in your body and mind as it really occurs, then you are cultivating mindfulness, the first factor of enlightenment. That’s mindfulness, *sati*.

### **Investigation of the Dhamma (*dhamma vicaya*)**

The second one is *dhamma vicaya sambojjhaṅga*. *Dhamma* means mental and physical phenomena and also *Nibbāna*. *Vicaya* means investigation. It means that this factor of enlightenment investigates the Dhamma so that it can be realised in its true nature.

Actually, this factor doesn’t try to analyse through thinking or through intellectualising. When mindfulness becomes sharp and concentration becomes deep, this factor, which is the insight knowledge which arises together with concentration, penetrates into the true nature of bodily and mental phenomena which are observed. Then it realises impermanence, suffering, no-soul-, or no-self-nature of mental and physical phenomena which are observed.

It means that this factor investigates the true nature of mental and physical phenomena. It has the ability to penetrate into the Dhamma and know the aspects of existence, *anicca*—impermanence, *dukkha*—suffering, and *anatta*—impersonal nature or no-soul, no-self. This insight is called the factor of enlightenment, this is *dhamma vicaya sambojjhaṅga*.

## Effort (*virīya*)

The third one is *virīya*, effort. Steady and balanced effort is one of the seven factors of enlightenment. When you have steady and balanced effort in your practice, you are sure to be mindful of every mental and physical phenomena which is arising at the moment. It is called *virīya sambojjhaṅga*.

## Rapture (*pīti*)

Another one is *pīti sambojjhaṅga*. *Pīti* means rapture. It is a delight which is very tender, very tenderly infiltrating or suffusing rapture. When you feel rapture on any part of your body while your concentration is good enough, you need not put conscious effort into your practice because effort becomes steady and balanced by itself, so the concentration becomes deep. Then you feel calm, serene, and tranquil. So you feel rapture, a very pleasant sensation, a very tender sensation of ecstatic delight. The whole body is suffused with a tender feeling. Sometimes you feel goose bumps, shaking, trembling, or sometimes vibrating. Or the hair of the body stands on end. That's also one of the factors of enlightenment.

Have you had this experience? You have? Be careful. This is a very good enemy of a yogi, a very good enemy of a meditator. It is good, but it is an enemy.

Why? Yogis tend to be attached to this rapture. When concentration is very good and effort becomes steady and balanced, then you can easily concentrate on any object of meditation. You need not make any effort to be mindful. The mind notes the objects very easily and comfortably. Then concentration becomes good and deep, you feel calm, tranquil, and serene. Then you feel this sensation of rapture and ecstatic delight.

This rapture, *pīti*, is classified into five types in the commentary. One type of *pīti* which is very powerful makes the meditator jump in the air from the seat. Have you experienced this? Try to

experience it. It is called *ubbega pīti*. *Ubbega* means the rapture that lifts the body of meditators up in the sky. Very good. Some meditators feel as if they are lifted by something, say, about four or six inches above the seat. Sometimes it is one foot above the seat.

In Burma, sometimes meditators have to sit for meditation inside a mosquito net because there are mosquitoes. Not very many, not like flies in Australia. Meditators sit inside a mosquito net, and sometimes their body is lifted up and the head touches the roof of the mosquito net by means of this rapture.

Some of the meditators are shocked by this experience because they haven't experienced it before. Surprising. In the commentary, there are two or three stories about this *ubbega pīti*, uplifting rapture. But I don't want to tell these stories. Why? Because the present story has not finished. (Now the Buddha is explaining the seven factors of enlightenment. To whom? To the deity Sujampati.)

### **Tranquillity (*passadhi*)**

Another one is *passadhi sambojjhaṅga*. *Passadhi* here means tranquillity. Tranquillity is also one of the seven of the enlightened ones. When you feel rapture, rapture is preceded by tranquillity. Tranquillity is preceded by concentration. When your mind is easily concentrated on the object of meditation, then you need not make any effort in the noting to concentrate the mind on the object of meditation. So, the mind becomes tranquil and serene. Only after that rapture comes to you.

### **Concentration (*samādhi*)**

Another one is *samādhi sambojjhaṅga*. Do you know that? Do you know *samādhi*, concentration? Concentration is also one of the seven factors of enlightenment. I need not explain it because you have experienced it to a certain extent. Sometimes you have

experienced this concentrated mind continuously for about ten minutes or twenty minutes.

### **Equanimity (*upekkhā*)**

The last one is *upekkhā sambojjhaṅga*. *Upekkhā* here means equanimity. When you have rapture, then you observe it, “rapture, rapture, rapture—*pīti, pīti, pīti*”. When you observe *pīti*, it becomes calm and balanced. Then you are not attached to it. Because you do not accept it as a pleasant sensation. Because you are mindful of it. Then the mind doesn’t go out, your concentration also is neither too deep nor superficial. Therefore it becomes balanced and steady. In this state of meditative experience, you feel neither happy nor unhappy.

You are in the middle of happiness and unhappiness. This state of meditative experience is called equanimity. Equanimity is also one of the seven factors of enlightenment. It is called *upekkhā sambojjhaṅga*.

*Sati, dhamma vicaya, viriya, pīti, passadhi, samādhi, upekkhā*: these are the seven factors of enlightenment.

## **Mindfulness is the all-inclusive mentality, the all-inclusive Dhamma**

I have explained the meaning of these seven factors so that you know how to develop these seven factors in you. How can you develop them? By mindfulness. Mindfulness is the all-inclusive mentality, the all-inclusive Dhamma. If you are mindful of any mental and physical processes without a break and have sharp, powerful, and constant mindfulness, then your concentration becomes deeper and deeper. Then insight arises based on deep concentration. This insight realises mental and physical phenomena which are observed at that moment. Then you can attain all of these seven factors of enlightenment or some of them.

At the early part of the fourth insight knowledge you can have these seven factors: *sati, dhamma vicaya, viriya, pīti, passadhi, samādhī, upekkhā*. But, you should be careful of these good enemies when you have this experience. Why? Because you are clinging to them. You tend to cling to these experiences and then you can't go to the upper stages of insight knowledge. You stop here.

Very good. You are content with them. Sometimes meditators take these good enemies to be Nibbāna which is peaceful and happy. They stop their practice because they have attained what they wanted to achieve. Actually, they have reached the fourth stage of insight knowledge. There are thirteen stages of insight knowledge to go through. Out of thirteen they have only attained only four. Only a part of the way. Is it right? Only one part of the insight stages has been attained, but they think that they have attained Nibbāna. Why? Because of the good enemy.

## **These good enemies corrupt your *vipassanā* insight**

They are called “corruptions”. These good enemies corrupt your *vipassanā* meditative experience. When you are attached to these good experiences and when you are content with them, then your meditative experience, *vipassanā*, stops here and you can't go to the higher stages of insight.

About two weeks ago, one of our meditators felt concentrated very easily and also very tranquil, serene, and peaceful. Sometimes he did not know anything. He was not aware of his bodily form. In the interview, he said, “I have experienced this and that, very good. So it's good enough for me, I am going back home”.

Now he is here, continuing his practise. I explained him that this is just the beginning of good experience. You have to go up. So, these are good enemies. Then you come to know the seven

factors of enlightenment which can be cultivated by means of mindfulness meditation. The Buddha said, “Without the development of the seven factors of enlightenment, no one can attain eternal peace and happiness”.

These seven factors of enlightenment are also called the requisites of enlightenment. There are 37. The Buddha continued, “Without closing of sense-doors no one can attain eternal peace and happiness that is deliverance and emancipation, Nibbāna”.

## **Close your six doors**

When you are striving to attain Nibbāna, deliverance or eternal peace, happiness, then you should close your six doors:

- Whenever you see something, observe, “seeing, seeing, seeing”.
- Whenever you hear something, note, “hearing, hearing, hearing”.
- Whenever you smell something, note, “smelling, smelling, smelling”.
- Whenever you taste something, note, “tasting, tasting, tasting”.
- Whenever you touch something, note, “touching, touching, touching”.
- Whenever you think about something, note, “thinking, thinking, thinking”.

In this way, all six sense doors can be closed by constant mindfulness. If you fail to be mindful of any consciousness of seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, touching, or thinking, can you close your doors? No. The enemy or the mental defilements will come in very easily.

Actually, the Buddha used these words, “When you see something, your mind should stop at what is seen”. This means that you should know the consciousness of seeing. That’s what the

Buddha said. If you note or if you are mindful of the consciousness of seeing, then your mind doesn't judge whether what is seen is good or bad. So you have no aversion or no desire for it. Then the mind stops at what is seen. This is the benefit of closing the doors.

Then again, the Buddha said, "Without attainment of Nibbāna which abandons all mental defilements no one can attain eternal peace and happiness".

First of all, the Buddha advised the deity Sujampati to cultivate the seven factors of enlightenment by means of mindfulness meditation and then to close the six doors by means of mindfulness meditation. When you are able to completely close these six doors, then you won't have any defilements at all. When you have attained the fourth stage of enlightenment, then you won't have any mental defilements. Then you have attained Nibbāna, the cessation of suffering or eternal peace and happiness which abandons mental defilements.

After the Buddha had clarified these points to Sujampati, Sujampati contemplated these points and also all mental and physical processes which were arising at the moment, especially worry, sorrow, and lamentation. In a short time, he came to realise impermanence, suffering, and the impersonal nature of these mental and physical phenomena which are observed at the moment. So he reached the upper stages of insight one after another. And after he got through the thirteenth stage of insight he attained the first path knowledge, *sotāpattimaggāñāṇa*. Then he became a noble one who had attained the first path, the first stage of enlightenment.

Because the first stage of enlightenment uproots *sakkāya diṭṭhi* and *vicikicchā*, the wrong view of personality or individuality, and sceptical doubt about the Triple Gem, he didn't take his bodily and mental processes to be a person, a being, or a deity. He had no attā. Because he had no idea of a personality or individuality he also had no wives, no female deities. As there is no person or being, what really exists in the whole world is just

mental and physical phenomena which are arising and passing away one after another.

If he sees it in this way, can he have any wife? No.

Did he have any son, daughter, any grand or divine house? No.

Did he need to feel worry or regret for the death of his deities? No.

In this way worry and sorrow had been uprooted by mindfulness meditation. This is one of the benefits of mindfulness meditation.

Another benefit of meditation is overcoming lamentation. When your relative has died, you lament. You cry over it, you wail over it. When your sons, daughters, or parents have died, you lament the death of your parents, sons, or daughters. This lamentation is destroyed by means of mindfulness meditation. This is also one of the seven benefits of mindfulness meditation.

Here, the commentary describes a woman whose husband, two sons, two parents, and one brother had died within a day. She was stricken with great grief, sorry, worry, and lamentation. She went wandering because she had gone mad due to these fires of grief, sorry, worry, and lamentation. But one day she came to the Buddha's monastery, Jetavāna. She saw the audience who was listening to a discourse expounded by the Buddha. She approached, not to listen but because she saw the gathering. The Buddha saw her. Then the Buddha said, "Sister, be careful".

When she heard the very sweet and clear voice of the Buddha, she calmed down, she came to her. Then she sat down at the edge of the audience and listened to the Dhamma. The Buddha aimed his discourse at this woman who was stricken with grief, worry, sorry, and lamentation. After the discourse had been delivered, this woman attained the first path knowledge because she had gone through all the thirteen stages of insight in a very short time. Then no worry, no sorry, no lamentation at all.

She requested the Buddha to ordain her a bhikkhuni. The Buddha told the *bhikkhuni saṅgha* to ordain her. Then she con-

tinued her practice because she had to attain the higher stages of enlightenment. So, diligently, enthusiastically, and earnestly she put more and more effort into the practice. Then, one night she attained the fourth stage of enlightenment and became an arahant.

Her name was Patācārā who had mastered the code of monastic rules. When she became an arahant, she had no lamentation at all. In this way, mindfulness meditation can overcome lamentation.

## The other benefits

Overcoming mental suffering and physical suffering. Mental suffering is called *cetasika dukkha*. Physical suffering is called *kāyika dukkha*. Meditation can overcome this mental suffering and physical suffering by being mindful of what is happening at the moment.

When you feel unhappiness, depression, dejection, or mental stress and strain, you observe it. Then it gradually disappears. You overcome it. Physical pain can also be overcome by being mindful of it. You have experienced this.

At the eleventh stage of insight knowledge you have no physical discomfort at all. You have overcome it completely. Sometimes some diseases or illnesses can be overcome by means of mindfulness meditation. These are physical suffering. This is the sixth benefit.

The first, second, third, and fourth stage of path knowledge can be attained by means of mindfulness meditation just like Sujampati Deva and Patācārā. You are now on the right path and you have walked the path halfway. If you continue with your practice, you are sure to attain path knowledge, the first, second, third, or the fourth. So you are hopeful, but do not expect anything, just be mindful. If you expect, expectation becomes a hindrance.

Then the seventh benefit is attainment of Nibbāna.

May all of you rightly understand these seven benefits of mindfulness meditation, strive your best and achieve your goal, the cessation of suffering.

# Parable of the log

Today is the 21st of January 1992.

Today I would like to deal with a discourse of the Omniscient Buddha recorded in the Saṃyutta Nikāya. It is the Darukkhandhopama Sutta, the Parable of the Log.

## The discourse

Once the Omniscient Buddha was sitting under a tree on the bank of the river Gaṅga (Ganges in English, but we pronounce it Gaṅga in Pāli) near the city of Kosambi. Five hundred bhikkhus accompanied him. The Lord Buddha saw a very big log being carried down the river by the current.

He pointed to the log and said, “Oh bhikkhus, do you see that big log which is being carried along by the current of the river?” The bhikkhus replied, “Yes Venerable sir, we see it”.

The Lord Buddha continued,

“If that log is not caught on the near bank, it will reach the ocean.

“If it is not caught on the far bank it will reach the ocean.

“If it is not submerged under water, it will reach the ocean.

“If it does not land on a small island in the middle of the river, it will reach the ocean.

“If it is not taken away by a human being, it will reach the ocean.

“If it is not taken away by a deity, it will reach the ocean.

“If it does not sink into a whirlpool, it will reach the ocean.

“If it does not become rotten, it will reach the ocean”.

Here the Omniscient Buddha points out that if there is not any of these eight faults, the log will reach the ocean. Then, the Buddha said, “Why will this log reach the ocean? It is because the current of the river inclines towards the ocean. It will, therefore, reach the ocean if it has none of these eight faults.

“In the same way, bhikkhus, you will reach Nibbāna if you have none of these eight faults. Why? Because right understanding (*sammā-dit̥ṭhi*) inclines towards Nibbāna, the cessation of *dukkha*. However, bhikkhus, this is just a simile”.

Then, one of the monks requested the Lord Buddha to explain the simile, which the Buddha did in this way.

The words “near bank” refer to the six sense doors—eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind.

The words “far bank” refer to the six sense objects—visible objects, sound or voice, smell or scents, taste, tangible things and mind objects.

“Submerged under water” means being attached to any sentient being or inanimate thing.

“Landing on a small island in the middle of the river” means conceit, pride or haughtiness.

“Taken away by a human being” means that a bhikkhu lives mingling improperly with laity.

“Taken away by a deity” means doing good deeds for the purpose of being reborn in heaven—the realm of Devas or Brahmas.

“Sinking into a whirlpool” means indulgence in the five kinds of sensual pleasures.

“Becoming rotten” means pretending to be virtuous when one is not actually virtuous.

## The exposition

Although the Omniscient Buddha addressed this discourse to bhikkhus, it is for everybody, irrespective of race and religion. Anyone who has none of the eight faults can reach the ocean. When he has reached the ocean he has got free from the round of existence and got rid of suffering (*dukkha*).

In some discourse of the Omniscient Buddha the ocean refers to the cycle of rebirths (*samsāra*) and in the others to Nibbāna, the cessation of suffering. In this discourse, what the Buddha refers to with the word “ocean” is Nibbāna.

## Sense-doors and sense-objects

Then, what does the Buddha mean when he compares the near bank with six sense-doors and the far bank with six sense-objects?

Here I would like to say a few words about the word “mind”. In the psychology of Buddhism “*citta*”, which knows the object, does not last even for the blinking of an eye. Herein the word “mind” is used in the sense of *citta* that knows the object and very instantly passes away. Cognition of the object does not last for even one millionth of a second. Occasionally we use the word “consciousness” which may be better than the word “mind”.

Consciousness or the mind knows the object, but the eye does not know it. With the help of the eye, one of the six sense-doors, consciousness sees the object. For example you see a brand new Rolls Royce car. In this case there is a visible object and there is the eye that helps the mind or consciousness see the object. If you see that Rolls Royce you may feel how good it would be to own one. If it is your own car it will give you much pleasure. You are attached to it because you see it and take it to be a very nice car of yours. You do not regard it as just a natural process of material phenomena. Then, you are caught on the far bank—the car, and the near bank—the eye, because your

attachment arises dependant on the car—the visible object and the eye—one of the six sense-doors.

The eye is one of the six sense-doors. When the eye contacts the colour or the form of the car, there arises consciousness that sees the car but consciousness of seeing does not stop there. It goes further. It thinks, “Yes, it is my car, a very good car, a new car. I bought it yesterday; it cost a lot of money”. In this way, you become attached to that Rolls Royce. That means that you are attached to a non-living thing because of its colour and form—a visible object—and because of the eye. So you are attached to the car.

Suppose you park it on the side of the road and a person carelessly drives his car past yours and scratches the door of your car. Then you feel angry because it is your car that is scratched. It means that you have attachment (*lobha*) and anger (*dosa*). Do *lobha* and *dosa* bring you happiness? No, they bring you unhappiness, *dukkha*. And why do you have this *dukkha*? Your suffering or unhappiness arises because you yourself are stuck on the near bank as well as on the far bank. That attachment arises dependant on the visible object, the car, with the help of the eye consciousness that keeps you stranded on the near bank. If you are attached to the car with the help of your eyes, you will not reach the ocean, Nibbāna. You will be clinging to the far bank as well as the near bank; you won’t reach the ocean.

The log is compared with the *khandhas* or a human being. *Khandhas* mean the five aggregates of mental and physical phenomena. Because you do not see the five aggregates as five aggregates of mentality and physicality, you take them to be a person, a being, a self or a soul and as a result you are attached to them; so you won’t reach the ocean. If, however, you see the five aggregates as the five aggregates of mentality and physicality, you won’t take them for a person etc. Then you will not be attached to them, and so you will reach the ocean. That Rolls Royce you bought yesterday, which was so expensive, if you see it as a Rolls Royce, then you are attached to it; but if you see it

as a material process or *rūpakkhandha*—the aggregate of materiality, you won't be attached to it. Then you won't be unhappy when it is scratched because you don't take it as a valuable Rolls Royce. You are caught on neither of the two banks.

### **Attachment and conceit**

What the Lord Buddha means by “submerged under water” is attachment, desire, craving, lust, love. If you are attached to any living being or inanimate object, you won't be able to reach the ocean. You are submerged under water.

Then, “landing on a small island” means conceit, pride or haughtiness. If you are proud of or conceited about your work, your rank or your success in your business, you are landing on a small island. That conceit delays you in your attainment of Nibbāna. If you are conceited, you are unable to realize the mental and physical processes in their true nature and you will take your bodily and mental processes to be a person, a being, an *atta* or a you. Then, there will arise many others defilement such as anger, lust, greed hatred and so on. So, you, landing on a small island, won't be able to reach the ocean because you are not able to realize natural process as a natural process, or the five aggregates as just a natural process.

### **Improper association**

If the log is taken away by a human being it won't reach the ocean. This refers to bhikkhus. Supposing a bhikkhu does not do his work of learning scriptures, practising meditation, delivering sermons, leading his disciples on the right path and encouraging them to meditate for their emancipation; instead, he mixes with the laity in an improper way. Such a bhikkhu is taken away by a human being. He will be unable to reach the ocean. He will be attached to these people whom he is improperly associating with. He will be so attached to worldly affairs that he won't be able to

realize the three characteristics of mental and physical phenomena, that is *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*—impermanence, suffering and no-soul, no-self or non-ego. If he is unable to realize these three basic facts of existence, he will be so strongly attached to worldly things that he won't want to reach the ocean.

### **Desire for better existence**

If the log is taken away by a *deva*, it won't reach the ocean. This means that if you perform any wholesome or meritorious deeds such as giving or charity (*dāna*), observing moral precepts (*sīla*) and meditation (*bhāvanā*) with a view to rebirth in the realm of *devas* or Brahmas, then you will be taken away by them to their realm. If this happens you won't reach the ocean. You may achieve your aim of a better rebirth because of the good you have done. You will be reborn as a shining one, a *deva* but you won't be able to reach the ocean.

*Deva* means a deity, one who shines. If you become *deva*, you will be very attached to yourself because you are shiny and very beautiful. Then, you won't be able to reach the ocean.

### **Sensual pleasure**

If the log sinks into a whirlpool, it won't reach the ocean. This means, that if you are indulging in sensual pleasure, you won't reach the ocean. This is attachment. If you are attached to what you see, what you hear, what you smell, what you taste, what you touch, and what you think about, then you become caught in a very big whirlpool. You won't be able to reach the ocean. Because the doctrine of the Buddha is so very rational, logical and natural, I am sure that you agree with him on this point.

Attachment to any sensual pleasure leads you to repeated rebirths in the cycle of existence; it does not lead you to Nibbāna, the ocean.

## Dishonesty

Then, the last one, is becoming rotten. If the log becomes rotten, it won't reach the ocean. That means that if you pretend to be a very virtuous person when you are not, you become rotten and will not reach the ocean. You won't reach Nibbāna.

## The way out of suffering

The Omniscient Buddha said, "If you have none of these eight kinds of faults, you are certain to reach the ocean because you will be carried by the Middle Current of the river". The Middle Current is the Noble Eightfold Path. If you develop the Noble Eightfold Path, you are not kept on the near bank or the far bank, you are not submerged under the water, you won't land on a small island, you won't be taken away by human beings or *devas*, you won't be caught in a whirlpool, you won't become rotten. Then you are certain to reach the ocean of Nibbāna.

You must strive to develop the Noble Eightfold Path so that you do not have any of these eightfold faults. What should you do to develop this Noble Eightfold Path? *Sīla* (morality) is the foundation, the basic requirement. *Samādhi* (concentration) is built on the foundation of *sīla* and *paññā* (insight and enlightenment) and comes with the proper application of concentration. It is very easy to develop this Noble Eightfold Path which consists of *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā*. Observe yourself or just observe your bodily and mental processes as they really are. That is all.

Watch any action or movement of your body and mind as it occurs without analysing it, without thinking about it. Just pay bare attention to what is happening to your body and mind as it really is. That is all. If you use any intellectual knowledge or preconceptions in this awareness of your bodily and mental processes, you go astray and your mind is not well concentrated, you will not be able to realize bodily and mental phenomena as they really are.

## Purification of mind

When you observe any activity of body and mind as they really occur, then gradually your mind becomes concentrated on any process that is observed. Then concentration becomes deeper and stronger. Your mind is purified from *nīvaraṇa* (hindrances) such as *kāmacchanda*, *vyāpāda*, *thīnamiddha*, *uddhacca-kukkucca* and *vicikicchā*.

*Kāmacchanda* means sensual desire. *Vyāpāda* means ill-will. *Thīna-middha* means restlessness and worry or remorse. *Vicikicchā* means sceptical doubt.

If you have one of these five hindrances in your mind, your mind is defiled. It is not pure. When your mind is not pure your insight is not penetrating. Only when the mind is purified of these five hindrances, can your insight knowledge become penetrating. When it is penetrating, you will be able to realize bodily and mental processes first in their specific characteristics and second in their general or common characteristics.

Realization at these two levels is called right understanding (*sammā-ditṭhi*) in the course of *vipassanā* meditation. When it has reached its climax you attain to Nibbāna, the cessation of suffering, through the first enlightenment (*sotāpattimagga*) which realizes the Four Noble Truths. You have reached the ocean.

However, it is only through deep concentration, when you are mindful of bodily and mental phenomena, that you are able to realize them with the three levels of Right Understanding.

## Right understanding

The first level of Right Understanding is the realization of the specific characteristics of materiality and mentality. The second is the realization of general or common characteristic of materiality and mentality. The third is the realization of the four Noble Truths—*dukkha*, the origin of *dukkha*, the cessation of *dukkha* and the way leading to the cessation of *dukkha*.

So, to purify the mind we need the Noble Eightfold Path. To realize mental and physical processes in their specific and general characteristics, we need the Noble Eightfold Path. To realize the Four Noble Truths we need the Noble Eightfold Path. This is the middle current of the river.

## **The way to freedom**

On the night when the Omniscient Buddha was about to pass away, he was reclining on a bed prepared for him in Kusināra Park. In the first watch of the night Subhadda, a mendicant, came to him and said, “Venerable Gotama Buddha I followed various doctrines taught to me by various teachers. They all say that they know all and that they are Arahants. Is what they say true?”

The Omniscient Buddha left the questions unanswered and admonished Subhadda; “Subhadda, whether they know all or not does not matter; it is not concerned with your deliverance; so I won’t answer this question. My time is approaching. I will teach you what is important for your emancipation. Listen to me attentively”.

## **The criterion**

Then the Buddha said, “Subhadda, in any doctrine in which the Noble Eightfold Path is not found, there will not be any *samaṇa*”. Here *samaṇa* means one who is calm as he has destroyed all defilement. It means that if there is no Noble Eightfold Path in a doctrine, then there is no one who has destroyed all defilements by following it.

If there is Noble Eightfold Path in a doctrine, there will be someone who has destroyed the defilement by following it and got rid of suffering. So, if you follow any doctrine in which you do not have to develop the Noble Eightfold Path you are certain not to destroy the defilements and get rid of suffering.

Here, the Omniscient Buddha points out the criterion of the true Dhamma.

The Lord Buddha said; “Subhadda, only in my doctrine or in my *sāsana* is there the Noble Eightfold Path to develop. Therefore, only in my doctrine there are *samaṇas*”. This discourse expounded by the Omniscient Buddha to Subhadda fits in with “The Parable of the Log” because a person who does not develop the Noble Eightfold Path will not reach the ocean of Nibbāna. If he develops the Noble Eightfold Path, he is certain to reach the ocean of Nibbāna as he will not be kept on the far bank or the near bank, etc. The Omniscient Buddha taught us the way to develop this Noble Eightfold Path. That is the technique of Mindfulness meditation.

## Mindfulness meditation

The Omniscient Buddha taught us the way of mindfulness when he expounded the Discourse on the Four Foundations of Mindfulness (Mahāsatiipaṭṭhāna Sutta). He teaches us to be mindful of bodily processes, sensation, consciousness and mind-objects as they really occur. So, the principle of mindfulness meditation is to observe, to be mindful of, to be aware of, whatever arises in our body and mind as it really occurs. Even unpleasant sensations of pain, aching, stiffening, itching and the like must be mindful of as they really are.

When you feel pain in your back or in your knee, you must observe it as it really is. You must not try to make it go away. You must not make it disappear because the pain helps you to attain Nibbāna. In other words pain is the key to the door of Nibbāna. So, if you feel a painful sensation you are very lucky. It will lead you to the cessation of suffering because it is one of the five aggregates to be thoroughly realized.

It is the aggregate of sensation, which is the truth of suffering and must be thoroughly understood. If we realize this painful

sensation in its true nature—in its specific as well as in its general characteristics—we see it as just a natural process, arising and passing away from moment to moment. It does not last for even a second. And through the realization of this pain, or aggregate of sensation, you can attain to enlightenment by which you can destroy defilement and get rid of suffering. That is why I say that if you feel a painful sensation, you are very lucky. Why? Because you have a mental process together with the physical process to watch, to observe and to realize. That pain gives you a very good opportunity to realize its true nature and so lead you to the cessation of *dukkha*, Nibbāna.

## Specific and general characteristics

It is here needed to explain the specific characteristics of mentality and physically and their general or common characteristics.

Every mental or physical process has its own distinctive features that have nothing in common with any other mental or physical process. You know *lobha* (greed, craving, desire, lust and attachment are all encompassed). *lobha* has its own characteristic that does not belong to any other mental or physical process. If you have love or desire for that Rolls Royce you will become proud, possessive or covetous. You become attached to it. So the specific characteristic of *lobha* is clinging.

*dosa* (anger) is different. It has the characteristic of rudeness. Whereas *lobha* draws things towards it, *dosa* is aversion; it repels.

## The six elements

Physical and mental processes, which constitute a so called person, are *paṭhavī-dhātu*, *āpo-dhātu*, *tejo-dhātu*, *vāyo-dhātu*, *ākāsa-dhātu*, and *viññāṇa-dhātu*. These six elements are those of earth, water, fire, air, space and consciousness.

*Paṭhavī-dhātu*, the element of earth, has hardness and softness as its characteristic. This characteristic belongs only to the earth element and to no other; it is, therefore, the specific characteristic of the earth element, while *āpo-dhātu*, the water element, has fluidity and cohesion as its specific characteristic; heat and cold are the specific characteristic of *tejo-dhātu*, the fire element.

When a meditator has gained deep concentration of mind, his mind is purified. Then he begins to realize the specific characteristics of mental and physical processes. When you observe your abdomen rise and fall—a physical process—and your concentration becomes deep enough, you begin to realize the rising and falling movements very clearly in their true nature. Movement or motion is the specific characteristic of the wind or air element. When you rightly understand the true nature of the rising movement or falling movement very clearly, you are not aware of the form of your body or abdomen. What you are realizing at that moment, is just the movement—outward movement and inward movement. Then you begin to realize the specific characteristic of the air element (*vāyo-dhātu*).

The general characteristics of material and mental phenomena are *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*—impermanence, suffering and no-soul, no-self nature. Every mental state, emotional state and physical process has these three characteristics in common. They are called common characteristics because they belong to every mental and emotional state and physical process.

After you have passed two stages of insight knowledge—the knowledge of differentiating between materiality and mentality and that of cause and effect—you come to realize these three general characteristics of psychophysical phenomena. This insight knowledge is known as knowledge of comprehension, which comprehends all these general characteristics of material and mental phenomena.

When a meditator's insight knowledge becomes mature on account of diligent practise with continuous and constant mind-

fulness and deeper concentration growing naturally, he is certain to pass through all the stages of insight with his personal experience of them. His bodily and mental processes—the bodily process that is noted and the mental process that notes it—cease to exist. Then, he attains to Nibbāna, the cessation of compounded things (*saṅkhāra*).

## An end of suffering

There, at that moment, he gets into the state of the cessation of all *saṅkhāra* (compounded things). He has abandoned attachment, the cause of suffering, because he has rightly and perfectly understood *dukkha*. So, the Truth of Suffering has been perfectly understood. The cause of suffering is abandoned at that moment. The Truth of the Way Leading to the Cessation of Suffering (The Noble Eightfold Path) has been developed. He has reached the cessation of compounded things (*saṅkhāra*). Here he has attained the third level of right understanding, that is, Enlightenment, by realizing the Four Noble Truths. Then he reaches the ocean because he has been carried away by the middle current, the Noble Eightfold Path. He is not kept on the near bank nor the far bank. He is not submerged under the water. He is not stranded on an island. So, he has reached the ocean.

The Lord Buddha, sitting under a tree on bank of the river Gaṅga, delivered this discourse. A cowherd named Nanda, who listened to the discourse, was so much inspired by it that he wanted to be carried away by middle current. So he approached the Lord Buddha and requested ordination as a bhikkhu: “Venerable sir, I am afraid of being caught on the near bank or the far bank or submerged into the river. I want to be carried away by the middle current and reach the ocean. Please ordain me a bhikkhu so that I can develop the Noble Eightfold Path, the middle current”.

The Omniscient Buddha said, “Boy, you are a cowherd. First you have a duty to drive your cows back home. You should entrust them to their owner. Unless you do that, I cannot ordain you”.

So the cowherd did as the Omniscient Buddha urged. Then he returned, to be ordained a bhikkhu. Bhikkhu Nanda went into the forest to a secluded place and developed the Noble Eightfold Path by being aware of all mental and physical phenomena that were arising from moment to moment. Because he was willing to be carried away by the middle current, he meditated diligently. In a very short time, he was carried away by the middle current and reached the ocean of Nibbāna. He reached the ocean of Nibbāna because he had none of those eightfold faults and was carried away by the middle current of the Noble Eightfold Path that runs towards the ocean, Nibbāna.

The Lord Buddha repeatedly said: “Be mindful of what is happening at this moment as it really is, or be aware of whatever arises in your body and mind as it really is. Then all of you will be carried away by the middle current and attain Nibbāna, the ocean”.

Is there anyone who wants to be ordained? You are not cowherds, so you don’t want to be carried away to the ocean of Nibbāna. You want to be carried away into the ocean of *samsāra*, the cycle of rebirth, because you want suffering. Is there anyone who wants to be ordained to be carried away by the middle current? I am ready to ordain you. For female meditators nuns. Male meditators bhikkhus. I am ready to ordain you.

No. there’s no one who wants to be carried away by the middle current because the teacher is not the Buddha. Then you should look forward to meeting the Metteya Buddha so that you can request your ordination. Enough.

May all of you strive your best, diligently and earnestly, to be carried away by the middle current, and develop the Noble Eightfold Path and achieve your goal of Nibbāna.

# *Samatha* and *vipassanā* meditation

Today is the 22nd of January 1992.

Today our Dhamma talk will be about the difference between *samatha* meditation and *vipassanā* meditation. Some Buddhists don't differentiate between *samatha* and *vipassanā* meditation. They are puzzled as to how to deal with *samatha* and how to deal with *vipassanā*. That's why one of my Dhamma talks in every retreat deals with the difference between them. Meditation is called *bhāvanā* in Pāḷi. *Bhāvanā* means culture or development. Here *bhāvanā* means specifically mental culture and mental development. To develop consciousness to the extent that one can attain calmness, serenity, tranquillity; but also enlightenment and the cessation of suffering. This *bhāvanā*, culture of mental development, is called meditation. Meditation is of two types in the teaching of the Buddha, *samatha* and *vipassanā*.

*Samatha* means calmness, serenity, tranquillity, and concentration. *Vipassanā* means insight or penetrating knowledge of the body-mind process. *Vipassanā* meditation is practised by most Burmese Buddhists. There are very few Buddhists who practise *samatha* meditation.

## ***Samatha* meditation**

The purpose of *samatha* meditation is to attain a high degree of concentration of mind. When a meditator practises *samatha* meditation, his aim is to attain deep concentration of mind and as a result, to feel calm, tranquil and serene. A *samatha* meditator has only to take a single object and concentrate on it as deeply as possible.

There are 40 objects for *samatha* meditation described in the “Visuddhi magga”, the Manual of Meditation. The *samatha* meditator takes one of these as the object of meditation. Apart from the respiration he can take a *kaṣiṇa*, *asubha*, or *anussati*, and so on as the object. Here *kaṣiṇa* means: a device which a meditator takes as the object to contemplate on. These *kaṣiṇas* are of ten kinds: *paṭhavī kaṣiṇa*, *āpo kaṣiṇa*, *tejo kaṣiṇa*, *vāyo kaṣiṇa*, and so on. *Paṭhavī kaṣiṇa* means: “device of earth”. *Āpo kaṣiṇa* means: “device of water”. *Tejo kaṣiṇa* means: “device of fire”.

When you want to concentrate your mind on a single object of meditation, you make a device to focus on. The earth *kaṣiṇa* for instance: You have to make a circle of earth. You make a circle the size of a plate with pure soil on a wall about two feet above the floor. Then you sit about two feet from the wall and look at this, saying, mentally “earth, earth, earth”, repeatedly, noting “earth, earth”. When the mind goes out, you bring it back and focus again on the circle and noting as, “earth, earth, earth”. You may also say, “*paṭhavī, paṭhavī, paṭhavī*”, in Pāḷi, if you know the meaning of *paṭhavī*.

Here *paṭhavī* means earth, but the meaning of *paṭhavī* in *vipassanā* meditation is hardness and softness. These specific characteristics are called *paṭhavī*, not literally earth or soil in *vipassanā* meditation. But in *samatha* meditation *paṭhavī* means the device which has been made for the purpose of contemplation. The mind gradually becomes concentrated on the object of meditation.

Why should you bring the mind back to the object of meditation when it goes out? Because you want to concentrate the mind on a single object very deeply. What you should notice is the difference between *samatha* and *vipassanā* as to dealing with wandering mind, thinking mind, or distraction. Whenever the mind wanders, you are not mindful of the mind and do not observe it. But you bring it back to the object of meditation, the circle of earth and focus on it, noting “earth, earth” or “*paṭhavi, pathavi*” and so on. You want to concentrate your mind very deeply on a single object of meditation.

When the mind is almost completely absorbed in the object, concentration at that stage of meditation is called *upacāra samādhi*. *Upacāra samādhi* means neighbourhood concentration. This concentration is near to *jhāna* (absorption) concentration, so it is called neighbourhood concentration. It is also called access concentration.

When you put enough effort into observing the circle, the concentration becomes deeper and deeper. Eventually the mind becomes completely concentrated on the object of meditation and then it is absorbed into the object of the earth circle. When the mind is completely absorbed in the object of the earth circle, it is quite purified of all hindrances or defilements. So you feel calm, serene, tranquil, and peaceful. You enjoy it. This is *samatha* meditation, not *vipassanā* meditation.

The aim of *samatha* meditation is to concentrate the mind. It is not to realise any mental or physical processes and not to destroy any defilements. It is called *jhāna sukha*. *Jhāna* here means absorption into the object of meditation. *Sukha* means happiness. *Jhāna sukha* means concentration happiness.

*Jhāna sukha* may be enjoyed by a *samatha* meditator but not by a *vipassanā* meditator. It is not wrong. It is quite right. That is what the mendicants or hermits in the Himalayas do. They go to the forest and practise *samatha* meditation enjoying serenity, tranquillity, and peacefulness of the mind all day long. The result of *samatha* meditation is not only deep concentration but also

the attainment of psychic powers or supernormal powers such as flying in the sky, walking on water, going under the ground, creating many persons, and so on. Such psychic powers can be attained through very deep concentration.

## **Two types of concentration: *upacāra samādhi* and *jhāna* concentration**

We have two types of concentration. One is *upacāra samādhi*, neighbourhood concentration or access concentration. The other is *jhāna* concentration, absorption concentration or fixedness concentration. *Jhāna* has eight stages. A *samatha* meditator practises to attain the eight stages of *jhāna*, one stage after another. Each stage is higher than the previous one. When your mind is deeply absorbed in the object of meditation, then you attain a stage of higher concentration. And when you proceed with your concentration, your mind will be more deeply absorbed into the object of meditation. So you go the third stage, the fourth stage, and so on. So, the final stage of *jhāna* concentration is the highest degree of concentrated mind. It is called *n'eva saññā n'asaññāyatana* in Pāḷi. You need not know so much about it because you are *vipassanā* meditators, not *samatha* meditators.

When a *samatha* yogi has attained all the eight stages of *jhāna* concentration he has to exercise his concentration so that he will become very skilled. When he wants to enter the fourth *jhāna* in a second, he can do it. When he wants to enter the eighth *jhāna* in a second, he can do it. When he is skilled in the attainment of the *jhānas*, he can enter into any *jhāna* in a second.

Based on *jhāna* concentration he proceeds with his practice of *samatha* meditation and then attains supernormal powers or psychic powers very easily. Not practically, but theoretically. Theoretically it is very easy to attain any *jhāna* in a second. But

practically it takes a year, two years, three years, sometimes six or seven, sometimes a whole life.

I do not teach *samatha* meditation, except for *mettā* meditation, *buddhānussati bhāvanā* and respiration meditation. These are included in the forty subjects of *samatha* meditation. They are also *samatha*. We have to practise either *mettā*, *buddhānussati*, or respiration meditation occasionally, when they are necessary to encourage our *vipassanā* meditation.

## ***Samatha* meditation is very useful for a *vipassanā* meditator**

Some arahants have attained these *jhānas* to enter *nirodha samāpatti*. *Nirodha samāpatti* means entering into the cessation of consciousness, mental concomitants, and all physical processes produced by the mind.

One who wants to enter *nirodha samāpatti*, the cessation of all mental and physical processes which are produced by the mind, has to take *samatha* meditation as a base. First of all, he has to enter each of the eight stages of *samāpatti*, *jhāna* concentration. After that, based on the highest concentration of *jhāna*, he proceeds with *vipassanā* meditation. Then he gets into *nirodha samāpatti*. So, for entering into *nirodha samāpatti*, *samatha* meditation is very useful.

A noble one (*ariya puggala*) attains path knowledge and then immediately attains fruition knowledge. If he wants to get into *phala samāpatti*, the attainment of fruition knowledge, he has to take *samatha* meditation as a base. First of all he has to practise *samatha* meditation so that he can attain absorption concentration, the full *jhāna* concentration. After concentration has been attained he has to practise *vipassanā* meditation. Then he gets into fruition knowledge, the attainment of fruition knowledge.

## What is *vipassanā*?

Here, I will very briefly also explain *vipassanā* meditation. *vipassanā* is a compound word. “Vi” refers to *anicca*, *dukkha*, *anatta* or impermanence, suffering, and impersonal nature. “*Passanā*” means to see clearly or clear seeing. In other words, we can say that “*passanā*” means realisation or right understanding. No meditator can realise any mental or physical phenomena in its true nature without being mindful of those mental or physical phenomena. Only when you are mindful of the mental or physical phenomena, can you realise them in their true nature. Realisation and mindfulness go side by side.

The *vipassanā* path means both mindfulness and realisation or insight knowledge. The meaning of the compounded word *vipassanā* means the realisation of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* of the body-mind process. *vipassanā* means the realisation of impermanence, suffering, and impersonal nature of the body-mind process, materiality and mentality.

The purpose of *vipassanā* is the elimination of suffering through the realisation of impermanence, suffering, and impersonal nature of the body-mind process. Without the realisation of the body-mind process in its true nature you can't eliminate your suffering. The aim of *vipassanā* meditation is to attain not only concentration, but also insight knowledge which penetrates into the three characteristics of existence and to destroy the defilements in order to attain the cessation of suffering. Should we be content with deep concentration of mind? No.

The purpose of *samatha* meditation is very different. The purpose of *samatha* meditation is only to attain a high degree of concentration. That of *vipassanā* meditation is the elimination of suffering through the realisation of mental and physical phenomena in their true nature. What we should notice is that because we do not need very deep concentration for that realisation, we should not try to concentrate our mind only on a single object of meditation.

Each and every mental state, emotional state, or physical process is the object of meditation. Therefore, *vipassanā* meditation has a variety of mental processes and physical processes as objects. That is mental and physical processes which are arising at each moment. If you cling to the rise and fall of the abdomen as the only object of meditation, this is wrong, because you only realise only that object. *vipassanā* meditation takes various mental and physical processes as the object of meditation.

The result of *samatha* meditation is the enjoyment of serenity, tranquillity, and peacefulness of mind and some supernormal powers at most. The result of *vipassanā* is cessation of suffering. Nibbāna, emancipation, and deliverance are the result. This emancipation can be attained through the destruction of mental defilements by means of right understanding of mental and physical phenomena. Unless you rightly understand *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* of mental and physical processes you can't destroy any mental defilements.

Without right understanding of impermanence, suffering, and the impersonal nature of mental and physical processes, can you destroy any defilements? No, not at all. Mental defilements can be destroyed only through the realisation of impermanence, suffering, and the impersonal nature of the body-mind process.

The result of *vipassanā* meditation is first of all realisation.

The second one is destroying the defilements.

The third and final one is the cessation of suffering.

But we skipped one stage. What's that? Concentration. Unless our mind is concentrated to a certain extent we are unable to realise any mental or physical process. So we need some degree of concentration. That's why when you come to the interview you say, "My concentration today is very good, it is very powerful, very poor, or today my concentration is very stable", and so on. But I haven't heard any yogi reporting, "My concentration is too deep". I want to hear it. Yes.

But actually, when concentration is too deep, you can't be aware of the bodily and mental processes. Because the mind is

deeply absorbed in the object it can't realise anything else. Even though I want to hear it I don't want to hear it.

When you practise *samatha* meditation, you have to contemplate only a single object, noting and observing it repeatedly. When the mind goes out, you have to bring it back to the object and focus on it deeply and as much as possible.

While practising *vipassanā* meditation when the mind goes out, you note the mind which is wandering or which is thinking about something else. Until it has stopped you must observe the mind which is wandering or thinking about something else. If you report, "When I note "rising, falling" my concentration is good but there is also some trivial and unimportant thought in the back of the mind". Very good. That mind will become gradually developed and help your concentration. When you feel that there is a thought process in the back of your mind while you are concentrated on the rise fall of the abdomen, you do not continue to note the rise and fall, but you note that thought process which you think is not important.

If you do not note it, this thought process is like a bush fire. Gradually it grows, develops and becomes stronger and stronger. Then, it kills your concentration. You must deal with it until it has completely stopped. Only after that do you return to the primary object and note it as usual.

That's one difference between the two kinds of meditations.

There is also another difference. When you have attained very deep concentration by means of *samatha* meditation, then your mind becomes purified from defilements and hindrances. So the mind becomes calm, quiet, tranquil, and peaceful. As long as the mind is absorbed into the single object, say, for one hour, two hours, or three hours, you feel happy, tranquil, and peaceful; you enjoy it. But at the moment when the mind is disengaged from the meditative object, what happens? Gone. Dissipated. When the mind is distracted or dissipated, then any of the mental defilements are ready to come in. Desire—*lobha*, or

*dosa*—worry or regret take over the mind which is not concentrated.

The result of *vipassanā* meditation is not like that. You know for yourself. When you have experienced the appearance and disappearance of the movement of the foot or the movement of the rising and falling very clearly once in your retreat, you can't forget it. Did you forget it? No, you are realising the impermanence of a physical process which is movement, *vāyo dhātu*, wind element. At that moment you do not identify this process of movement with yourself, with a person, or with a being. Then you don't take it to be a self or a soul because you personally experienced it as a series of movements which are arising and passing away. What we call a self is an ever-lasting entity. What we call a soul is an ever-lasting entity. A series of movements of the foot or the rising-falling, is it ever-lasting or not? How long does it last?

A thought moment arises and lasts only a millionth of a second. The moment of a physical process lasts seventeen longer than that of a moment of thought. When you are out of retreat, sometimes you recollect your experience during the retreat. Then you can recollect this appearance and disappearance of the movements of rising-falling and the movement of the foot. At that moment too, you do not identify this physical process to be a person or a being. You don't take it to be a soul or a self when you recollect your experience. If you do not believe me, then you should recollect when you are back at home.

You have some experience, and some meditators have very good experiences. Such meditators, if they continue their practice for another two months, they are sure to attain any stage of enlightenment, say, at least the first stage of enlightenment, *soṭāpattimaggañāṇa*. This is also one of the differences between *samatha* and *vipassanā*. The result of *samatha* meditation can be enjoyed only while the mind is concentrated on the object. The result of *vipassanā* meditation can be enjoyed even in daily life, when you recollect the experience you had in your retreat.

How many points of difference do you find which I explained here? Four. The difference between the two purposes of the two types of meditation. The purpose, the result, the way you have to practise, and the enjoyment of the result. And also the object, the difference between the objects of meditation: *Samatha* takes only a single object, *vipassanā* takes various objects of mental and physical processes.

The result of *samatha* meditation is concentration, *jhāna*, and supernormal powers at most.

Differentiating between *samatha* meditation and *vipassanā* meditation you can judge which way you should follow. In Burma, we Burmese Buddhists say, “*Samatha* is the path of *jhāna*. *vipassanā* is the path of *ñāṇa*”. *Ñāṇa* is realisation, right understanding, or insight. The path of *ñāṇa* is better than the path of *jhāna*. The result of the path of *jhāna* only lasts temporarily, only for the time being. The result of the path of *ñāṇa* lasts forever. Whenever you recollect it, you have it.

May all of you differentiate between *samatha* and *vipassanā* and strive in *vipassanā* meditation for your salvation and achieve the goal.

# *Samatha* is helpful to *vipassanā* meditators

Today is the 23rd of January 1992.

*Samatha* meditation is helpful to *vipassanā* meditators to have deep concentration and clear insight into phenomena. The *Vissuddhi magga* commentary, after describing *samatha* meditation very detailed, describes the benefits of *samatha* meditation or concentration meditation. Actually the benefits of meditation.

When a meditator has practised *samatha* meditation and has attained the eight stages of *jhāna*, absorption concentration, and whenever he wants to live in peace, happiness, and bliss, he enters upon the *jhāna* attainment. He focuses his mind on the object which is usually observed by him. Then, gradually concentration becomes deeper and deeper. When concentration reaches the deepest stage, the meditator's mind is fully absorbed into the object of meditation. Then the mind is purified from all mental defilements and hindrances. It becomes calm, tranquil, serene, and peaceful. Because the mind is tranquil, the meditator enjoys the blissful state of deep concentration. This is called *ditṭhadhamma sukha vihāra*.

## Mental defilements are temporarily removed by the power of deep concentration

As long as the mind is fully concentrated on or fully absorbed into the object of meditation he can enjoy this blissful state of a concentrated mind. He has no worry, no regrets, no sadness, no anger, no depression, and no stress and strain. Such enjoyment of blissful states of a concentrated mind is called *ditṭhadhamma sukha vihara*. “*Ditṭhadhamma*” means in this existence. “*Sukha*” means happily and blissfully. “*Vihara*” means living. So, “*ditṭhadhamma sukha vihara*” means, “He lives very happily and blissfully in this existence”.

If the mind is completely absorbed into the object of meditation without any of the mental stimuli, defilements, or hindrances for an hour or two, then he feels this blissful state of a concentrated mind for that time. Sometimes he may be able to enter upon this *jhāna* attainment for a day or two. Then he feels that he lives happily, peacefully, and blissfully in this state of a concentrated mind for two, three, or four days.

But when the mind becomes disengaged from the meditative practice, mental stimuli such as desire, greed, hatred, ignorance, distraction and so on come into the mind. Then the mind becomes agitated. Then that blissfulness and peacefulness has gone. It means that all mental defilements are removed by the power of deep concentration for the time being. So it is called temporary removal of mental defilements from the mind. We call it *vikkhambhana pahāna* in Pāli.

These eight stages of *jhāna* concentration are the foundation for the attainment of psychic or supernormal powers, *abhiññā*. One who wants to attain these psychic powers or supernormal powers takes all the eight attainments as a foundation and proceeds with his concentration meditation to attain psychic and supernormal powers. One of the benefits of concentration med-

itation is that concentration can be the foundation for psychic and supernormal powers.

Another benefit of concentration meditation is: all the eight stages of *jhāna* concentration, absorption concentration, are the foundation for the attainment of fruition knowledge, *phalañāṇa*. We call fruition knowledge *phalañāṇa* in Pāli.

## **When a person has attained path knowledge**

When a person has attained path knowledge, the first stage of enlightenment knowledge, immediately after his attainment of path knowledge there arises a consciousness together with enlightenment. That consciousness together with enlightenment arising immediately after the path knowledge is called fruition knowledge, *phalañāṇa*. It means that the second consciousness next to the path knowledge is the result of the path knowledge, *maggañāṇa*. This consciousness together with enlightenment is called fruition knowledge, *phalañāṇa*.

## **No path knowledge arises two times**

A meditator can attain path knowledge or the consciousness of path knowledge only once in *saṃsāra*, in the cycle of rebirth. No path knowledge arises two times, only once. The path knowledge at the first stage of enlightenment is one path knowledge. Likewise, the second, the third, and the fourth are one path knowledge. So, the first path knowledge arises only once in the cycle of rebirth.

The second path knowledge arises also only once in the cycle of rebirth. The third path knowledge arises also only once in the cycle of existence. The fourth path knowledge arises also only once in the cycle of birth and death.

After the first path knowledge has been attained, immediately after it there arises a consciousness together with en-

lightenment. This consciousness is fruition knowledge, the consciousness of fruition. Enlightenment is called fruition knowledge. This is the result of path knowledge.

When a person wants to enjoy the blissful state of fruition knowledge, first of all he has to be aware of bodily and mental processes. Then his insight knowledge starts from the fourth insight knowledge and goes up one stage of insight knowledge after another. When all the thirteen stages of insight knowledge have been attained, then he gets into fruition knowledge. But if his concentration is not good enough, not deep enough, he cannot enter upon the fruition knowledge so he can't enjoy the blissful state of fruition knowledge. Only when concentration is good enough, deep enough, can he go up one stage after another of insight knowledge and enter upon the attainment of fruition knowledge: the blissful state of a concentrated mind together with fruition knowledge. This is also one of the benefits of concentration.

The Visuddhi magga describes this benefit of concentration not attained by *samatha* meditation but attained by *vipassanā* meditation.

## **Attainment of *nirodha samāpatti***

There is also another benefit of meditation. When a person wants to enter upon the attainment of *nirodha samāpatti*, the cessation of all mental states and physical processes which are produced by the mind, then first he has to practise *samatha* meditation and attain all eight stages of *jhāna*. Only after he naturally enters upon the attainment of the cessation all mental states and physical processes which are produced by the mind. It is called *nirodha samāpatti*.

The concentration produced by *samatha* is the foundation of *nirodha samāpatti*.

## Being reborn in the higher world of Brahmas is also one of the benefits

When a person enters upon any of the eight stages of *jhāna* concentration, and dies in that state, then he will be reborn in the higher world of Brahmas.

Not only that, but there is also another benefit of concentration which is attained by a *samatha* meditator.

## Insight meditation which is preceded by *samatha* meditation

As you know there are two types of *vipassanā* meditation or insight meditation. The first one is called *samatha pubbaṅgama vipassanā*. The second is called *suddha vipassanā*. The first one, *samatha pubbaṅgama vipassanā*, means insight meditation which is preceded by *samatha* meditation. This is called *samatha pubbaṅgama vipassanā*. *Samatha* means *samatha*, *pubbaṅgama* means preceded, *vipassanā* means insight meditation. Then this compounded word means insight meditation preceded by *samatha* meditation.

## Pure insight meditation

The second type is *suddha vipassanā*. *Suddha* means pure or bare. *Pubbaṅgama vipassanā* means insight meditation. *Suddha vipassanā* means pure insight meditation or mere insight meditation. Insight meditation without *samatha* preceding.

When a person has ample time to spend on meditation, say, six months, one year, two years, or three years, then he should spend about two or three months on *samatha* meditation and then spend the other remaining months on *vipassanā*.

First of all he practises *samatha* meditation. *Samatha* meditation has mainly two types. The first one is the mindfulness type. The second is the reflective type.

Respiration meditation is of the mindfulness type.

You must not reflect upon your respiration or your experience. What you should do is just be mindful of in-breathing as it really occurs. You need not reflect upon it. This type of *samatha* meditation is called mindfulness type of meditation.

Then *buddhānussati bhāvanā*, recollection of the attributes of the Buddha is called *buddhānussati bhāvanā*. The object are the attributes of the Buddha. Then you have to reflect upon the attributes of the Buddha as much as you can. In this way, your mind gradually becomes concentrated on the attributes of the Buddha. This is the reflective type of *samatha* meditation.

*Mettā* meditation, too, is reflective. You have to reflect upon the welfare of all living beings, wishing their happiness, peace, prosperity, and freedom from all kinds of mental and physical suffering. Gradually the mind becomes soaked with the feeling of loving kindness. The mind becomes soaked with the feeling of loving kindness. Gradually it infiltrates the whole body and spreading over the whole body. Very good meditation. *Mettā* meditation. This is also of the reflective type of *samatha* meditation.

When you take respiration as the object of meditation, then you focus upon respiration at the nostrils. When the breath comes in, observe it, “in”. When it goes out, “out”. “In, out—in, out”, making a mental note. Making mental notes is not essential, but it helps the mind to focus on the object of respiration. The most important point is to observe the in-breath and out-breath as it really occurs.

The venerable Mahāsi Sayadaw differentiated between the insight type of respiration meditation and the concentration type of respiration meditation. In the Visuddhi magga commentary the respiration meditation is included in the forty subjects

of *samatha* meditation. So, according to it, it is called *samatha* meditation.

But in the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta, the discourse of the Four Foundations of Mindfulness, the respiration meditation is described as insight meditation. That's why Mahāsi Sayadaw differentiated between the two types of *samatha* and insight respiration.

When you focus your mind on the in and out of the air, then it is *samatha* meditation. When the air comes in, you note “in” or “in-breathing”. When the air comes out, you note “out” or “out-breathing”. “In, out—in, out”. When you focus on the coming in and going out of the breath you are practising *samatha* meditation because the coming in and going out is neither a mental process nor a physical process. It is just a conventional term. So this is *samatha* meditation.

When you breathe in, the air touches the nostrils. When you breathe out, the air touches the nostrils. Focusing on this touching sensation, whenever the air comes in and goes out, is *vipassanā* meditation. When you observe the touching sensation, it is equal to observe in your *vipassanā* meditation, “sitting, touching, touching”.

At any point of contact, the touching sensation consists of the eight kinds of physical units including the four primary material elements. When you take the touching sensation as the object of meditation, the object of meditation is a physical process, which is absolute reality. When you observe absolute reality this is *vipassanā* meditation, insight meditation.

If you observe a conventional term or concept, it is *samatha* meditation. In this way, the Venerable Mahāsi Sayadaw differentiates between the two types of respiration meditation, one as *samatha* meditation, the other as insight meditation. Contemplating at the touching points at the nostrils is also described in the Visuddhi magga.

In this way, you have to concentrate whenever the air comes in, and concentrate on it whenever the air goes out. Gradually

the mind becomes concentrated. Not overnight, not in a day or two. How long will it take to get deep concentration by means of this respiration meditation? You can't say, because it depends on your accumulated experience by means of this meditation in your past existences. This is called *pāramī*.

*Pāramī* means the accumulated experiences you had in past existences by means of meditation. If your accumulated experience is very good and very big, then you can attain deep concentration, say, in a week or ten days. But if your accumulated experience in the past is not very good, you have to make sustained effort in the noting of respiration day and night, sometimes without sleep. Then you may attain deep concentration after one month of striving and exertion.

Yes. You may attain the first stage of *jhāna*, concentration. When the mind is well concentrated on the object of respiration, in and out, it doesn't go out very often. There may be occasional distractions, but they are very short. When you take the mind back to the primary object, it is absorbed into the object of meditation.

All depends on your aim in meditation. If the aim of meditation is to practise *vipassanā* meditation based on the concentration you have attained by means of *samatha* meditation, you need not go up to the second, third, or fourth stage of *jhāna* concentration. The first *jhāna* concentration is enough as a foundation for *vipassanā* meditation.

Not only *jhāna* concentration, but also neighbourhood concentration is enough as a foundation for *vipassanā* meditation. If the aim of your practise of *samatha* is to proceed with *vipassanā* meditation, you need to attain only the first *jhāna* concentration, not the second, the third, or the fourth.

## You can switch your mind to *vipassanā*

When your mind is well concentrated on respiration with little distraction, sometimes it is totally absorbed into the respiration object, then you can switch your mind to *vipassanā* by attending to any process which is arising at that moment.

Because you have already attained some degree of deep concentration as the base for *vipassanā* meditation, you need not try to concentrate your mind on any particular mental or physical process. The concentration which you have attained by means of *samatha* meditation can be carried over to help your *vipassanā* meditation. When you note, “rising, falling—rising, falling”, the mind is well concentrated on it. Because the mind is concentrated, it is purified from all defilements and hindrances and you have attained purification of mind by means of *jhāna* concentration. Because the mind is purified from these taints, it becomes penetrating and sharp.

The insight knowledge that arises together with this deep concentration becomes penetrating and realises a series of movements of rising and a series of movements of falling. When you observe, “rising”, you come to realise one movement after another arising. When you observe, “falling”, you come to realise one movement after another and so on.

Then, if you observe, “rising, falling—rising, falling”, you can distinguish the rising movement, the physical process, and the mind that notes it as a mental process. This is the dual process of physicality and mentality. You come to distinguish between these two processes. You do not identify either mental process with your person, being, self or soul. Then you have removed the idea of a person or a being, regarding these two processes. *Sakkāya ditṭhi* has been removed.

Not long after you switch your contemplation to the rise and fall of the abdomen, you realise it because the concentration that has been attained is already good. How did you get this concentration? Through *samatha* meditation.

If your past experiences of this type of meditation is very poor, it will take you, say, one year or two years to get this deep concentration. In Burma, there was a very enthusiastic Mahāthera who took keen interest in the attainment of psychic or supernormal powers based on *jhāna* concentration. He spent many years in the forest practising *samatha* meditation. After about fifteen years he passed away without *jhāna* concentration. Why? Because his past experiences were poor. Maybe he was the type of person who wanted to indulge in thinking, analysing, criticising, and reasoning.

If you take respiration as the object of the mindfulness type of meditation, you have to be mindful. There is no room for thinking, analysing, or criticising. If you think about the practice, analyse it, or if you criticise the experience, you are unable to concentrate on your respiration meditation. You are hopeless and even though you have passed away you won't get any concentration.

## **We have to go straight to *vipassanā* meditation when we have only a short time**

Not everybody can attain such deep concentration. It depends on his past experience, on his attitude, and the *pāramīs*, too. That's why we have to go straight to *vipassanā* meditation, when we have only a short time such as one, two, or three months. It is a very short time. If you spend three months on *samatha* meditation, you may not be able to switch on to *vipassanā* meditation because you have not yet attained deep concentration.

When you go straight to *vipassanā* meditation, pure insight meditation, then you can realise some aspect of mental and physical processes in one or two months' time. You may be able to reach at least the eleventh stage of insight knowledge in three months' time because it is not very difficult to attain.

## Patience is the vital factor

What you need is strenuous and sustained effort, constant mindfulness, perseverance, and great patience. Patience is a vital factor needed in mindfulness meditation. You must be patient with everything and everyone.

When a meditator has a lot of time, ample time to spend on meditation, say about one year or two years, or six months or so, then he may spend about one or two months for *samatha* meditation and switch on to *vipassanā* meditation after that.

But whether he has attained neighbourhood concentration or *jhāna* concentration or not after two months of *samatha* meditation I think it is enough for him to switch on to *vipassanā* meditation because he should not spend a longer time on *samatha* meditation. Two months is enough, I think.

But in Burma, in Australia too, some meditators practise *samatha* meditation for three days. Then they practise *vipassanā* meditation for seven days. That is called *vipassanā* meditation preceded by *samatha*. In three days of meditation, can you attain concentration? You can't.

In *samatha* meditation, if you feel pain on any part of your body, what should you do? Yes. Bring the mind back to the nostrils. But when you have a very tense painful sensation, the mind doesn't go to the nostrils. Where does it go? To the pain. It is very, very difficult to take it from the pain to the nostrils. Then, better do what?

This is *samatha* meditation, not *vipassanā* meditation, so it is better to change the position and relieve the pain. If you do not overcome the pain by changing the position, then stand up. If you do not get rid of this pain you go out of the hall and walk briskly. Then you sit down again and start on the nostrils.

In *samatha* meditation you have to change your position because you should not observe the painful sensation. What you want is to concentrate your mind deeply on the nostrils, the respiration. You must not concentrate your mind on the pain in the

knee or in the back. The best way is to change the position, take the mind to the nostrils and note, “in, out—in, out”. That’s the best way.

## **We do not use respiration meditation** ***Mettā* is helpful**

We also use *samatha* meditation as a helper to *vipassanā* meditation but we do not use respiration meditation. It is somewhat difficult to concentrate on the nostrils, on the breathing, in a short time, say, in two or three sittings. We only use *mettā* meditation or *buddhānussati* meditation. *Mettā* meditation is not dry.

By developing *mettā* the mind becomes gradually soaked with the spirit or the feeling of *mettā*, loving kindness. It becomes wet. Then you feel calm, serene, tranquil, and peaceful in one sitting or two sittings very, very easily. Then your thoughts are overcome by the concentration that you have attained by means of *mettā* meditation. Then you can switch to *vipassanā*. Very good.

## **When you get tired by *vipassanā*** **take the shelter in *mettā***

Whenever you have a lot of thoughts then you have to use *mettā* meditation as a help for *vipassanā*. Some yogis say, “There are some thoughts in the background. But I concentrate on the rise and fall of the abdomen”. But they don’t know that the mind is split into two parts at that moment. When you have such a state of distraction or restlessness stop *vipassanā* meditation and do *mettā* meditation, say, for one or two sittings. Then you will be all-right. After that you switch to *vipassanā*.

In the same way, the recollection of the attributes of the Buddha can be used. If you want to practise *buddhānussati bhāvanā*,

you must have some knowledge of the Buddha's life and also his teaching so that you can reflect upon the teaching and attributes of the Buddha. Then you can concentrate on them to a certain extent.

One who tends to think about something else or tends to analyse something else should develop *buddhānussati bhāvanā*, the recollection of the Buddha's attributes. His thoughts must be replaced by the recollection of the attributes of the Buddha. Then the mind will become calm.

If you feel depressed or disappointed for some reason, you should do *mettā* meditation for about two or three sittings and then switch to *vipassanā* meditation. It will be all right. We have to use *samatha* meditation to help our *vipassanā* meditation for deep concentration as well as insight, too. It is like a person who travels in the burning sun. When it is a hot day like yesterday and the day before yesterday, and he goes for a very long journey then he feels tired. He cannot proceed with his journey. Then, what does he have to do? He takes shelter under a shady tree. He takes rest there for some time. When the tiredness is gone, he proceeds with his journey.

In this way, when you get tired by *vipassanā* meditation, you have to take the shelter of *samatha mettā* meditation. *Samatha* meditation is very helpful for a *vipassanā* meditator.

As we are doing now, if a meditator hasn't time enough to spend on *samatha* meditation, then he goes straight to *vipassanā* meditation and is aware of all mental and physical phenomena. Gradually, he will be able to concentrate the mind on any mental states or physical processes which are observed by means of mindfulness power. Concentration gradually becomes deeper and deeper. Then, the mind is concentrated on the object of meditation which are mental and physical phenomena that are observed to a large extent with little distraction. It is purified from defilements and hindrances.

Insight knowledge that arises together with the purified mind becomes penetrating and realises mental and physical

phenomena in their true nature. A pure insight meditator attains purification of mind by means of momentary concentration which stays with an object of physical and mental processes momentarily, but continuously and constantly. Because the mind is concentrated continuously, constantly, and successively on one object after another it becomes powerful. So it has the strength or capacity to resist being overwhelmed by the hindrances. It can be free from all hindrances. Then he has attained purification of mind by means of momentary concentration. That is a pure insight meditator.

May all of you strive your best, practising *vipassanā*, pure *vipassanā* meditation, and eventually achieve your goal.

# The progress of insight

Today is the 24th January 1992

I will deal with the progress of insight in accordance with the description in the Visuddhi magga and in the Progress of Insight written by the Venerable Mahāsi Sayadaw.

I have explained how a meditator attains the insight knowledge of discerning materiality and mentality, *nāmarūpaparicchedañāṇa*, how a meditator realises cause and effect, discerning conditionality, *paccayapariggahañāṇa*, and how a meditator clearly comprehends the three characteristics of existence, *anicca*, *dukkha*, and *anatta*—impermanence, suffering, and impersonal nature of the body-mind process.

## Discerning materiality and mentality (*nāmarūpaparicchedañāṇa*)

Before attaining the insight knowledge of discerning materiality and mentality you have to acquire purification of mind, *citta visuddhi*. To obtain purification of mind, *citta visuddhi*, as a basic requirement you have to attain the purification of virtue or morality, *sīla visuddhi*, by observing the precepts. So, the first *visuddhi* is *sīla visuddhi*, purification of morality or virtue. The second is *citta visuddhi*, purification of mind. *Citta visuddhi*, purification of mind can be attained by *samatha* meditation by means of *upacāra samādhi*, access concentration and *jhāna samādhi*, ab-

sorption concentration. This purification can be attained by a pure *vipassanā* meditator by means of momentary concentration, *khaṇika samādhī*. When the mind is well concentrated on each object of the mental and physical processes, the mind becomes purified from defilements and hindrances to a large extent. Then the insight knowledge that arises together with the concentrated mind becomes penetrating, sharp and clear. It begins to realise the specific characteristics of materiality and mentality and distinguishes between the physical process and the mental process.

This stage of *ñāṇa* is called *nāmarūpaparicchedañāṇa*, the insight knowledge which discerns materiality and mentality. This *ñāṇa* purifies a meditator of the false view of a personality, individuality, self, or soul. This stage of *ñāṇa* is called purification of view. His view is purified because he has no false view of a personality, individuality, self or soul regarding the mental process or physical process which is observed at that moment.

But he is not yet able to completely uproot this false view. When he is realising materiality and mentality in their true nature, he can overcome the false view of a self or soul. This stage of insight knowledge is called purification of view, *ditṭhi visuddhi*.

## **Discerning conditionality (*paccayapariggahañāṇa*)**

When he proceeds with his practice, concentration becomes deeper, mindfulness becomes more constant and sustained, and the insight knowledge becomes penetrating. Then he realises the nature of conditionality, the law of cause and effect. This knowledge purifies the meditator's mind from sceptical doubts about whether he existed in the past, whether he is existing in the present or whether he will exist in the future.

This is how he realises cause and effect. For instance: when there is a rising movement, there arises a mind that notes it.

When there is a falling movement, there arises the mind that notes it. The object is the cause and the noting mind, the subject, is the effect.

Because there is the movement of the foot, there arises the mind that notes it. The movement of the foot, the object, a physical process, is the cause and the mind that notes it is the effect, a mental process. When he is able to realise the intention before all actions or movements, he comes to realise, “These movements are not done by me, a person, or by a being. These movements or actions arise dependent on their cause which is intention”.

Intention causes these actions to arise. When there is intention to lift the foot the foot is lifted. When there is intention to push it forward, the foot is pushed forward. When there is intention to drop it, the foot is dropped. When there is intention to press it, the foot is pressed. In this way, all the movements of the foot are done by intention not by “me”, a person, or a being. In the same way, when he observes any other mental process or physical process, he comes to realise cause and effect.

The insight knowledge which realises cause and effect destroys the sceptical doubt he had about his existence as a person in the past, his existence as a person in the present, and his existence as a person in the future. No “I” does the lifting movement, pushing movement, dropping movement and so on. What really does these actions and movement is the intention. Intention is neither a person, nor a being, neither a self nor a soul.

Then he has no doubt. What really exists is the nature of cause and effect. This insight knowledge which discerns conditionality amounts to *kaṅkhavitaranā visuddhi*. It is called *paccaya-pariggahañāṇa*, the insight knowledge that discerns conditionality. At this stage, he has attained the purification by overcoming doubt, *kaṅkhavitaranā visuddhi*.

## **Knowledge of unsatisfactoriness and nonself (*sammasana nana*)**

When he proceeds with his practice, he is able to comprehend all three characteristics of existence *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*—impermanence, suffering, and no-soul, no-self-nature of mental and physical processes.

At this stage, he has to suffer a great deal of pain but he can observe it. Whenever pain arises, he observes it. While he is observing pain, another pain arises. In this way, he has to deal with many painful sensations. With deeper concentration he observes the pain consistently and perseveringly so that his noting mind penetrates into the pain.

Then he comes to realise the impermanence of the painful sensation, knowing one wave of painful sensation after another, arising and passing away, arising and passing away. Sometimes he experiences it as pulsations. One pulsation arises and then passes away. Sometimes he finds a wave of heat arising and passing away. He finds the painful sensation appearing and disappearing in many ways. He comes to realise *anicca*. He comes to realise that mental and physical processes are arising and passing away.

He realises that every mental and physical process is subject to impermanence, so it is suffering. Suffering means that we are oppressed by the constant arising and passing away of phenomena. Because they are impermanent, they are not a person, a being, a self, or a soul.

## **The fourth *ñāṇa* and the ten corruptions of insight (*udayabbayañāṇa*)**

As he proceeds with his practise, gradually the pain subsides. Even though he feels the pain it is not very strong. When he notes it, it goes away in a short time. He also can distinguish each

movement of rising and falling. In this way he comes to realise many series of many broken movements of rising and falling. He begins to realise the appearance and disappearance of physical processes.

Sometimes he sees the noting mind as impermanent, as appearance and disappearance. When he has gone through this knowledge of comprehension, gradually he feels comfortable and happy because there is almost no pain in his sitting as well as in walking. Even though pain arises, when he notices that it is there, it has gone away.

Because there are no disturbances in the mind, the mind becomes more and more concentrated. When it is more deeply concentrated, he feels happy, he feels rapture. Because of deep concentration the noting mind becomes clearer and more penetrating. So every object can be noted very easily. The objects arise and are noted of their own accord. He need not put any effort into the noting. The object of a physical process or a mental process arises and then the mind very readily and easily notes it. Then it goes away. Then another object arises and the mind notes it. In this way, he does not make intense effort to note any object. His effort becomes balanced and steady. It is neither lax nor tense.

This is why he feels peaceful, happy, and rapturous. His knowledge of noticing the object is also sharp, lucid, and clear. It realises every object and the object passes away. Because of deep concentration and clear insight sometimes he sees a bright or shining light in his mind. Sometimes it is like the radiance of the sun or the moon. Sometimes he sees like a fluorescent light. He knows and notes it, “seeing, seeing, seeing”, or “light, light, light”. Then the light disappears.

When his concentration is not deep enough and the insight knowledge is not penetrating enough, the light fades and is not very bright. For some this light lasts very briefly. For some persons it lasts long, sometimes for about one minute or thirty seconds. Some meditators have this light for a very long time. In

sitting he feels it and he notes it, but it doesn't disappear. Then it appears in other sittings for one day, two days, or three days. He has to note, "seeing, seeing, seeing". Then he is disappointed by this light because he could not note any other object of meditation.

Most meditators have a somewhat bright light which doesn't last very long. When it comes, it is noted and goes away. This leads to stronger faith in the technique and also the Triple Gem because he has experienced what has not been experienced by him before and also because these experiences are very good. He hasn't experienced such a peacefulness, happiness, or rapture in his worldly life. So, he has strong faith in the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha—in the Triple Gem.

Because he believes very firmly in the Triple Gem and the Dhamma that he is practising he wants to urge other people to practise the Dhamma. Sometimes he feels sad. Everybody in the world should practise this Dhamma, mindfulness meditation. Because he himself experienced such a good enemy.

What's that? Good enemies are good, but they are not friends. Because they are good you enjoy them. Even though you are expected not to enjoy them, to note them, you can't help enjoying them. Then you become attached to them. Then you cling to them. Then you can't go up to the higher stages of insight. You stop here. Why? Because your enemies hinder your progress. So they are called good enemies. They are of ten types, but I need not explain all ten types. Just some which are common to all meditators. They are called *vipassanā upakilesa* in Pāḷi. They are referred to as "the ten corruptions of insight" by Nyanaponika Mahāthera and also by Nyanamoli Thera.

All the ten corruptions of insight arise in some yogis, but for some yogis only two or three types of corruptions arise. Usually the light arises usually in almost all meditators. For some meditators it is weak and for some meditators it is very powerful, bright and lasts long. In this way it varies. This takes place at

the early part of the fourth *ñāṇa*, the insight knowledge of arising and passing away of mentality and physicality.

The ten corruptions arise in the early part of this *ñāṇa*. When the meditator has some knowledge of these ten corruptions, or when he is instructed by his teacher not to be attached to them and not to enjoy them but to observe them persistently and perseveringly, then he observes them. He notes, “seeing, seeing, seeing”, when he sees the light. When he feels happy, “happy, happy”, when he feels rapture, “rapture, rapture”, and so on. Every good enemy arising is noted. When he notes it, it goes away, it disappears in a short time. In this way, he passes over the early part of the fourth knowledge.

Then the mind becomes stable and more concentrated on the objects. The mind notes very easily because of deep concentration and deep insight. The rising movement and the falling movement arise one after another and pass away. When he notes pain, very instantly it passes away. In this way, he comes to realise the appearance and disappearance of mental and physical phenomena. This is called the insight knowledge of arising and passing away of mental and physical phenomena.

## **Knowledge of dissolution (*bhangañāṇa*)**

When he proceeds with his practice by maintaining mindfulness, concentration, and insight gradually insight knowledge becomes more penetrating, sharp, and clear. When noting an itching sensation the mind doesn't realise the beginning or the appearance of the itching sensation. It knows the disappearance of it.

Whenever the mind notes the rising-falling, an itching sensation, or a painful sensation, what is known is just disappearance, disappearance, disappearance. The meditator doesn't know the arising of the object. Whenever he notes an object,

he finds it disappearing or dissolving. Every mental process or physical process which is arising, when noted, all these processes are disappearing, disappearing, dissolving.

Sometimes his mind doesn't have any physical or mental process to note. All things are dissolving and the mind sees nothing. Then he has to note the mind as, "knowing, knowing, knowing". The mind knows disappearance or the dissolution of all mental and physical processes. So that mind has to be noted, "knowing, knowing, knowing".

He has lost the sense of his bodily form. What he is knowing is that there is the mind which knows nothing. Then he has to note, "knowing, knowing, knowing". Sometimes this knowing mind together with the noting mind disappears for a fraction of a second. Then it comes up and knows nothing and notes, "knowing, knowing, knowing", and so on. This stage of insight knowledge is called *bhaṅgañāṇa*, the insight knowledge of dissolution. This is the fifth one. The fourth is *udayabbayañāṇa*, the insight knowledge of arising and passing away of mental and physical phenomena.

## **Knowledge of fearfulness (*bhayañāṇa*)**

Whatever he notes, he finds it disappearing. Whatever he notes, dissolves. Then the meditator feels fearful because nothing lasts even a second, a millionth of a second. Everything is disappearing, disappearing, disappearing. So it is very fearful. All these mental and physical processes are fearful and dreadful. That stage of *ñāṇa* is called insight knowledge of fearfulness. Sometimes it is called awareness of fearfulness, *bhayañāṇa* in Pāli.

Many meditators feel fear, they are afraid of something. But when they are asked what they are afraid of they have no reason to be afraid. Actually, they think that mental and physical pro-

cesses disappearing is fearfulness. This is called insight knowledge of fearfulness, *bhayañāṇa*.

## **Knowledge of misery (*ādīnavañāṇa*)**

Then the meditator becomes miserable because he has nothing to enjoy. He has nothing to be attached to. Sometimes he feels homesick. Actually, he doesn't feel homesick. But it is as if he feels homesick because of this knowledge which takes everything as miserable, every mental and physical process to be miserable. This knowledge is called insight knowledge of misery, *ādīnavañāṇa* in Pāli.

When he continues to observe every mental and physical process arising at the moment, then he feels boredom. He is not happy. He feels always miserable, so he is idle or lazy. He also he feels that he has no place to stay or to live or to go to.

## **Knowledge of boredom or disgust (*nibbidāñāṇa*)**

Before he practised this meditation he liked to go to the cinema very much. He enjoyed it very much. But now at this stage, even though he is threatened to go to the cinema, he won't go. This knowledge is called knowledge of boredom or *nibbidāñāṇa*. But this knowledge is usually translated as insight knowledge of disgust. Because he feels disgusted with every mental and physical process which is disappearing whenever he notes it. So it is translated as insight knowledge of disgust by the Venerable Nyanaponika. But it can also be translated as knowledge of boredom.

He feels lazy. When he is asked not to lie down on his bed and sleep, he can't do that. After that he proceeds with his practice.

## Knowledge of re-observation (*paṭisaṅkhañāṇa*)

Then he attains the insight knowledge of re-observation. Because he feels miserable and fearful about these mental and physical processes, he re-views or re-observes the mental and physical processes. At this stage the meditator has to confront dreadful pain, aching, stiffening, or itching. The pain is so severe that he thinks that he may not be able to observe it. But he can.

When observed, though the pain is severe, he can note it and observe it very attentively. Then the pain disintegrates, sometimes it disperses or sometimes it explodes. But the pain doesn't completely disappear. It comes again. He notes, then it disappears, then it comes again. In this way, he has to face a lot of pain which is very tense and severe. But whenever he notes it, it disappears. Then he realises the impermanence of feeling or sensation, painful sensation or painful feeling. Then he becomes oppressed by the constant arising and passing away of the phenomena. *dukkha*, suffering, is seen more clearly. Then he comes to see more and more clearly the impersonal nature of all mental and physical phenomena because they are constantly arising and passing away. This insight knowledge is called insight knowledge of re-observation.

He consistently observes any mental or physical process including pain. Gradually, he passes over this stage of knowledge and then he sees phenomena arising and passing away, arising and passing away. Whatever he notes, he sees it as arising and passing away. Then the mind becomes extremely concentrated on the object. Because the mind is extremely concentrated insight knowledge sees everything as appearance and disappearance, arising and passing away, calmly, concentratedly and tranquilly. He is neither happy nor unhappy.

He sees every mental and physical phenomenon which is observed as appearance and disappearance, constant appearance

and disappearance. It is in this stage of insight knowledge that you can't send out your mind to any object.

## **Knowledge of equanimity (*sāṅkhārupekhāñāṇa*)**

In this insight knowledge, the mind becomes elastic. Even though you push the mind to the object you desire most, it doesn't go, it comes back, as if you throw a ball at the wall. Very good stage of insight knowledge. It is called insight knowledge of equanimity. The insight meditator feels neutral about formations, mental processes and physical processes. So it is called insight knowledge of equanimity about formations, *sāṅkhārupekhāñāṇa*. This is the eleventh stage of insight knowledge.

This knowledge is the best of all thirteen insight knowledges. You do not feel reluctant or lazy. You feel not hurried but you observe whatever arises in your body and mind. You can sit for two hours, three hours, or four hours. Concentration is very, very deep. The mind doesn't go out. When you walk you see every movement of the foot very clearly arising and passing away. Sometimes you lose the sense of the shape of the foot. What you are realising is just feeling of movement or just movements.

Because your effort is neither lax nor tense, mindfulness becomes steady, and balanced. Then concentration becomes deep enough. So, you go forward very rapidly. The object, the mental or physical process, is sometimes very quickly arising and then very quickly passing away, but you can note it.

## **Knowledge of adaptation (*anuloma-ñāna*)**

Because of the very swift arising and passing away of mental and physical phenomena it appears as flickering. In this way, the yogi comes to attain the stage of insight knowledge which is called insight knowledge of adaptation. This *ñāna* is also called insight leading to emergence, which means emergence from formations. Until this insight knowledge of adaptation he is an ordinary man or a *puthujjana*. After he has attained this *ñāna* and another one very instantly, he becomes a noble one, an *ariya puggala*. Because this *ñāna* adapts a *puthujjana* to be in conformity with the *ariya puggala* it is called adaptation knowledge, or insight knowledge of adaptation.

## **Maturity knowledge (*gotrabhu-ñāna*)**

After he passes this *ñāna* he attains another *ñāna*, maturity knowledge. This is the border line between an ordinary person and a noble one. When he passes this line, he feels as if dropping into a certain state of mental and physical process. That is called *maggañāna*.

## **Path and fruition knowledge (*maggañāna and phalañāna*)**

The text says that at this stage of *ñāna* the mind abides in Nibbāna, taking Nibbāna as its object.

Then another consciousness arises and abides in Nibbāna. This is called fruition knowledge.

In this way, he has attained *maggañāna* and *phalañāna*, path knowledge and fruition knowledge.

Then, after he has attained fruition knowledge, he reviews his experiences. He has come through all the course of meditative practice.

He reviews whether or not he has destroyed any mental defilements, whether or not he has attained the cessation of suffering, Nibbāna. If he has attained the first path knowledge or the first stage of enlightenment, by reviewing he comes to realise that he has destroyed the false view of personality or individuality.

He has destroyed, uprooted, or exterminated the false view of personality, individuality, *sakkāya diṭṭhi*, *atta diṭṭhi*. And also, he comes to realise that he has eradicated sceptical doubt about the Triple Gem. It is called *vicikicchā*. The false view of personality or individuality is called *sakkāya diṭṭhi*, *atta diṭṭhi*. Sceptical doubt about the Triple Gem is called *vicikicchā*. The scriptures and the commentary to it, say, “One who has attained the first path knowledge and fruition knowledge has uprooted *sakkāya diṭṭhi* and *vicikicchā*”. Because he has uprooted the false view of personality, he has no gross defilements.

It means that a *sotāpanna* will never be reborn as an animal, will never be reborn in hell, and will never be reborn as a ghost because he has uprooted the basic cause of defilements which is *sakkāya diṭṭhi*. Burmese Buddhists say that you should strive to attain the first stage of enlightenment so that you can get rid of these woeful states.

May all of you strive for your salvation to attain at least the first path knowledge and get rid of these four woeful states of existence.



# Questions and answers

BENI: Sayadaw, please tell us a little of the history of this particular technique. Who first developed it, why was it so controversial and the background of Mahāsi Sayadaw?

ANSWER: “This particular technique”, I think, refers to the noting of the rising and falling of the abdomen. Is it right? Yes. The Venerable Mahāsi Sayadaw, when he was twenty-eight, practised this *vipassanā* meditation with a very famous meditation teacher, a monk who was known as an arahant called Jetavan Sayadaw. One of Jetavan Sayadaw’s disciples was a monk who later disrobed. He started to practise this rise and fall of the abdomen.

At that time Mahāsi Sayadaw also practised this meditation under the guidance of Jetavan Sayadaw. This disciple of Jetavan Sayadaw tried many methods for finding the most suitable one to make progress in concentration as well as insight. He found the abdominal movement to be the most effective method. He realised that the abdominal movement has the characteristics of the wind element, *vāyo dhātu*. It has many aspects to experience. So, he tried it and found it to be very effective. Then he told the other meditators to try it.

They found it most effective in attaining concentration as well as insight. Then their teacher, the Venerable Jetavan Sayadaw, accepted it as one of the techniques which are in accordance with the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta. In the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta, the Discourse on the Four Foundations of Mindfulness, there is a chapter on the contemplation of the four primary material elements, *paṭhavī dhātu*, *āpo dhātu*, *tejo dhātu*, and *vāyo dhātu*.

*Paṭhavī dhātu*, the earth element refers to hardness and softness. *Āpo dhātu* has the characteristics of fluidity and cohesion. *Tejo dhātu* refers to temperature or heat and cold. *Vāyo dhātu* has the characteristics of movement, motion, vibration and sup-  
porting.

With deep concentration, you are aware of the rising movement and falling movement as just movement without the shape or the form of the abdomen, sometimes without bodily form. Gradually, you come to realise a series of movements which are arising and passing away. This is in conformity with what the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta describes as the contemplation of the four material elements. So the Venerable Jetavan Sayadaw accepted it.

Mahāsi Sayadaw also tried this method and he also found it very successful and effective. When he taught his disciples, he took this technique.

“Why was it so controversial”? This technique of meditation is not controversial in Burma because many of the Burmese monks are learned in the scriptures. So they know that this method or technique is in conformity with the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta. They cannot argue with the truthfulness of this technique.

But there are some people outside Burma who have doubts because they do not correctly know, how the contemplation of the four material elements is describes in the scriptures. They take only the name. What's that? The abdomen. They think that when we observe the abdominal movement, the rising movement and the falling movement, we do not pay attention to the movements, but pay attention to the abdomen. But they said that in the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta there is no mention about the abdomen. That is why they are arguing because they are not learned.

CHRISTIAN: Please, can you explain why a state like anger is not an emotion in Buddhist psychology? What is the difference between the emotions fear, sadness and a state like anger and greed?

ANSWER: As you know, Buddhist psychology classifies both mental and bodily phenomena in five aggregates. The first aggregate is the aggregate of materiality or material processes, material phenomena. The second aggregate is the aggregate of feeling or sensation. It doesn't say emotion but aggregate of feeling or sensation. The third aggregate is the aggregate of perception. The fourth aggregate is the aggregate of mental formations. The fifth is the aggregate of consciousness.

The second aggregate, the aggregate of feeling or sensation, includes pleasant feeling, unpleasant feeling, and neutral feeling. Except for these feelings, all mental concomitants or mental associates are included in the fourth aggregate, the aggregate of formations, including fear, anger, and so on. Sadness is feeling or sensation, so it is included in the second one.

Anger and fear are not included in the second one, the aggregate of feeling or sensation. It cannot be included there. Buddhist psychology describes dependent origination which has twelve links. I will explain very briefly.

Through ignorance is conditioned *saṅkhāra*, action, good action or bad action. Through action consciousness of rebirth arises. Through consciousness of rebirth there arise *nāma* and *rūpa*, mental processes and physical processes. Through mental processes and physical processes there arise the six sense organs, *saḷāyatana* we call it, the six organs or sense fields. Through these six sense organs there arises contact with sense objects. Through contact there arises feeling or sensation. Here, this is the aggregate of feeling or sensation.

Through feeling or sensation there arises attachment or craving. Through craving there arises clinging. Through clinging there arises action. Through action or deed there arises the consciousness of rebirth. Through consciousness of rebirth there arises rebirth. Through rebirth there arise decay, death, and so on.

Feeling or sensation arises dependent on contact. Through feeling or sensation there arises craving. If anger would be included in feeling one link would be missing because dependent on anger there would not arise any craving or attachment. So that's why anger is not included in the aggregate of feeling or sensation. It is included in the fourth one, the aggregate of formation.

BHIKKHU SUMANGALO: Is it possible to sit too long in *vipassanā* meditation?

ANSWER: Yes, it is possible. In Burma there are some *vipassanā* meditators who sit ten hours, thirteen hours, fourteen hours, twenty hours, twenty-four hours or thirty-six hours in a session without changing position. It can be done, but it is not necessary. If you can sit for two hours, it is enough for you to make progress in insight as well as in concentration.

SKY: Venerable Sayadaw, when the noting is flowing easily and consciousness is gone with no object to note, what is occurring then? Yesterday you said to note “knowing, knowing”.

ANSWER: Yes. “When the noting is flowing easily and consciousness is gone with no object to note”. Consciousness is gone with no object to note is wrong because consciousness always has its object. Unless there is an object consciousness doesn’t arise. Only when there is an object does consciousness arise. So, if she says, “The consciousness is gone with no object to note”, then that is wrong. “Yesterday you said to note, ’knowing, knowing””.

Yes. At that moment the consciousness knows nothingness. So you have to note that consciousness which knows the nothingness making mental notes, “knowing, knowing, knowing”. Because you know it, it means nothingness. So you have to note that consciousness which knows nothingness mentally noting, “knowing, knowing, knowing”.

QUESTION: Dear Sayadaw, from where do thoughts come? Is mind a collective pool into which we dip for our selection?

ANSWER: Yes. Consciousness comes from nowhere because it is not materiality, no substance. It is not substantial but it arises dependent on its object.

When there is an object there arises consciousness and knows it.

Then, “Is mind a collective pool into which we dip for our selection”? No. The mind is not a collective pool. The mind is a thing which you should observe so that it doesn’t make you suffer. It is not a collective pool.

MALCOLM: Please explain the relationship between the five *khandhas* and the six sense fields.

ANSWER: I have mentioned the five *khandhas*. *Khandha* means aggregate. The first, as you know, is the aggregate of materiality or material processes, physical processes. The second is the aggregate of feeling or sensation. The third is the aggregate of perception. The fourth is the aggregate of mental formations. The fifth is the aggregate of consciousness.

When we classify the physical process into five sense fields then the eye is the first sense field. Is the eye mentality or physicality? Physicality. So it is included in the aggregate of materiality.

The ear is the second sense field. Is it mentality or physicality? It is included in the aggregate of materiality, in the first aggregate. Then, nose, tongue, and body, they are also physical processes, physicality. Then they are included in what? In the aggregate of materiality.

Then the last one, mind. Is mind mentality or physicality? It is included both in mental formations and consciousness because when we say mind, it is not pure consciousness.

Consciousness arises together with its mental concomitants such as contact, volition, attention, and so on. So the pure consciousness is included in the

aggregate of consciousness, the other mental concomitants are included in mental formations.

ALFRED: In last night's talk, you did not seem to mention the arising of the desire for deliverance. Could you please explain this in brief? When referring to the factors abandoned by the stream enterer you did not mention the attachment to rites and rituals. Could you please explain this in brief?

ANSWER: Yes. "In last night's talk you did not seem to mention the arising of the desire for deliverance". I mentioned it. He seems to be sleepy. He seems to be overpowered by sloth and torpor. I mentioned it. Then, "When referring to the factors abandoned by the stream enterer you did not mention the attachment to rites and rituals".

The scriptures say, "*Sotāpattimagga*, the first path knowledge, eliminates *diṭṭhi* and *vicikicchā*". *Diṭṭhi* means the false view of a personality and individuality. *Vicikicchā* means sceptical doubt about the Triple Gem. Only these two are mentioned in the scriptures. But the commentary to the scriptures says, "*Sotāpattimagga*, the first path knowledge, destroys *sīlabbataparāmāsa* too".

*Sīlabbataparāmāsa* here means the wrong view by which one holds that to perform rites and rituals one can get rid of *saṃsāra*, one can get rid of suffering. But mere attachment to rites and ritual is not *sīlabbataparāmāsa*.

Mere attachment is when a person holds that by performing rites and rituals based on the Triple Gem, then he has done a very meritorious deeds. So he is attached to rites and rituals. Its purpose is to develop merit by performing these rites and rituals. Such an idea is not *sīlabbataparāmāsa*.

Only one who holds that by performing rites and rituals, one can get rid of suffering, then this view is wrong view, *sīlabbataparāmāsa*. Such *sīlabbataparāmāsa* is exterminated by the first path knowledge, the commentary says, but not the scriptures. But I think it is in accordance with the scriptures.

SUZANNE: Dear Venerable Sayadaw, in your time's up story you described people who have become enlightened as peaceful and happy, loving no one and indifferent. I had always believed that an enlightened one would be extremely compassionate. Therefore I am puzzled as to how one could be indifferent and compassionate. What you say seems to be contradictory, so could you please explain?

ANSWER: I did not say anything about it. Here she said, "You described people who have become enlightened as peaceful and happy, loving no one". People who have become enlightened must be classified into four types. The first is the *sotāpanna*, the second the *sakadāgāmī*, the third the *anāgāmī* and the fourth the arahant. Only arahants who have completely destroyed all defilements love no one.

In English, the word love is very difficult to define. In 1979, when I conducted a meditation retreat at IMS, Massachusetts, together with the Venerable Mahāsi Sayadaw, in the question and answer session one of the meditators, a lady about thirty years old, asked the question, "What is love"?

I don't know what kind of love she referred to. Generally, as far as I know, in Christianity if you say love it has two meanings, I think. One is love for your neighbour. The other is love for your spouse. So, I answered that I don't know love. What I know is lov-

ing kindness. If you want to know loving kindness, I can explain it to you.

When a person has completely destroyed all defilements and become an arahant, he loves no one in the sense of attachment. But he loves everyone in the sense of loving kindness. That's why we have to use the word loving kindness to differentiate from "love" in the sense of attachment.

Then, "I had always believed that an enlightened one would be extremely compassionate". Right. Compassion and loving kindness are different. Compassion is the sensitivity to the suffering of other people. Loving kindness is wishing the welfare of living beings. But if you have loving kindness you have compassion. If you have compassion, you have loving kindness, not love in the sense of attachment. In this retreat, one meditator requested me to talk about love in relationships. I asked her, "What kind of relationship do you want to listen to"? She said, "Spousal". I told her, "I don't know that one. What I know is the relationship between the intention and the physical process which follows it". Very amusing!

"Therefore I am puzzled as to how one could be indifferent and compassionate. What you say seems to be opposite to each other, so could you please explain?"

Compassionate is not indifferent. Compassion, I told you, is the sensitivity to the suffering of other people. It is very different from indifference.

PETER: I refer to the story about the man who left his wife and child to practise the Dhamma. After he became enlightened he abandoned them and was unmoved by their suffering. His attitude seems coarse to me.

Why did he not show compassion to them? Why did he not resume his responsibility for them, particularly, since he had completed the work, why would he like to be a monk and dislike to be a householder? I thought arahants would be beyond like and dislike.

ANSWER: He wants to copy or imitate this person, I think. He wants to follow suit. "After he became enlightened he abandoned them and was unmoved by their suffering. His attitude seems coarse to me. Why did he not show compassion to them? Why did he not resume his responsibility for them, particularly, since he had completed the work, why would he like to be a monk and dislike to be a householder? I thought arahants would be beyond like and dislike". Many questions, not only one.

"Why did he not show compassion to them"? When the monk did not open his eyes and was not affected by the suffering of his people, it means that the monk had a lot of compassion for them, a great deal of compassion for them. If he opened his eyes, picked up the child, and embraced it then the mother of the baby would think, "This monk still likes my child, my baby, and also me, too".

Then she would come again and embrace the monk who was an arahant. If she did that she would have a great deal of suffering because of her bad *kamma*. So to avoid this, the monk was compelled to be indifferent to the child and the lady.

When the lady knew that the monk was indifferent to them, with her pride and conceit she came back to the monk and walked away. Then she was happy. She suffered no longer.

Then "Why did he not resume his responsibility for them?" Because this questioner has not yet attained

arahantship. He thinks that he has a responsibility for ladies.

But arahants and monks do not have responsibility for any one. The householder has responsibility for his family. The monk was neither a husband nor a layman. He has no responsibility to take care of these things because he has no connection with his former wife or child. So he doesn't have any responsibility to them.

Then, "Particularly, since he had completed the work". Yes. Since he had completed the work he had no responsibility for them.

And, "Why would he like to be a monk and dislike to be a householder? I thought arahants would be beyond like and dislike".

He was beyond like and dislike. He became a bhikkhu not because he decided to be a bhikkhu, but because the life of a bhikkhu is suitable for his purity without having any defilement. So he had to live as a bhikkhu, not because he liked it. He was beyond likes and dislikes. So, Peter has to strive too to be a monk who is beyond likes and dislikes.

VIVIANNA: At the moment of death, when consciousness has passed away and is rising again, has it got any idea or control over where and with whom it will arise?

ANSWER: She wants to know this question, "With whom it will arise"?

When death consciousness has passed away, another consciousness arises in the same process and then this consciousness also passes away. This consciousness is called rebirth consciousness because it is the first consciousness of another existence.

It arises and passes away. It hasn't any idea or control over where or with whom it will arise because it arises and then passes away. But you may ask this question: "What is the cause of being reborn a rich man or a poor man? What is the cause of being reborn as an animal and what is the cause to be reborn in hell?"

You know: In the past existence you have done bad deeds or good deeds. It drives the consciousness to be reborn in hell, in the Brahma world, in the human world, and so on. So, the first consciousness has nothing to do with these things.

QUESTION: Dear Sayadaw, my interest is in the application and benefits of *vipassanā* meditation to daily life. What are the most important things to be mindful of in order to successfully apply *vipassanā* to daily life? And how can we know whether we are practising skilfully or unskilfully? Without regular interviews with the teacher can we measure progress or the skilfulness of practice ourselves?

ANSWER: This is a very practical question. "What are the most important things to be mindful of in order to successfully apply *vipassanā* to daily life"? When you live at home, you have to apply mindfulness to your daily life as much as possible, but not specifically and not in detail.

While you are doing something at home, you should apply this mindfulness generally. General mindfulness should be applied to what you are doing, not specific mindfulness. When you are stretching your arms to hold something, you need not slow it down. You do it normally and steadily and then you should be aware of it generally, "stretching". When you bend the arms to do something there is no need not

to slow it down. You do it normally, but you should be aware of it, “bending”, and so on.

“What are the most important things to be mindful of in order to successfully apply *vipassanā* to daily life”?

Mental states, emotional states. These mental processes are the most important things to be mindful of. Because it is the mind that makes a person do evil things or meritorious deeds. If you are able to be mindful of evil thoughts or bad thoughts, then these thoughts can be overcome by being mindful of them. When an evil thought has disappeared, you won't have evil speech and evil deeds. These mental processes are the most important things to be mindful of, in applying *vipassanā* to daily life.

And, “How can we know whether we are practising skilfully or unskilfully? Without regular interviews with the teacher, can we measure progress or the skilfulness of practise ourselves?” Yes, it is better to have interviews with a teacher even though not regularly. If you have an opportunity to have an interview with a teacher occasionally, it is better.

But you are able to know whether your practice is skilful or unskilful. The measure is the concentration. When your mind is concentrated to a certain extent in your daily practice, then you can say that your practice is skilful. But if you do not have a bit of concentration, then you can say that your practice is unskilful.

“Can we measure progress or the skilfulness of practise ourselves”?

Yes. You can measure your progress by experiencing something new. If you experience something new in your daily practice you can say that your meditation is progressing to a certain extent. If you

do not experience anything new, then you can say that your meditation is not progressing; it is stuck. Whether you have new experiences or not is the measure you can use.

QUESTION: Venerable Mahāsi Sayadaw mentions a *sotāpanna* has doubts. Can you explain this please?

ANSWER: Where did you hear this of Mahāsi Sayadaw? No, no, no, Mahāsi Sayadaw did not say anything like that. Maybe the transcriber made a mistake. You should read the other books written by Mahāsi Sayadaw. Then you will find out. Mahāsi Sayadaw did not mention it.

May all of you, having experienced something in this meditation retreat, judge that this technique is beneficial for you and strive your best to have more and more experience and attain the cessation of suffering.

***Sādhu! Sādhu! Sādhu!***

# About the author

The venerable Chanmyay Sayadaw U Janakābhivaṃsa, born 24 July 1928, is a Theravada Buddhist monk from Myanmar.

He was born in Pynma village, Taungdwingyi Township, British Burma, on Tuesday, 24 July 1928. His parents were U Phyu Min and Daw Shwe Yee. He started to study the Buddhist scriptures at the age of fifteen as a novice monk. He received the higher upasampada ordination in 1947 and continued advanced studies of Buddhist scriptures. He practised Vipassana meditation under the instruction of the most Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw from 1953 to 1954. He was then invited by the State Buddha Sasana Organization to be an editor of the Buddhist scriptures in Pali for reciting Buddhist scriptures at the Sixth Buddhist Council in Myanmar.

Starting from 1957, the Venerable Sayadaw spent six years in Colombo, Sri Lanka, where he continued his studies of English, Sanskrit, Hindi and Sinhalese languages. He returned to Myanmar in June 1963. At the invitation of the state Buddha Sasana Organisation, he took up residence at Kaba-Aye where he edited the publications of Pali Texts.

In 1967, he was appointed by the Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw as a meditation teacher at Mahasi Sasana Yeiktha, Yangon. In 1977 Sayadaw Ashin Janakabhivamsa took up residence at Chanmyay Yeiktha Meditation Center which was donated to him by some devotees and became the abbot of the center. He has been since then well known as Chanmyay Sayadaw.

In 1979 - 1980 Chanmyay Sayadaw accompanied the Most Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw's Dhamma Mission to Europe and the U.S.A. He has undertaken many Dhamma missions to countries in Asia, Europe, and the United States. As recently as July 2015, at the age of 87, he travelled to the UK, Ireland, and Canada giving Dhamma Talks.

