

## **The Perfections Developed in Daily Life**

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## Introduction

### Iti'pi so Bhagavā Arahāy, Sammāsambuddho

It is for this reason that he is the Blessed One,  
The Worthy One, Fully Enlightened One.

During our pilgrimage in India we recited these words many times when we walked around the Asoka pillar in Lumbini which marks the Buddha's birthplace, around the Bodhi-tree in Bodhgaya where he attained enlightenment, around the Stupa in Sarnath where he preached his first sermon and around the Stupa in Kusinara which commemorates his parinibbāna.

It was the fourth time that I visited the holy places. In Calcutta I joined a group of Thai friends who had organised this journey. Two monks, Bhante Dhammadharo and Bhante Guttasīla, had come from Thailand together with Sujin Boriharnwanaket and other Thai friends. Sarah (from England) and Pinna (from Singapore) had also joined this group which consisted of nineteen people.

When we were staying in the Thai temple in Bodhgaya Bhante Dhammadharo said that we should find out for ourselves the reason why the Buddha attained enlightenment. "It is for this reason that he is the Blessed One". What did the Buddha discover? He discovered the truth of all conditioned phenomena and when he attained enlightenment he experienced the unconditioned reality, nibbāna. He had developed the perfections, pāramís, during innumerable lives as a Bodhisatta, a being destined to become a Buddha. During his last life he attained enlightenment under the Bodhi-tree and then all his defilements were eradicated. His wisdom had matured to the omniscience of a Sammāsambuddha who was foremost in wisdom and virtue.

Before the unconditioned reality, nibbāna, can be experienced, the conditioned phenomena which arise in daily life have to be known as they really are. Do we see phenomena as they really are? What appears at this moment? Is there seeing? Is there a notion of "I see"? We do not create our seeing, it arises because of its own conditions. It performs the function of seeing just for a moment and then it falls away immediately, we cannot cause it to stay. Seeing which arises because of conditions is beyond control, it is not self. The object seeing sees is only visible object, that which appears through the eyes. We do not see people and things, these do not appear through the eyesense. People and things are concepts we form up in our mind. In the absolute sense there are only mental phenomena, nāma, and physical phenomena, rúpa. There is no "I" who hears, it is hearing which hears and then falls away immediately to be succeeded by another experience. At each moment there is another experience, a moment of consciousness which experiences an object and then falls away. Objects are experienced one at a time through the six doors of eye, ear, nose, tongue, bodysense and mind.

When we were in the bus in Calcutta Bhante Dhammadharo reminded me that in the absolute sense there are no people, we are alone. He spoke into my taperecorder the following message for my husband who had encouraged me so much to undertake this pilgrimage:

“There is nobody there and nobody here. There is not Lodewijk all alone in the Hague and all of us here having a trip in Calcutta. There has only ever been, and only is, and can be, just different moments of experiencing an object, only for a moment, and then there is the next moment of experiencing another object. All alone, everybody completely alone, no matter how many other people we think there are around us the whole time. And if we think that we are surrounded by other people, nice or not nice, we are really deluding ourselves. We have to realize that in the absolute sense there is nothing comforting about thinking that there are people all around us. There is nothing comforting even about thinking, ‘I am happy all by myself’. There are just empty phenomena, one after another. It is either the phenomenon which experiences, *nāma*, or it is the phenomenon which does not experience, *rúpa*. Both of them are empty. There is nothing reliable there, there is nothing worthwhile there. It is just the same old thing, life after life, moment after moment. In every life, just like now. So, if while we are here, we have a lot of Dhamma talk but we don’t remember the truth about the phenomena of our life we are not doing the best we can. If you have not much chance for a Dhamma talk, but you are learning honestly to know the phenomena of your life as they are, then that is what really helps. We might not always like to learn about them, but that is what counts most. So I hope and trust that the fundamental understanding of the things I have just been talking about is there and that it is growing. I hope that based on this understanding there are now and will be more and more in the future moments of detachment from the reality which appears.”

I remarked that, although I understand in theory that there are no people, only *nāma* and *rúpa*, I find it difficult to realize this in my daily life. However, it is right understanding which brings detachment from the notion of people and beings. When we only think about *nāma* and *rúpa* there will not be detachment. The *nāma* and *rúpa* which appear now can be the object of mindfulness and in this way the direct knowledge of realities can be developed. The Buddha could attain enlightenment because he developed for innumerable lives direct understanding of seeing which appears at the present moment, of visible object which appears at the present moment, of all realities which appear at the present moment. Direct understanding of realities can only be developed now.

If the Buddha had not attained enlightenment and taught us the truth of all realities we would live in complete darkness, not knowing the way to develop right understanding, not knowing what is right and what is wrong. It is a blessing that the Buddha taught us the way to develop right understanding. It is a blessing that there still is opportunity to hear the Dhamma "which only becomes manifest at rare intervals covering immeasurable aeons"<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Subcommentary, *Dígha Nikāya*, translated by Ven. Bodhi, B.P.S.Kandy, Sri Lanka.

When we find out that the Buddha's teachings really help us to know ourselves better we gain more confidence in them. Each time we visit the holy places we can recollect his birth, his enlightenment, his first sermon and his parinibbāna with more confidence, reverence and gratefulness.

**Vijjā caraṇasampanno--endowed with knowledge and virtue.**

These are qualities of the Buddha we praise when we pay homage to him. What is the meaning of these words? We read in the “Visuddhimagga” (VII,32) :

Herein, the Blessed One’s possession of clear vision consists in the fulfilment of Omniscience (Ps.1,131), while his possession of conduct (virtue) consists in the fulfilment of the Great Compassion (Ps.1,126). He knows through omniscience what is good and harmful for all beings, and through compassion he warns them of harm and exhorts them to do good. Out of compassion the Buddha developed during his lives as a Bodhisatta the ten perfections, pāramís, so that he eventually could become the Sammāsambuddha, an omniscient Buddha who has discovered the truth all by himself and who is able to teach the truth to others as well.

We read in the Introduction to the Jātakas, the Buddha's birth stories<sup>2</sup>, that the Bodhisatta, aeons ago, when he was born as the brahman Sumedha, came to realize that it is sorrowful to be subject to birth, old age and death. He wanted to look for the way leading to freedom from birth and he became an ascetic. He acquired proficiency in the jhānas and supernatural powers. Once he saw people clearing a path for the Buddha Dīpaòkara and he helped full of joy. The Buddha approached before Sumedha's work was finished and Sumedha, with great devotion, lay down on the mud, wishing that the Buddha would tread on him. He aspired to become a Buddha in the future and the Buddha Dīpaòkara declared that his aspiration would reach fulfilment. Sumedha then considered the ten perfections he would have to develop during innumerable lives as a Bodhisatta in order to attain Buddhahood.

The ten perfections are the following:

liberality (dāna)

morality (sīla)

renunciation (nekkhamma)

wisdom (paññā)

energy (virīya)

patience (khanti)

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<sup>2</sup> Commentarial literature, translated by H.C. Warren, Harvard Oriental Series III.

truthfulness (sacca)

determination (adiïhãna)

loving kindness (mettã)

equanimity (upekkhã)

The Bodhisatta was unshakable in his resolution to develop the pãramís in order to attain Buddhahood for the welfare and happiness of other beings. He always had in mind to alleviate the sufferings of beings and he was prepared to give his life for them. He was mindful of his ultimate goal, the attainment of Buddhahood, also when he encountered great difficulties and obstacles. He practised the perfections with constancy and vigour, out of compassion for us, so that we too can attain enlightenment.

The Bodhisatta made his resolution to become a Buddha in the presence of the Buddha Dípaòkara and he gave expression to his resolution again in the presence of twentythree Buddhas who came after the Buddha Dípaòkara. The Bodhisatta had listened to the teachings of all these Buddhas and since the teaching of vipassanã, insight, is exclusively the teaching of a Buddha, the Bodhisatta must have developed satipaïhãna together with the ten pãramís, otherwise he could not have attained Buddhahood.

During this pilgrimage we discussed the Buddha's perfections in relation to our lives. We have accumulated many kinds of defilements during countless lives and, thus, there are conditions for the arising of unwholesomeness, akusala, time and again. Because of our defilements we do not have enough strength to walk the Path the Buddha taught and therefore we need to accumulate all kinds of wholesome qualities which can support us while we develop right understanding of realities. We are not destined to become a Sammãsbuddha, but if we develop the perfections along with satipaïhãna there are conditions to attain enlightenment, one day, during one life, we do not know when. When we develop the perfections we should not expect any gain for ourselves, our goal should be the eradication of defilements. If this is not our goal dãna, síla and the other wholesome qualities are not perfections leading to enlightenment.

The Buddha became the world's helper out of compassion. Could we also help the world through the development of the pãramís and the attainment of enlightenment? The disciples of the Buddha who had developed the pãramís during countless lives and who attained enlightenment could also help other beings but they could not equal the Buddha who was foremost in wisdom and virtue and who had an immeasurable compassion for all beings. However, all those who have attained enlightenment can inspire others with confidence in the Buddha's teachings since they have proved that the eightfold Path can be developed and that it leads to the eradication of defilements. Those who have attained enlightenment can be the "good friend in Dhamma" to others. They can be of much help to others, not only through words, but above all through the application of the Dhamma in

life. We read in the "Middle Length Sayings" (III, no.110, Lesser Discourse at the Time of a Full Moon) about the good qualities of the noble person (sappurisa):

“And how, monks, is a good man possessed of good states of mind? As to this, monks, a good man has confidence (saddhā), he has shame (hiri) and fear of blame (ottappa), he has heard much, he is of stirred up energy, he has mindfulness aroused, he has wisdom- it is thus, monks, that a good man is possessed of good states of mind.”

The ariyan, the person who has attained enlightenment, has an unshakable confidence in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha, and in wholesomeness. Even the sotāpanna, the person who has attained the first stage of enlightenment and who has not yet eradicated all defilements, never neglects the five precepts. The ariyan who has developed direct understanding of realities can explain the Dhamma to others more clearly than the non-ariyan and he can truly help others to develop the eightfold Path leading to enlightenment. It is encouraging to know that if we develop the perfections along with satipaṭṭhāna we do not only help ourselves but we can also help others. Thus, to a certain extent we can also become "helpers of the world".

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## Chapter 1

### THE PERFECTION OF GIVING

We read in the commentary to the Cariyāpiṭaka<sup>3</sup> that the destruction of self-love and the development of love for others are the means for the accomplishment of the perfections. The text states:

“For by fully understanding all dhammas in accordance with their nature, the Great Being who has formed the resolution to attain the supreme enlightenment remains untainted by them, and his self-love thereby becomes eliminated and exhausted. Then, since through the repeated practice of great compassion he has come to regard all beings as his dear children, his loving kindness, compassion, and affection for them increase.”

If one is sincere in the development of satipaṭṭhāna one will become less selfish and one will have more consideration for others. One will become more generous. Dāna is one of the perfections leading to enlightenment. One may be inclined to give things to others because one has accumulated generosity, but generosity may not necessarily be a perfection. Generosity is a perfection when one has the sincere inclination to develop it together with satipaṭṭhāna in order to have less selfishness. Then one does not expect any gain for oneself, one does not expect anything in return from other people. Without right understanding generosity cannot be a perfection, but this does not mean that there has to be right understanding with each moment of giving. Sometimes there are conditions for mindfulness of nāma and rūpa while we give, sometimes not. However, we should not forget our goal which is the eradication of defilements. All the perfections are necessary conditions for the attainment of this goal. It is not consistent if we just develop awareness of nāma and rūpa in order to eradicate the clinging to self, and continue to be stingy and continue to keep our possessions for ourselves. We may think that “I” can develop the perfections, but it depends on the accumulated conditions which kind of kusala arises. When we see the benefit of all the perfections there will be conditions to develop them all, without there being the need to think, “I should develop the perfections”. If we think in that way there is clinging to a self who can do this or that.

The Bodhisatta developed the perfection of dāna during countless lives, relinquishing his own possessions and giving gifts which were a source of pleasure to others. He remained unshakable in his resolution to help others even if it meant that he had to endure hardship himself. He not only gave external objects, he also gave his limbs and life. He gave the gift of fearlessness (abhāya dāna) which is protection to those who had fears, dispelling their dread, panic and anxiety. He gave the gift of Dhamma, he preached about what is righteous and true. When he attained Buddhahood he gave the highest gift: he gave up all his defilements and reached supreme wisdom so that he could help other beings to walk the way leading to enlightenment.

The “Jātakas”, the stories of the former lives of the Buddha, can inspire us to develop the perfections the Bodhisatta developed life after life. When we were in the train on our way from Calcutta to Gaya, Bhante Dhammadharo read to us the “Sasa-Jātaka”

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<sup>3</sup> Translated by Ven. Bodhi and included in his translation of The All-embracing Net of Views, The Brahmajāla Sutta and its Commentaries, B.P.S. Kandy, Sri Lanka. From now on I will refer to the commentarial treatise on the perfections as Ven. Bodhi, with the corresponding page. This quotation is from p. 323,324.

(no. 316) which relates that the Bodhisatta, when he was a hare, offered his own flesh to a brahmin. The Bodhisatta was going to sacrifice himself by letting himself fall into the fire so that the brahmin did not have to commit akusala kamma in killing him. We read:

“...Rising from his bed of kusa grass and coming to the place, he thrice shook himself so that, if there were any insects within his coat, they might escape death. Then offering his whole body as a free gift he sprang up, and like a royal swan, alighting on a cluster of lotuses, in an ecstasy of joy he fell on the heap of live coals. But the flame failed even to heat the pores of the hair on the body of the Bodhisatta, and it was as if he had entered a region of frost....”

The fire did not roast him because the brahmin was actually Sakka, King of the Devas of the Thirtythree, and he had created that fire in order to test the Bodhisatta's virtue. The Bodhisatta said to him:

“If not only you, Sakka, but all the inhabitants of the world were to try me in this matter of almsgiving, they would not find in me any unwillingness to give.”

At first we may find this story somewhat strange but we should consider what its real meaning is. The Bodhisatta was consuming his self-love, giving his limbs and life with abundant joy. He gave himself wholeheartedly and completely, without holding back anything, without thinking of himself. He only thought of the welfare of others: he had loving kindness for the brahmin, he took compassion on the insects which might be in his coat, and therefore he shook himself three times. He was always intent on his ultimate goal: to attain Buddhahood for the welfare of other beings.

Often during this journey the Sasa-Jātaka came to my mind and this Jātaka inspired me to appreciate more the benefit of giving wholeheartedly. In a day there are many more akusala cittas than kusala cittas, but we are ignorant of them. When we do not perform dāna, observe sīla or apply ourselves to mental development, which comprises the development of calm and the development of right understanding, we think, act and speak with akusala cittas. There is often clinging after seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting or the experience of tangible object. We may not notice that there is clinging when it is subtle, but there are countless moments of them. Are we not attached to all the objects which are experienced through the six doors? Through satipaṭṭhāna we gradually come to know the many moments of akusala citta, we come to know that we are thinking of ourselves more often than we ever thought.

If one has not been generous in the past it is not easy to be generous at the present time. We read in the commentary to the Cariyāpiṭaka<sup>4</sup> that the Bodhisatta, when his mind does not leap up at the thought of giving considers the following:

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<sup>4</sup> Ven. Bodhi p. 322



“Surely, I have not been accustomed to giving in the past, therefore a desire to give does not arise now in my mind. So that my mind will delight in giving in the future, I will give a gift. With an eye for the future let me now relinquish what I have to those in need.”

Further on we read about the overcoming of worry about the loss of an object being given<sup>5</sup> :

“When the Great Being is giving a gift, and he sees the loss of the object being given, he reflects thus: ‘This is the nature of material possessions, that they are subject to loss and to passing away. Moreover, it is because I did not give such gifts in the past that my possessions are now depleted. Let me then give whatever I have as a gift, whether it be limited or abundant. In that way I will, in the future, reach the peak in the perfection of giving.’ ”

We too may regret the loss of an object we give. However, generosity can be accumulated little by little. The Bodhisatta was not forgetful of his ultimate goal while he developed the perfections. If we develop the perfection of dāna along with satipaṭṭhāna we will not be forgetful of our ultimate goal: the eradication of defilements. We can notice that we have a great deal of stinginess and selfishness and thus it is beneficial to accumulate generosity. However, we cannot have generosity whenever we want it, it is a kind of nāma which arises because of its own conditions. When there is generosity it can be object of mindfulness so that it will be known as not self. In the absolute sense there is no person who is generous.

Acharn Sujin reminded us time and again: "Just be aware of any reality which appears." We were wondering whether this could be applied at any time. Awareness of the present moment is so difficult and would it therefore not be better to develop first other kinds of kusala and later on satipaṭṭhāna? We are always trying to judge what we should or shouldn't do. We want to make good use of our life and we are trying to reach conclusions about the way we spend it. Bhante Dhammadharo said:

“Why does one judge whether one spends one's life well? Really, it should be: ‘Am I learning about myself?’ If one always thinks in ‘wholes’ and of ‘the whole situation’ one has an image or picture of how one should be living. This is unrealistic and it takes us away from knowing this moment. This way of thinking is unavoidable, we can't help it, but it is good to know we are doing it and we should realize that it is only nāma. We always want to come to conclusions about ourselves, about what we are doing, by thinking, and we forget sati. Sati is the opposite of this clinging to reach conclusions.”

When we hear the words, "Just be aware" it may seem like an over-simplification of life, but in fact it is the answer to all our problems and worries about how we should be living. A moment of right understanding of the reality which appears is more effective than all our planning and thinking because then detachment from the self is being developed. We may hear the words "Just be aware", but if there is no "follow up" we

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<sup>5</sup> Ven. Bodhi p. 323

cannot find out whether or not it is true that satipaṅhāna conditions one to think more often of others and to be less selfish. It will take a long time of developing satipaṅhāna before there can be detachment from the self. However, those who have attained enlightenment have proven that right understanding conditions all kinds of kusala. The sotāpanna has eradicated the wrong view of self and also all stinginess. He has pure generosity without any notion of self who is generous. In order to attain enlightenment he had to develop the perfection of dāna and all the other perfections along with satipaṅhāna.

We all have different weak points and we cling to different things. Our clinging is an obstruction to generosity. I want certain situations to be as I have planned, such as Dhamma discussions. Although Dhamma discussions are helpful there can be many selfish moments when one wants to have a discussion. One may want to force such a situation when it is not the right time. When we were in the park of Taj Mahal, sitting on the grass for a Dhamma discussion, there was nothing to drink. Sarah and I went out to get some drinks and since we had to walk rather far to get them I knew that I was going to miss part of the discussion. However, at that moment there were conditions to see that helping was more beneficial than just sitting down for the discussion to suit oneself. Moreover, also while walking on a busy street with many vendors there are nāma and rūpa and they can be object of mindfulness. The good example of all my friends and also our previous discussions about generosity and satipaṅhāna helped me to see the benefit of kusala. We can experience ourselves that even a small act of kindness from others can mean a great deal to us and, thus, when there is an opportunity to do something for others, even something which seems insignificant, we should not overlook such an opportunity. Sarah reminded me of this fact time and again by her words and example. It is true, hearing the Dhamma, considering it and above all the development of right understanding can condition more generosity.

## Chapter 2

### THE PERFECTION OF SÍLA

We read in the Sasa-Jātaka that the Bodhisatta, when he was a hare, wanted to offer his own flesh to a brahmin. When he was about to let himself fall into the fire, he shook himself three times so that the insects which might be in his coat would not get hurt. During innumerable lives the Bodhisatta developed the perfection of síla, there was no síla he had not observed. He trained himself to refrain from deeds by which he could harm other beings and from speech which is untrue, harsh, slanderous and idle. We read in the commentary to the Cariyāpiṭaka<sup>6</sup>:

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<sup>6</sup> Ven. Bodhi p. 300

“Thus, esteeming virtue as the foundation for all achievements, as the soil for the origination of all the Buddha-qualities, the beginning, footing, head and chief of all the dhammas issuing in Buddhahood--and recognizing gain, honour and fame as a foe in the guise of a friend, a Bodhisatta should diligently and thoroughly perfect his virtue as a hen guards its eggs: through the power of mindfulness and clear comprehension in the control of bodily and vocal action, in the taming of the sense-faculties, in the purification of livelihood and in the use of the requisites.”

Sīla is not only refraining from unwholesome actions and speech, it is also the performing of wholesome actions and speech, such as showing respect or helping others. The Bodhisatta was foremost in virtuous deeds and speech. He was always ready to help and protect other beings. He spoke words which were blameless, pleasant and beneficial, having beings' welfare in mind. The commentary to the Cariyāpīṭaka states that the Bodhisatta had courteous conduct to those worthy of respect. He was waiting upon the sick and helping those who were in need. He inspired with talk on Dhamma those who were in need to be inspired. He was contented with little and he saw danger in the slightest faults.

We have read in the quotation above that the Bodhisatta recognized gain, honour and fame as a foe in the guise of a friend. One may neglect sīla because one believes to gain something, but actually there will be great loss. Neglect of sīla brings unpleasant results. For different people different precepts may be difficult to observe, depending on their accumulations. During our pilgrimage we discussed several times the fifth precept, abstention from intoxicants and alcoholic drinks. If one is used to drinking beer or wine one may be unable to refrain from drinking immediately, but through consideration of the teachings one may begin to see the disadvantages of it. Bhante Dhammadharo said that alcohol seems at first to bring what is desirable, but that its effects are not desirable. Alcohol can lead to madness. It hinders one in the performing of ones daily tasks, there will be no swift recognition of the tasks to be done both in the present and in the future, and one will be inclined to sleep late in the morning. One may easily say and do very unwholesome things one regrets later on. We may talk and think about the benefits of kusala and the dangers of akusala, but discussing or thinking is not enough.

If one does not develop satipaṭṭhāna, right understanding of the nāmas and rūpas of our life, it is impossible to acquire perfection of sīla. We should remember that it is not self who abstains from evil. When we refrain from unwholesome action or unwholesome speech there are particular mental factors arising with the kusala citta (virati cetasikas) which perform the function of abstention. They are abstention from wrong action, abstention from wrong speech and abstention from wrong livelihood, which is wrong action or speech committed for the sake of our livelihood. These wholesome mental factors can only arise when there are the appropriate conditions, not because of a self who wants to exert control. Also sati accompanies the kusala citta which abstains from evil. Each kusala citta is accompanied by sati which is non-forgetful of wholesomeness, which prevents akusala. There is sati of different levels, of the level of dāna, of sīla, of samatha and of vipassanā. Sati of vipassanā is mindful of nāma and rūpa so that right understanding of them can be developed. When there is abstention from evil there must be sati, but not necessarily of the level of satipaṭṭhāna. There is not satipaṭṭhāna each time

when kusala citta arises, but if satipaïhåna is being developed it also conditions sati of other levels. It conditions generosity, the observing of sïla, mettå and other wholesome qualities. There is more often unwholesome consciousness, akusala citta, than wholesome consciousness, kusala citta. After seeing, hearing and the other sense-impressions there is often clinging, aversion and ignorance. When there is right mindfulness of what appears through one of the six doors one is not taken in by the object which appears. It is sati which is watchful. There is at that moment actually a threefold training (sikkhå), namely in higher sïla, samådhi (concentration) and paññå, which are those of the eightfold Path. We do not have to think, I should have sïla, but at the moment of satipaïhåna one does not commit akusala. There is also calm without there being the need to try to have calm, because there is no disturbance by akusala. If there is the threefold training sïla can be brought to perfection.

If there can be awareness of more kinds of realities we will acquire a more detailed knowledge of our different types of cittas. We will know the many moments of akusala citta, also when akusala does not have the intensity so as to motivate unwholesome speech and action. The understanding of the Dhamma can help us to see the truth of our own unwholesomeness. The perfection of truthfulness or sincerity has to be developed as well. We should not have the idea that we need to develop one perfection only, the perfections support one another and all of them are needed for the attainment of enlightenment. We may believe that we see the disadvantage of unkind deeds and speech but how do we think about other people? We may easily be ignorant of unwholesome thinking because we are so used to thinking in such a way and we believe that we do not harm others just by thinking. Is there lack of mettå while we think about others? We also need to develop the perfection of mettå. If there is no mettå sïla cannot be brought to perfection. When we criticize others, even in our thoughts, because we don't like their appearance or their way of speech there is no mettå. Our unkind thoughts can easily motivate unpleasant speech. Before we realize it we have spoken already unkind words. Then we may have aversion about our own akusala. We may think, I should have more kusala. However, it is important to face akusala and to realize it as just a reality which has arisen because of conditions. There should be no selection of the object of mindfulness. Any reality which appears can be object of mindfulness. Who knows what the next moment will be? It can be seeing, thinking, very strong attachment, anger or jealousy. In order to learn to see the disadvantage of akusala its characteristic has to be known, and, thus, there should be awareness of it when it appears. One may be inclined to ignore the characteristic of akusala, one may prefer to be calm. One finds it pleasant to be calm with kusala, one clings to an idea of "my kusala". Instead of the development of right understanding of what appears now one may turn to other kinds of practice. One may spend one's life with many good works such as the study of Dhamma and the writing of books about it, but put off the practice of Dhamma, that is, the development of understanding just now. One may want to accumulate kusala for oneself, and one does not realize that one's goal should be the eradication of defilements through right understanding.

Acharn Sujin reminded us that when satipaïhåna is being developed there is no attachment to the result of kusala, no clinging to an idea of: I should have more dåna, I should have more sïla, I should have more calm. All kinds of kusala are good, but they can become objects of clinging and when there is clinging kusala is not developed.

It is only through satipaïhãna that sïla can become firm and enduring. If there is no development of satipaïhãna we are actually in a dangerous situation. There may be conditions for kusala citta which observes sïla, perhaps for a long time, but who knows his past accumulations of akusala? At any time there can be the arising of akusala citta which motivates a very bad deed. When satipaïhãna is not developed we are not honest with ourselves. We may think, I can observe the precepts, and delude ourselves into thinking that we are so good, but we may not notice the countless moments of akusala citta. We do not realize that there is no person who observes the precepts or who transgresses them, but that there are only dhammas, arising because of conditions. Kusala dhammas and akusala dhammas arise because of their own conditions, not because of our will.

For some people the observance of the fifth precept, the abstaining from alcoholic beverages, is very difficult. One cannot force oneself to keep this precept, it is sati which keeps one from drinking. One can learn to be mindful of realities also while one enjoys the taste of alcoholic drinks. Is there no flavour appearing? It can be known as only a kind of rúpa. Are there no tasting, no attachment appearing? These are realities which can be object of awareness. It is through satipaïhãna that one will know kusala as kusala and akusala as akusala, and it is through satipaïhãna that there will be more conditions to observe sïla. Only when one has become a sotãpanna one can observe the five precepts perfectly. One can become a sotãpanna through the development of right understanding. One moment of right understanding of the present moment is more effective than many kinds of good works undertaken without any development of right understanding. One moment of right understanding now is a condition that right understanding can arise again and, thus, it can grow. It can lead eventually to the eradication of all defilements.

We read in the commentary to the "Ten Precepts" of the "Minor Readings" (the Illustrator of Ultimate Meaning) about the fruits of the abstaining from ill deeds. Such fruits are the result of firm, established sïla, sïla which is practised together with satipaïhãna. When we read the scriptures we should remember that satipaïhãna which is exclusively the teaching of the Buddha, is included in all of his teachings, also when it is not expressively mentioned. If we forget this we may read the whole Tipiãaka with wrong understanding. We read that the fruits of abstention from alcoholic drinks are:

“...swift recognition of past, future and present tasks to be done, constant establishment of mindfulness, freedom from madness, possession of knowledge, non-procrastination, non-stupidity, non-drivellingness, non-intoxication, non-negligence, non-confusion, non-timorousness, non-presumption, unenviousness, truthfulness, freedom from malicious and harsh speech and from gossip, freedom from dullness both night and day, gratitude, gratefulness, unavariciousness, liberality, virtuousness, rectitude, non-anger, possession of conscience (hiri), possession of shame (ottappa), rectitude of view, great understanding, wisdom, learnedness, skill in (distinguishing) good from harm, and so on.

### Chapter 3

#### THE PERFECTION OF RENUNCIATION

Renunciation, nekkhamma, is another perfection the Buddha fulfilled during his lives as a Bodhisatta. We read in the commentary to the Cariyâpiïaka<sup>7</sup> the following definition of renunciation:

“Renunciation has the characteristic of departing from sense pleasures and existence; its function is to verify the unsatisfactoriness they involve; its manifestation is the withdrawal from them; a sense of spiritual urgency is its proximate cause.”

The Bodhisatta recognized the unsatisfactoriness in sense pleasures and he contemplated the benefits of renunciation. In many lives he went forth from the household life into the homeless life. Renunciation is not only leading the life of an ascetic, it means above all renunciation from akusala. We read in the commentary to the "Dialogues of the Buddha" (commentary to the Sangîti sutta, Dîgha Nikâya III, 215) that "all good states are nekkhamma-dhâtu", they are the element (dhâtu) of renunciation. At the moment of kusala citta one renounces akusala. The perfection of renunciation has to be developed together with satipaiïhâna so that there eventually can be complete renunciation from all

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<sup>7</sup> Ven. Bodhi p. 261.

defilements and also from existence. The arahat who has eradicated all defilements does not cling to rebirth, for him there are no more conditions to be reborn.

In the train to Bodhgaya Bhante Dhammadharo read to us the "Sīlavímamsa-Jātaka" (no. 330). It is said that a hawk seized a piece of meat and was pecked at by other birds who also wanted it, until he let go of it. Then another bird seized it who was harassed in his turn until he let go of it, and then the same happened to other birds who seized that piece of meat. Whoever let go of it was left in peace. The Bodhisatta said:

“These desires of ours are like pieces of meat. To those that grasp at them is sorrow, and to those that let go is peace.”

In the same Jātaka we read about another example of the sorrow caused by clinging. A female slave Piùgalå had made an appointment with her lover and was waiting for him, but he did not turn up. So long as she was waiting and hoping for his arrival she was restless and could not sleep peacefully. Hope brings sorrow and the absence of hope brings peace is the lesson taught by this example. We discussed the application of this Jātaka in daily life. We have many expectations which are all forms of attachment, lobha. We expect life to be pleasant but it cannot be real happiness. We have expectations from our friends, we want to be liked by them and we need attention from them. Don't we often start a conversation with others just in order to receive attention from them? Bhante Dhammadharo reminded us that this is a whole area of our life we hardly ever consider. Such moments of clinging usually pass unnoticed, but when there is mindfulness of them they can be known as they are: only conditioned realities which are not self. If we want to renounce akusala there should first be renunciation from the clinging to self. This will not be achieved by thinking about renunciation, but only by right understanding of the present moment.

When seeing appears there can be awareness of it in order to know it as a reality which experiences visible object. Seeing sees visible object, everything which appears through the eyesense. Visible object is not a person. We may understand in theory that we do not see people, only visible object, but we still believe that we see people. If there can be awareness of visible object and it is known as just visible object, not a person, we will come to understand the difference between the world of absolute truth, of nāmas and rúpas, and the world of concepts and ideas. Before we heard the Dhamma we only paid attention to the world of concepts, but through the Dhamma we can learn the absolute truth. We can learn through direct experience that seeing sees visible object, not a person, that hearing hears sound, not the voice of someone. Through satipaïhåna there will eventually be less clinging to the world of concepts, the world of people, of self. Renunciation can only be a perfection if satipaïhåna is developed as well.

We discussed during this journey our feeling of being dependent on others which is a form of clinging. We are apt to be too dependent on our teachers of Dhamma and we expect too much from them. It is beneficial to listen to the person who explains the Dhamma in the right way but we have to consider ourselves what we heard again and

again, we have to develop right understanding ourselves, nobody else can do that for us. In that way we will become independent.

The perfection of renunciation can be developed by monks as well as by layfollowers. Those who have accumulations for monkhood can go forth into the homeless life. One may have the intention to practise renunciation, one may lead a life of fewness of wishes, but if right understanding is not developed one will continue to cling to the self. How could there then be true, sincere renunciation? If the monk observes Vinaya and also develops satipaṭṭhāna he practises true renunciation and he is fulfilling his task of preserving the Dhamma. If one not only knows the Dhamma in theory but also applies the Buddha's teachings in one's life one can explain the Dhamma to others more clearly. The observance of the Vinaya should not be separated from the development of satipaṭṭhāna, there can be mindfulness of nāma and rupa with the observance of each rule.

During our pilgrimage we had many opportunities to appreciate the monk's life. Bhante Dhammadharo told me that in his temple the monks usually drank plain water, no coffee, tea or other beverages, and he said that he was glad to learn to be contented with plain water. Sarah had received a fund from one of our Thai friends to be spent during this journey for the monks' needs. While we were making a boat trip on the Ganges river near Varānasī and looking at the people who were bathing themselves in the holy water of the Ganges, vendors who sold Buddhist rosaries approached our boat. Sarah wanted to buy rosaries for the monks, but Bhante Dhammadharo told her that he only wanted a rosary for his teacher and not for himself, because that would be an extra burden. He did not want to accumulate possessions. If one develops the virtue of fewness of wishes together with satipaṭṭhāna one's renunciation can reach perfection.

In Varānasī we saw many things which were mentioned in the scriptures: the money counter, the sweeper and the dirt collector. Sarah bought "neem", sweet wood, for the monks and this was used also in the Buddha's time. One chews it and then it can be used as a toothbrush. Bhante Dhammadharo said that life in Varānasī was just as life in the Buddha's time: "only realities appearing through the six doors." There was a lot of noise and we were in the midst of throngs of people who were pushing, but still, there were only realities appearing through the six doors. Also in such a situation there can be mindfulness of nāma and rupa. Sati can sometimes arise, but one should not expect to have keen understanding of realities in the beginning.

Bhante Dhammadharo said that the hundred and eight beads of the rosary reminded him of the hundred and eight kinds of craving. Craving can be classified according as it arises on account of the objects experienced through the six doors. It can arise also with the eternity view which assumes the object to be lasting, or with the annihilation view which assumes that everything is annihilated. In that way there are eighteen kinds of craving to be discerned. Furthermore, these eighteen kinds can arise with regard to one's own visible object and to external visible object and so on with regard to the other objects. Then thirtysix kinds of craving are to be discerned. There are thirtysix kinds of craving of the past, thirtysix kinds of the present and thirtysix kinds of the future. Thus, there are



hundred and eight kinds of craving (Vis. XVII, 235). I said that I did not quite understand why the craving in the future which has not arisen yet is real. The Bhante said: "It is sure to come and it is frightening". Craving will arise again and again because the conditions for it are already there. We continue to have expectations but clinging can be object of mindfulness. If craving can be known as "only a reality" which has arisen because of conditions and which falls away immediately, it will be less of an obsession. Through right understanding it can eventually be eradicated.

The Bodhisatta cultivated jhāna during many lives. Jhāna is a high degree of renunciation, because at the moment of jhāna one is free from sense impressions and, thus, not enslaved to them. However, if satipaṭṭhāna is not being developed enlightenment cannot be attained and defilements cannot be eradicated. If one has accumulated skill for jhāna it can be developed together with satipaṭṭhāna so that the realities which appear and also the jhānacitta can be known as not self. If right understanding of the present moment is not developed calm will be the object of clinging. What is the goal of one's life: to develop calm or to develop right understanding of realities?

One may believe that it is difficult for a beginner to be aware of lobha or dosa which are intense. One cannot force sati and if it does not arise should one not try to be calm first, for example by thinking of the Buddha's teachings?

It is true that in the beginning mindfulness of the reality which appears at the present moment does not often arise. There may be conditions for kusala citta with calm but without right understanding of the present reality. Because of our wrong understanding it may seem to us that we can tell ourselves, "Now there cannot be mindfulness of nāma and rūpa, but I should think of the Buddha's teachings so that there will be less akusala". In reality all cittas which arise do so because they have their own conditions for their arising, not because we could control them. At some moments it may be possible to think of the Buddha's teachings and to become calm, but at other moments we may be unable to do so.

If one tells oneself that one should become calm first before there can be mindfulness of the present reality one clings to calm already and then there is akusala citta. If one wants to do something else first before one develops satipaṭṭhāna is that not an excuse not to begin to develop understanding right now? Even while we are thinking in that way are there no realities appearing? It is a type of nāma which thinks in that way and it arises because of conditions. One has accumulated such inclination. Without the development of right understanding we are lost because we do not know when there is subtle clinging to "my kusala". Even though we understand in theory that the development of right understanding is urgent there can be many moments that we are distracted from our goal by clinging. While we try to avoid the types of akusala we do not like another type of akusala, a subtle clinging we do not notice, arises. Until one has become a sotāpanna one may deviate from the eightfold Path, led by clinging. But also such moments can be object of mindfulness and that is the way to follow the right Path again. If we are resolute to develop understanding of any reality which appears now, even if it is

very unwholesome, we are not tempted to try other ways of practice first, we are not tempted to put off the development of right understanding.

I remarked to Acharn Sujin that I find it difficult as a beginner to have keen understanding of the object which appears. Acharn Sujin answered:

“The beginner is not keen enough to be aware of all objects which appear. The beginner should begin with one doorway at a time until he is skilful enough to be able to be aware of any object. This is the way. One should not try another way and neglect awareness of the object which appears. The beginner begins to develop right awareness of the object which appears, that is the duty of the beginner.”

It is good to be reminded of the duty of the beginner, otherwise we make ourselves believe that awareness in daily life is impossible in the beginning and then there will never be true renunciation from all akusala.

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## Chapter 4

### THE PERFECTION OF WISDOM

There are different kinds and degrees of paññā, wisdom, and the Bodhisatta developed them all. The Bodhisatta knew what was good and what was harmful for beings, and this is wisdom. Out of compassion he gave advice both with regard to material welfare and spiritual welfare. Also during the lives when he was an animal he saved other beings from destruction. In the train to Bodhgaya Bhante Dhammadharo read to us the "Suppāraka-Jātaka" (no. 463), the story of the Bodhisatta's life as a wise mariner who guided people on a ship through dangerous seas, collected treasures for them and brought them safely home. When he had become the Buddha he guided beings through the sea of saósāra, the cycle of birth and death, and he helped them to reach safety, to reach the real security which is the end of rebirth. Bhante Dhammadharo said that one has to be "long-sighted" to be able to develop paññā. The ultimate result will be the attainment of nibbāna, but that is a long way off. One cannot attain nibbāna immediately when one has just begun to develop paññā, it takes countless lives. One has to know what the stumbling blocks are, one has to know the right conditions for the growth of paññā, one has to study realities and consider them carefully, over and over again.

The Bodhisatta developed the wisdom based on learning, that is: wisdom through studying, listening, memorizing and interrogation. He developed the wisdom based on reflection, he considered paramattha dhammas, and he developed insight, direct understanding of realities. He had listened to several Buddhas and, thus, he had learnt to develop satipaṭṭhāna. Out of compassion he also helped other beings to develop wisdom.

We read that when the Bodhisatta was Sumedha he understood the danger of rebirth and the disadvantages of defilements. He compared defilements with dung and we should reflect on this simile. Do we realize the ugliness of defilements, do we really consider

them as filthy as dung? The Bodhisatta knew that there should be an end to defilements. He compared nibbāna to a lake in which the stain of corruptions could be washed away. Generosity, sīla and all the other perfections must have as their foundation paññā which sees the danger of defilements, otherwise they cannot be purified. The goal of the perfections is the eradication of defilements. The commentary to the Cariyāpiṭaka states that paññā is the chief cause for the development of the other perfections, that it perfects them all. In his last life the Bodhisatta reached the omniscience of a Buddha. After he had realized the truth of all conditioned realities he experienced the unconditioned reality, nibbāna.

The Buddha is called the "Tathāgata", and this word has several meanings. The commentary to the Cariyāpiṭaka <sup>8</sup> gives different explanations of this word in order to show different aspects of the qualities of the Buddha.

"Tathāgata" is explained as "thus come". As soon as the Bodhisatta was born in his last life he went the same way as the previous Buddhas. "Thus come" shows the advent of a Buddha to be. He arrived at his goal through the same course as the Buddhas of the past.

"Tathāgata" is also explained as "thus gone". Gone refers to the Bodhisatta's deportment at birth, when he took seven strides and surveyed the world in all directions, exclaiming that he was the chief, the best and the eldest in the world and that this was his last birth. "Gone" also refers to the movement of his knowledge. This implies the development of his wisdom culminating in final deliverance.

The third explanation of "Tathāgata" is: "come to the real characteristic", and this refers to his discovery of the real characteristics of all dhammas.

The next explanation of "Tathāgata" is: "awakened to real dhammas". This refers to his realization of the four noble Truths and the Dependent Origination.

The following explanation of "Tathāgata" is: "seer of the real", and this discloses the scope of his knowledge, the analytical precision of it and its all-encompassing range.

The Buddha is called the "Tathāgata" because he is the speaker of the real. This refers to the truth of every utterance of the Buddha, from the night of his enlightenment until his parinibbāna.

The Buddha is called the "Tathāgata" because he practises what he teaches. His conduct is in accordance with his teaching.

The Buddha is called the "Tathāgata" in the sense of vanquishing or surpassing. He is unequalled as to virtue and wisdom. He is unique, incomparable.

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<sup>8</sup> Ven. Bodhi in Part V of his book, p. 331 and following.

The word "Tathāgata" designates all the qualities of the Buddha. We cannot grasp the Buddha's wisdom. We can only acquire some understanding of it if we practise what he taught. We read in "As it was said" (Itivuttaka, Book of the Threes, Ch 5, Part 3) that the Buddha said:

“Monks, even if a monk should seize the hem of my garment and walk behind me step for step, yet if he be covetous in his desires, fierce in his longing, malevolent of heart, of mind corrupt, careless and unrestrained, not quieted but scatterbrained and uncontrolled in sense, that monk is far from me and I am far from him. What is the cause of that? Monks, that monk sees not Dhamma. Not seeing Dhamma he sees not me. Monks, even though a monk should dwell a hundred yoyanas away, yet if he be not covetous in his desires, not fierce in his longing, not malevolent of heart, not of mind corrupt, but with mindfulness set up and composed, calmed, one-pointed in mind and restrained in sense,— then indeed that one is near to me and I am near to him. What is the cause of that? Monks, that monk sees Dhamma. Seeing Dhamma he sees me.”

The Buddha could not have reached the peak of wisdom had he not developed it during four incalculable periods of time and a hundred thousand kappas. He had to begin once. He had to begin again and again to be mindful of *nāma* and *rūpa*, one at a time, in daily life. He had to be patient to develop understanding for innumerable lives. We have to be "long-sighted" to develop wisdom. There are many conditions needed to attain enlightenment. We need patience to develop all the perfections together with right understanding.

The Buddha discovered the truth of all phenomena. All conditioned realities are impermanent (*aniccā*), *dukkha* and not self (*anattā*). We may have theoretical understanding of the fact that what is subject to change and impermanent cannot give us security and happiness, but that is only thinking. If we could really penetrate the truth of *dukkha* after having heard about it we would be a *sotāpanna*. The wisdom which realizes directly the truth of this moment develops very gradually, in the course of many lives. If there is no direct knowledge of the arising and falling away of a *nāma* or a *rūpa* which appears now, how could the truth of *dukkha* be realized? And then, before the arising and falling away of a *nāma* or a *rūpa* can be realized we have to know precisely the *nāma* which appears as *nāma* and the *rūpa* which appears as *rūpa*. We know in theory that *nāma* is the reality which experiences an object and that *rūpa* is the reality which does not experience anything, but are their different characteristics realized when they appear one at a time?

Acharn Sujin reminded us:

“Is there any understanding of the characteristic of seeing? If one does not understand it as it is yet, understanding of it should be developed. We cannot expect to have clear understanding of the characteristic of seeing as not self in the beginning.”

We expect that the characteristic of *nāma* can be described exactly as it is, and that it can be understood merely by listening to many descriptions of it. However, we should

carefully consider what we have heard and we should begin to be mindful of the reality which appears. The characteristic of seeing can be known when seeing appears. If one considers carefully what one hears, one sentence such as, "Nāma is the reality which experiences an object" could be enough. We want to have many Dhamma discussions but we neglect to consider the Dhamma. "You want quantity, not quality", Acharn Sujin said. We read in the "Dhammapada", vs. 100:

“Better than a thousand utterances with useless words is one single beneficial word, by hearing which one is pacified.”

Nāma is the reality which experiences an object. Is there now an experience? Is there seeing? It is the seeing which sees and then falls away. Do we still cling to a notion of self who sees? If that is so, understanding of seeing should be developed when seeing appears, until its characteristic is truly known as "only a reality" which is conditioned and does not stay, which is beyond control. Is there hearing? It is the hearing which hears. Hearing has nothing to do with seeing, it is a completely different reality arising because of its own conditions. The characteristic of hearing can be known when hearing appears. It can be studied with mindfulness, just for a moment, and this is the way to begin to develop paññā.

Seeing now is conditioned, hearing now is conditioned. If we understand that each moment is a new situation which is conditioned already it will help us to be mindful of the present object which is there already, instead of preferring another situation, another object to the present one.

Acharn Sujin reminded us that it is lobha which lures us away from the present object to another object. We were wondering when and to what object lobha lures us away. Do we not want to be aware of the present object? When we are in an unpleasant or dangerous situation we have aversion, we are frightened, and while we are wishing for the situation to be changed we forget to be mindful of the present object. We overlook what is right at hand. There are bound to be moments with aversion, even strong aversion, but can there not be in between moments that we begin to study with awareness the characteristic of the present reality? If we truly understand that each moment is conditioned already and beyond control, we will come to see the meaning of anattā, not self.

We should find out in all sincerity when lobha lures us away from the present object. We often think of concepts and then the reality of the present moment is thinking. Is there mindfulness of such a moment, or do we believe that we would rather know seeing, hearing or visible object? Is there a very subtle clinging? We may not notice that we try to direct sati to what we think should be the next object of awareness. Also lobha which lures us away from the present reality can be object of awareness. Right understanding can know everything, all the details of our daily life. If there can be awareness of any object in daily life it indicates that there is less clinging to particular objects.

We should not worry about what the object of sati will be the next moment. When sati arises it performs its function already. Sarah stressed the fact that the development of satipaṭṭhāna should not cause us extra worry, it should not make our life heavier but lighter. She spoke about the joy of Dhamma, saying that we should be grateful to have been able to listen to the Dhamma and to be able to at least begin with the development of right understanding. There can be mindfulness of a reality as it appears through one doorway. This is the beginning, but the way of practice of the beginner is not different from the way of practice of the advanced person. One has to begin to study realities again and again, there is no alternative.

Conditioned realities have to be known as they are before nibbāna, the unconditioned reality, can be experienced. Paññā which is developed can experience realities as impermanent, dukkha and anattā. One of these characteristics is experienced at a time, there cannot be the experience of all three characteristics at the same time. It depends on one's accumulations which of these characteristics is experienced more often. Acharn Sujin asked us what comes to our mind when we see a cockroach, a snake or any other animal. Some people may consider the characteristic of dukkha, others the characteristic of impermanence and others again the characteristic of anattā. Bhante Dhammadharo said that he often considers dukkha:

“There is always something interfering with permanent happiness, something goes wrong even if it looks so nice, but, it is no good, no good!”

Acharn Sujin said that she asked us about our attitude, even though paññā has not reached the stage that the characteristics of impermanence, dukkha and anattā can be directly experienced, in order to show us that our different feelings about reality are dependent on our accumulations. She said that it may seem that the characteristics of impermanence, dukkha and anattā are known merely by thinking about them, but that this is not so. The nāma or rūpa which appears can be directly known as impermanent, dukkha or anattā. She said that it is very important to remember that they are known by a reality which is not self. At this moment things appear as a whole, there is the whole world with all the people, there is self. Even when we consider nāma and rūpa, paramattha dhammas, there is bound to be a notion of my understanding, we believe that there is I who understands. When there is a moment of insight there is no notion of self who knows. There is no I, no world; the six doors are separated, there are only realities appearing through one doorway at a time. Acharn Sujin stressed that insight is developed together with detachment, detachment from the self. When insight has been developed to the stage of knowing the true nature of realities it arises naturally in daily life, for example, while one looks at people and all the things around oneself. The moment of insight is not intellectual understanding, it is developed paññā which directly knows the nāma or rūpa which appears as it is.

In the Theragāthā (Canto 43) we read about the Thera Sumangala who was born in a poor family of farmers. He went forth and, after a meditation subject was given to him,

he was sent to the woods. He found it too difficult to live in solitude and therefore he departed to his village again. There he saw the peasants ploughing the fields in soiled garments, covered with dust, blown by hot winds. We read in the commentary to this Canto:

“And he thought: ‘Truly these fellows earn their living in great misery!’ and feeling anxious, his insight approaching maturity, he set himself to do exercises that had been given him, going to the roots of a tree, and biding in seclusion... After he had seen the farmers he realized with insight that life is dukkha. His wisdom reached maturity and he finally attained arahatship. He spoke the following verse which gives expression to his freedom from dukkha:

Well rid, well rid, O excellently rid  
 Am I from these three crooked tasks and tools,  
 Rid of my reaping with your sickles, rid  
 Of trudging after ploughs, and rid is my back  
 Of bending over these wretched little spades.  
 Though they be ever here, ay, ever here,  
 Enough of them, I say, for me, enough!  
 Go meditate, Sumangala, ay go  
 And meditate, Sumangala, and bide  
 Earnest and diligent, Sumangala!”

While Sumangala looked at the farmers he developed right understanding of the nāma and rūpa appearing at that moment. He had developed understanding during countless previous lives, otherwise he could not have attained arahatship. We do not have to look for a particular object in order to develop insight, we do not have to avoid looking at people, talking to them or laughing, because any object in daily life can be the object of insight. Our aim should be to have more understanding of what is real so that the notion of self and other defilements can be eradicated. In this way the perfection of wisdom can develop.

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## Chapter 5

### THE PERFECTION OF ENERGY

With untiring energy and great perseverance the Bodhisatta accumulated the right conditions for enlightenment over an endlessly long time. Always intent on the welfare of all beings he endured great hardship and affliction without becoming disenchanted and he was unwavering in his resolution to become a Sammā-sambuddha. Energy, viriya, is one of the perfections he developed. We are inclined to cling to an idea of self who exerts energy, but energy or effort is a mental factor which arises because of its own conditions. Energy accompanies many cittas al-though not all. It can be akusala, kusala or neither kusala nor akusala, depending on the citta it accompanies. Since there are many more akusala cittas than kusala cittas energy is more often akusala than kusala. For each kind of kusala we need energy; if we had no courage and perseverance we could not accomplish kusala. When we are helping others we sacrifice our time and comfort and, thus, we need energy; otherwise we would feel too tired, we would not be able to do it. Sometimes kusala is strong, but often it is weak and then there is not much energy. Since we accumulated such a great deal of akusala we should not delay kusala when there is an opportunity for it. Kusala is never enough. We need energy to listen to the Dhamma and to consider what we heard. We should not merely think of the names nāma and rūpa, or kusala and akusala, we need to be aware of their characteristics when they appear. It is stressed in the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta (Dialogues of the Buddha, Dīgha Nikāya I, 10) that one should contemplate the body in the body, feelings in the feelings, consciousness in consciousness and dhammas in dhammas, ardent, clearly comprehending and mindful (ātapí, sampajana, satima). The commentary (Papañcasúdaní) states that ardour is a name for energy. We should not be disheartened when there is lack of awareness; we need to listen to the Dhamma again and again and consider realities ardently, that is, with courage and perseverance. We read in the commentary to the Cariyāpīṭaka<sup>9</sup> about energy:

“Energy has the characteristic of striving; its function is to fortify; its manifestation is indefatigability; an occasion for the arousing of energy, or a sense of spiritual urgency, is its proximate cause.”

We have accumulated attachment to sense pleasures, we never have enough of them, but when we see their danger there can be a sense of urgency to develop right understanding. Through right understanding we can come to know our attachment, we can learn to see it as it is: a conditioned reality which is not self. Only when the wrong view of

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<sup>9</sup> Ven. Bodhi, p. 261.



self has been eradicated clinging can be gradually eliminated. The perfection of energy has to be developed together with right understanding. The aim should be the eradication of defilements, otherwise energy is not a perfection leading to enlightenment. We read in the commentary to the Cariyāpīṭaka<sup>10</sup>:

“Energy devoid of wisdom does not accomplish the purpose desired since it is wrongly aroused, and it is better not to arouse energy at all than to arouse it in the wrong way. But when energy is conjoined with wisdom, there is nothing it cannot accomplish, if equipped with the proper means....”

The Bodhisatta was intent on his ultimate goal while he with ardent energy developed all kinds of kusala. We read in the “Sivi-Jātaka” (no. 499) that the Bodhisatta, in one of his lives when he was a king, gave his own eyes to a blind brahmin who was actually Sakka, king of the devas, in disguise. Although others had tried to dissuade the Bodhisatta he was unshakable in his resolution. The pain was extreme when he had his own eyes taken out, but he endured it with heroic fortitude. We read that when his right eye had been taken out already he gazed at it with his left eye and enduring the pain he asked the brahmin to come. He said:

“ ‘The eye of omniscience is dearer than this eye a hundred fold, yes a thousand fold; there you have my reason for this action’, and he gave it to the brahmin, who raised it and placed it in his own eye socket. There it remained fixed by his power like a blue lotus in bloom. When the Great Being with his left eye saw that eye in his head, he cried: ‘Ah, how good is this my gift of an eye’ and thrilled straightway with joy that had arisen within him, he gave the other eye also... Later on his sight was restored to him.”

When the Bodhisatta was intent on his ultimate goal, saying, “The eye of omniscience is dearer than this eye”, he did not merely think: “Once I have to become a Sammāsambuddha”, but he developed the conditions for it right there and then. Could he have endured such extreme pain without mindfulness of the present moment? When there is firm resolution to develop the conditions for enlightenment at this moment there is mindfulness of the present reality since this is the only way. At the same time there is right effort, and this is the perfection of energy.

We should not merely think: “Once we should reach our goal, once we should attain enlightenment”, but we have to be resolute with regard to mindfulness at this moment. We should have courage and perseverance to begin again and again to develop right understanding.

We read in the commentary to the Cariyāpīṭaka<sup>11</sup> about the means by which the perfections are accomplished, and it is said that they should be performed perseveringly without interruption, and that there should be enduring effort over a long period without coming to a halt half-way. The Bodhisatta did not come to a halt half-way. We may listen to the Dhamma and start to develop understanding of nāma and rūpa, and then, when there are no tangible results of our practice we may come to a halt half-way or even

<sup>10</sup> Ven. Bodhi, p. 279.

<sup>11</sup> Ven. Bodhi, p. 305.

sooner. When we notice that right understanding grows very slowly and that mindfulness does not arise very often there may be the temptation to think that we better devote ourselves to other things. We may do many good deeds and help others but without developing a single moment of right understanding. There may be energy for kusala, but not the perfection of energy. We may not be courageous enough to be mindful of akusala when it appears. Then we will be ignorant of the many moments of akusala cittas which are bound to arise in between the moments we do good deeds. We will continue to cling to a notion of self who performs kusala, there will be a false overestimation of ourselves, without our noticing it.

Mindfulness of nāma and rūpa cannot often arise, but we can at least begin to develop it. No matter whether there are kusala cittas or akusala cittas, they can be object of mindfulness. We are negligent if we do not see the value of a moment of mindfulness of a reality as it appears through one doorway at a time. We are likely to be forgetful of the goal of the Buddha's teachings which is the eradication of defilements. If we believe that kusala in itself should be our goal we forget that kusala is impermanent and not self. If we realize that death can come at any time and that in the next life there may not be an opportunity to listen to the Dhamma and develop right understanding, there may be a sense of urgency to be mindful of any reality which appears. Then we are not forgetful of the duty of the beginner and the perfection of energy is being developed, there is no need to think of energy. At such a moment there is no notion of self who makes an effort to have sati. The clinging to self can lure us in many ways. We may for example think that we see the value of sati and that we should concentrate on nāma and rūpa. When we cling to an idea of self who can direct sati we are distracted again from our goal to develop right understanding of the present reality. However, it is paññā which can discern such moments, also these can be object of mindfulness when they appear.

Throughout our pilgrimage we discussed the development of the perfections. They should be developed along with satipaṭṭhāna, otherwise enlightenment cannot be attained. Acharn Sujin reminded us not to move away from our goal by clinging, even clinging to kusala. She said:

“There can be just unawareness, no wrong practice. But if one thinks that one should rather have objects other than the present one, since these appear to be more wholesome, one will never study the object which appears now. And how can one know their true nature when there is no study, no awareness of them? So it must be the present object, only what appears now. This is more difficult because it is not the object of desire. If desire can move one away to another object, that object satisfies one's desire. Desire is there all the time. If there is no understanding of lobha as lobha, how can it be eradicated? One has to understand different degrees of realities, also lobha which is more subtle, otherwise one does not know when there is lobha. Seeing things as they are. Lobha is lobha. Usually one does not see the subtle lobha which moves one away from developing right understanding of the present object.

If there is no understanding of the present object and there is attachment to objects other than the present one, one continues to be ignorant of the objects which appear from life to life. One always moves away from knowing them. Just moving away, even a little,

prevents one from developing right understanding of the object which appears now, such as seeing and visible object, which one has not realized yet.

If one realizes that there is not yet precise understanding of the realities which appear now, no understanding of them as nāma and rúpa, one will not move away from mindfulness and study of the reality which appears now.”

Mindfulness may not often arise and our understanding may be weak, but we should not be misled as to the true goal of our life. In all sincerity we should scrutinize ourselves: do we cling to an image of ourselves, wanting to be full of kusala, with a great deal of sati, and to be very peaceful, or do we want to know ourselves as we really are, our defilements included? Is it not more beneficial to know the truth about ourselves? Is it not more beneficial to have right understanding of all realities, also of our many defilements, subtle and gross, and to know the many moments of unawareness? When there is courage and strength to develop right understanding of the present object, whatever it may be, the perfection of energy is being developed and we are not distracted from our true goal. We will not come to a halt midway.

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## **Chapter 6**

### **THE PERFECTION OF PATIENCE**

Patience, khanti, is another perfection the Bodhisatta fulfilled. He endured insults, afflictions and tortures with endless patience since he was unshakable in his resolution to reach his goal.

We usually think of patience as enduring the undesirable, but patience also endures the desirable. When there is a pleasant object lobha is bound to arise and when there is an unpleasant object dosa is bound to arise. When kusala citta arises instead of akusala citta there is patience. The commentary to the Cariyāpiṭaka<sup>12</sup> gives the following definition of patience:

“Patience has the characteristic of acceptance; its function is to endure the desirable and the undesirable; its manifestation is tolerance or non-opposition; seeing things as they are is its proximate cause.”

Right understanding of nāma and rūpa which appear conditions patience, at that moment there is no attachment, no aversion. The perfection of patience has to be developed along with satipaṭṭhāna. How could the Bodhisatta have such deep-rooted, endless patience? He accumulated right understanding of realities during many lives. The commentary to the Cariyāpiṭaka<sup>13</sup> explains how patience should be fortified by reflection in the right way. We read:

“ ‘Although this suffering arises through the wrong deeds of others, this body of mine is the field for that suffering, and the action which is its seed was sown by me alone.’ And: ‘This suffering will release me from the debt of kamma.’ And: ‘If there were no wrong-doers, how could I accomplish the perfection of patience?’ And: ‘Although he is a wrong-doer now, in the past he was my benefactor.’ And: ‘A wrong-doer is also a benefactor, for he is the basis for the developing of patience.’ ”

We should develop patience in the different situations of our daily life. Can there be patience when it is too cold or too hot, when things in the house are out of order, when we are in the midst of a traffic jam? At such moments we should consider, “If I do not develop patience right now there never will be any patience”. We may find it difficult to see a wrong-doer as a benefactor, but we should consider our different cittas wisely. Someone who hurts us gives us the opportunity to cultivate patience. Such a situation is like a test for our patience. When we remember that we receive the result of the kamma we performed ourselves it will help us to have more endurance. In the absolute sense there are no people who hurt us, there is no self who is hurt, there are only nāma and rūpa which arise because of their own conditions and then fall away immediately.

We read in the commentary to the Cariyāpiṭaka<sup>14</sup> that patience has to be developed together with wisdom. The text states:

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<sup>12</sup> Ven. Bodhi p. 261.

<sup>13</sup> Ven. Bodhi p. 281.

<sup>14</sup> Ven. Bodhi p. 279.

“Again, only the man of wisdom can patiently tolerate the wrongs of others, not the dull-witted man. In the man lacking wisdom, the wrongs of others only provoke impatience; for the wise they call his patience into play and make it even grow stronger.”

When right understanding of realities grows one understands more clearly that each situation one faces is conditioned already, that it is beyond control. Instead of impatience there can be mindfulness of the reality which appears. The commentary to the *Cariyāpiṭaka*<sup>15</sup> states that the Bodhisatta considers the following:

“Mere dhammas alone exist, devoid of self or of anything pertaining to a self. They arise and pass away in accordance with their conditions. They do not come from anywhere, they do not go anywhere, they are not established anywhere. There is no agency in anything whatsoever. In this way a Bodhisatta becomes fixed in his destiny, bound for enlightenment, irreversible.”

We need patience for the development of all the perfections. When we realize our many defilements we understand that it takes a long time to eradicate them. Then we will not be disturbed that it takes aeons to accumulate the conditions for enlightenment, that we cannot attain it soon. We need patience to listen to the Dhamma, to consider what we heard and to be aware of realities. Acharn Sujin reminded us that *sati* and *paññā* are *saḍkhāra-khandha*, the *khandha* of “formations”, which are all the mental factors, *cetasikas*, except feeling (*vedanā*) and remembrance (*saññā*). *Akusala* (unwholesome) *cetasikas* and *sobhana* (beautiful) *cetasikas* are included in *saḍkhāra-khandha*. The “formations” form up each moment which arises. *Sati* and *paññā* which arise now are conditioned by past accumulations of *sati*, *paññā* and other wholesome qualities. If there can be right mindfulness of a *nāma* or *rūpa* which appears now this moment has been “formed up” by many moments of studying, considering and mindfulness in the past. Each moment is conditioned by many factors and the way these condition it is very intricate. A moment of right mindfulness falls away but the conditions for the arising of mindfulness later on are accumulated, since each *citta* which arises and falls away conditions the next *citta*. Thus *paññā* can develop until it has become supramundane understanding (*lokuttara paññā*), having *nibbāna* as its object. Each moment which has been formed up by past accumulations is new, it cannot be the same as past moments, it does not come into being by simply adding up all the past moments. *Lokuttara paññā* is a completely new situation, but it is conditioned by many different factors of the past, by many moments of studying, of considering, of developing understanding of *nāma* and *rūpa*, and also of developing all the perfections. All the different wholesome qualities support one another and together they form up the conditions for the fully developed *paññā*. If we understand, at least in theory, that right understanding is *saḍkhāra-khandha*, formed up by many factors, and that it forms up later moments of understanding, it will help us to see that *paññā* grows very gradually in the course of many lives. It will prevent us from clinging to an idea that we can direct the growth of *paññā*, that we have to do something special in order to hasten its development. If we remember that *paññā* is *saḍkhāra-khandha*, the *khandha* of formations, we will be more pa-tient while we study

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<sup>15</sup> Ven. Bodhi, p. 283.

with mindfulness the realities which appear. The beginning has to be the beginning, the beginning cannot be the advanced stage of paññā.

Nāma has to be realized as nāma, and rúpa as rúpa, their different characteristics have to be directly known when they appear one at a time. This is the beginning stage of insight knowledge which has to be realized before the following stages of insight. Paññā grows stage by stage. Hearing is different from sound. When sound appears it is evident that there must also be hearing. Sound and hearing have each different characteristics and these can, one at a time, be objects of mindfulness. Sound does not experience anything, it has no intention to be object of hearing. Hearing is an experience, it is a kind of knowing, and its characteristic can be realized if there is mindfulness of it when it appears. While we are thinking about hearing, the characteristic of hearing cannot be known, since the reality at that moment is thinking. We need patience to develop understanding of the different characteristics of realities.

In order to discern the different characteristics of realities we need right thinking, vitakka, a factor of the eightfold Path accompanying right mindfulness and right understanding. Vitakka is different from what we in conventional language denote by “thinking”. The function of vitakka of the eightfold Path, sammā-saòkappa or right thinking, is “touching” the nāma or rúpa which appears so that right understanding can know it as it is. When nāma is the object of mindfulness, vitakka “touches” that object, so that there can be right understanding of it as only a nāma, not self. When rúpa is the object of mindfulness, vitakka “touches” that object, so that right understanding can know it as it is.

Objects are impinging on the six doors time and again but most of the time there is forgetfulness of realities. Sometimes there is mindfulness of the reality which appears and then we may notice that such moments are different from our usual forgetfulness. Although there is not yet clear understanding of realities, there can be a beginning of noticing or “studying” with awareness different nāmas and rúpas which appear.

Are we patient enough to study with awareness all the details of our daily life? We may not like it to be aware of unpleasant feeling, or we may not find it interesting enough to know seeing which appears now or hearing which appears now. If patience arises there can be careful consideration of the Dhamma and there can be a beginning of understanding of the present reality. The only way to have less ignorance is mindfulness of the reality which appears now, even if that is ignorance or unawareness. Courage, perseverance and patience are indispensable for the development of right understanding.

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## **Chapter 7**

### **THE PERFECTION OF TRUTHFULNESS**

Sincerity or truthfulness, *sacca*, is another perfection the Bodhisatta developed. When one is seeking the truth one is inclined to truthfulness also in speech. The Bodhisatta did not speak falsehood and he always kept his promise, even when he was in danger of life. The commentary to the *Cariyāpīṭaka*<sup>16</sup> speaks about different aspects of truthfulness:

“Without truthfulness, virtue, etc. is impossible, and there can be no practice in accordance with ones vows. All evil states converge upon the transgression of truth. One

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<sup>16</sup> Ven. Bodhi, p. 283

who is not devoted to truth is unreliable and his word cannot be accepted in the future. On the other hand, one devoted to truth secures the foundations of all noble qualities. With truthfulness as the foundation, he is capable of purifying and fulfilling all the requisites of enlightenment. Not deceived about the true nature of dhammas, he performs the functions of all the requisites of enlightenment and completes the practice of the Bodhisatta path.”

The same commentary<sup>17</sup> 2) gives the following definition of truthfulness:

“Truthfulness has the characteristic of non-deceptiveness in speech; its function is to verify in accordance with fact; its manifestation is excellence; honesty is its proximate cause. The function of truthfulness is verifying according to fact.”

What are the facts? Our ignorance and the many defilements which arise are facts. We should not be deluded about realities. Do we want to know them as they are, or do we pretend to be more virtuous and wise than we actually are? It takes courage to verify according to fact, and sincerity is indispensable for the development of right understanding. We may take akusala citta for kusala citta, but we have to verify the truth. For example, when we are helping others we may think that there are kusala cittas all the time, but is this true? “Helping can be very superior”, Bhante Dhammadharo reminded us. Is there conceit, is there up-holding of ourselves in our dealings with others? Do we expect kindness in return for our good deeds? Very shortly after the kusala cittas have fallen away there are bound to be akusala cittas but we may not notice this. We take for kusala what is akusala, but also the opposite may be the case. We may take, for example, confidence in the Dhamma for lobha. When there is confidence in wholesomeness, saddhā cetasika, it can be accompanied by pleasant feeling and since lobha can also be accompanied by pleasant feeling, we may think that as soon as there is pleasant feeling there must be akusala citta. It is not easy to know the true facts, but we can verify according to fact by being mindful of the different realities of our daily life.

We may not like it to be mindful of akusala but from the beginning we should be sincere. Many moments of lobha in our daily life pass unnoticed. When we take a bath and stretch out our hand to the hot water tap is there lobha? We take hot water for granted, but when there isn't hot water we are annoyed and this shows that we are attached to it. When we want tea is there attachment? We may think, “I have attachment”, but do we have a precise knowledge of the characteristic of lobha when it appears? Though we have a general idea of what lobha is, we do not know its characteristic precisely, when it appears. We do not know it as only a conditioned reality, it is still “my lobha”. We have to verify according to fact all the different moments of our daily life.

The perfections are mentioned in a specific order and immediately after truthfulness the perfection of determination, adīṅhāna, is mentioned. The commentary to the Cariyāpīṭaka<sup>18</sup> gives the following reasons for this:

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<sup>17</sup> Ven. Bodhi, p. 261.

<sup>18</sup> Ven. Bodhi, p. 258.



“a) Because truthfulness is perfected by determination, since abstinence (from falsehood) becomes perfect in one whose determination is unshakable.

b) Having first shown non-deception in speech, to show next unshakable commitment to one’s word, for a Bodhisatta devoted to truth proceeds to fulfil his vows of giving, etc. without wavering.

c) To show, right after the veracity of knowledge, the complete accumulation of the requisites of enlightenment (bodhi-sambhāra); for one who knows things as they really are determines upon the requisites of enlightenment and brings them to completion by refusing to vacillate in the face of their opposites.”

The requisites of enlightenment are the perfections themselves and these condition one another. Truthfulness is needed with the development of all the perfections. When there is truthfulness one is faithful to one’s resolution to attain the goal, one does not vacillate. It means that we have a sincere inclination to develop the perfections in order to eradicate defilements. When we, for example, perform dāna or observe sīla, we should not expect any gain for ourselves, such as a good name or honour, but our goal should be to have less defilements. We need truthfulness in order to develop the perfection of wisdom. If one is faithful to one’s resolution and keeps to one’s aim of developing right understanding of the present reality, one does not prefer another situation to the present situation and one does not prefer another practice to mindfulness right now.

“Mindfulness should be developed in daily life, in any kind of situation”, we often say. Are we doing what we say? If not, we are not sincere. We should scrutinize ourselves in all sincerity, with mindfulness, in order to verify the true facts. We may be satisfied with the calm which accompanies kusala citta, we may make the accumulation of calm our aim instead of right understanding of the present reality, whatever that may be, pleasant or unpleasant. Then we are not faithful to our commitment to develop right understanding in order to eradicate defilements, we are insincere. It may happen that we start to develop right understanding and then, after ten or more years, when we still do not see much result, we become impatient. We may wonder whether being in another situation would help us to have more sati. We do not realize that each situation is conditioned already. Any object, also kusala citta, can become object of clinging. We may not even notice that we prefer other situations, other objects to the present one. Even subtle clinging to kusala can be dangerous, because it makes it most difficult for us to develop understanding in daily life. Understanding cannot grow if it is not developed in daily life. We have to know our life, our real accumulations. When there is more sincerity the development of satipaṭṭhāna will be more natural. This means that one will develop understanding of whatever appears now instead of looking for other objects. Acharn Sujin said:

“It is hard to know subtle clinging, one usually follows desire. Anything can be object of desire. When one thinks that one is not attached to sensuous objects, one is attached to other objects, not developing right understanding of seeing now, hearing now, thinking now. Each moment is conditioned and satipaṭṭhāna can see how it is conditioned just like that. If we understand that the present reality is conditioned already we will not

try to change the situation in order to have more mindfulness. While we are thinking of having more mindfulness we are clinging to a concept of self who has mindfulness and we forget to be mindful of whatever appears now.”

During my last afternoon in Delhi we had a Dhamma discussion in the lobby of the hotel. I was clinging to particular situations which, I thought, were favorable for sati, and Acharn Sujin tried to bring me back to the present moment by her way of answering my questions. I thought that when there would not be an occasion for Dhamma discussions I would be missing out opportunities to learn. The conversation which I recorded was as follows:

Sarah: ”It seems that there is just clinging to oneself when one thinks about how one is missing out Dhamma discussions. For example, when there were discussions in Thai there were some moments of dosa but then there were also other moments of rejoicing in others’ kusala, appreciating good reminders, instead of thinking of oneself, of how one is missing out. Missing out in what? In an opportunity for kusala?”

Acharn Sujin: “When one develops satipañhāna, no matter in what situation one is, sati can arise and right understanding can grow.”

Nina: “Why is it that one does not understand this in the beginning, that one only understands this in theory but not in the practice?”

Acharn Sujin: “Because it is beginning, and beginning is beginning.”

Sarah: “The desire for result is so strong.”

Acharn Sujin: “The person who has not such strong desire can go on smoothly. But who has strong desire has to lessen it and he must first have the understanding of the right Path.”

Nina: “We will go back to our countries and there will be ups and downs in our practice. Now we are in India and we have a great deal of discussions; when we are back it will be different.”

Acharn Sujin: “Don’t you think that there are also ups and downs now?”

Nina: “Yes, but maybe there are more conditions for awareness because of our discussions and because of the holy places we visited.”

Acharn Sujin: “But one can see that all such moments are anattā, and that is the way to have less clinging.”

Nina: “One may have lots of worries when one is back. I have to move to another country and to adapt myself to life over there, and then I will worry. Problems will arise.”

Acharn Sujin: “With sati one will see that right understanding can grow.”

Nina: “But there may be downs in the practice.”

Acharn Sujin: “That can be object of awareness. If it is not object of awareness, right understanding cannot grow.”

Nina: “But the Bodhisatta had in some lives not so many opportunities to develop understanding; for example, when he was an animal. So, ups and downs are bound to happen.”

Acharn Sujin: “Otherwise realities would not be impermanent, dukkha, anattā.”

When I was clinging to a concept of self who could have sati, Acharn Sujin brought me back to the present moment, saying that there are also ups and downs now. Only the present moment can be clearly understood. While we are thinking about sati we do not know the true nature of realities. In our daily life there may be moments of sati but since we are beginners there is not yet clear understanding of nāma and rūpa. We may become discouraged and we may believe that there could not be sati in daily life. We may doubt about the characteristic of sati and we may wonder whether there was sati or not. While we are thinking with doubt we do not know the present reality and there is no way to find out when there is sati and when there is not. Courage is needed to begin again and again in order to know the truth.

We should be faithful to our commitment to know the present moment, “not preferring to know objects other than the present one”, as Acharn Sujin often said. This does not mean that there should not be development of all kinds of kusala at the same time. All the perfections should be developed, but they should be developed along with right understanding of the present moment. In that way there will be less inclination to cling to an idea of “my kusala”. One will realize that kusala is impermanent, dukkha and anattā.

Acharn Sujin reminded me to be aware in all kinds of situations:

“Better than thinking about sati now is being aware in Holland while you are busy.”

If we are sincere and we do not prefer other objects to the present reality, right understanding can grow in daily life, while we are busy, while we are relaxed, while we are enjoying ourselves with music and other entertainments. We will not try to change our life and, thus, satipaṭṭhāna can become more natural. There will be less worry about sati. It is not depressing to be sincere, it is purifying. We should be grateful to the Buddha who taught us the way to know our true accumulations, all our defilements.

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## Chapter 8

### THE PERFECTION OF DETERMINATION

The Bodhisatta developed the perfection of determination, *adiñhāna pāramī*. He was unshakable in his resolution to develop all the perfections until he would attain Buddhahood. We too have to be determined to develop the perfections life after life. Today we listen to the Dhamma and we discuss *satipañhāna*. This interest in the Dhamma is conditioned by our accumulations in the past. We may have listened to the Dhamma also in former lives and we will have to listen to the Dhamma, consider it and be aware of realities again and again, in many lives to come, because right understanding develops very gradually. Are we determined to continue to develop right understanding until we have reached the goal? In the "Thera-therīgathā" (Psalms of the Brothers and Sisters) we read about men and women in the Buddha's time who had developed the perfections together with *satipañhāna*, not merely during one life but during countless lives, until their wisdom reached maturity in their last life. We read that they had made the resolution to develop the conditions for enlightenment time and again. We read for example about the former lives of the Therī Cāpa (Canto 68) in the commentary to this Canto:

“She too, having made her resolve under former Buddhas, and heaping up good of age-enduring efficacy in this and that rebirth, till she had accumulated the sources of good, and matured the conditions for emancipation, was, in this Buddha age, reborn in the Vankahāra country, at a certain village of trappers, as the daughter of the chief trapper, and named Cāpa.”

We then read that after she had met the Buddha she attained arahatship.

We may find that the development of right understanding hardly seems to make any progress but we should remember that the Buddha and his enlightened disciples had for innumerable lives maintained an unshakable resolution to reach the goal. We may give expression to our resolution to develop right understanding when we pay homage at the holy places with flowers, candles and incense, and we may express our resolution in words, but that is not enough. The Bodhisatta did not merely think, "I resolve to attain Buddhahood", he developed all the conditions to reach the goal, he developed understanding of the realities appearing at the present moment. He was resolute with regard to the present moment. We need determination for the development of all the perfections; determination serves as their foundation. The perfections have to be developed together with right understanding of *nāma* and *rūpa*, so that there will be conditions to eventually attain enlightenment. When there is mindfulness of the *nāma* or *rūpa* which appears now we actually accumulate the perfection of determination, *adiiḥāna*, without there being the need to think, "I have to develop determination".

Acharn Sujin reminded us of the meaning of determination:

“*Adiḥāna pāramī* is the resolution to develop right understanding of the reality which appears. Being resolute means that one is firm on the Path of developing right understanding of the realities which appear, because one realizes that it takes time, that it takes so many, many lives before there can be the highly developed understanding of the reality which appears now. It has to be now, so it is bound to be difficult. The moment of being aware of the present object, any object which appears, without wanting it to be something else, indicates the resolution.”

We may not like it to be aware of unwholesomeness, *akusala*, but also *akusala* should be known as it is: only a conditioned reality, not self. When mindfulness arises of what appears now we are faithful to our resolution, because at such a moment there can be a beginning of right understanding. There must be a beginning again and again, for many lives, so that there can be detachment from the self and from all *nāmas* and *rūpas*.

We do not see a result of a short moment of mindfulness, it passes and then there are many moments of ignorance. However, one moment of right mindfulness now conditions the arising again of right mindfulness later on. In that way the understanding of the characteristics of *nāma* and *rūpa* which appear can become clearer. We always want to do things which bring an immediate, tangible result and we don't have enough confidence in the effectiveness of one short moment of mindfulness of what appears now.

The development of right understanding is the most valuable in our life. Why? When there is ignorance and wrong understanding we do not realize that there are six worlds: the world appearing through the eyes, through the ears, through the nose, through the tongue, through the bodysense and through the mind-door. Only one reality at a time appears through one of the six doors. At the moment of seeing there is the world appearing through the eyes and there cannot be at the same time the world appearing through the ears or through the other senses. We cling to "wholes", to concepts of person, of "my mind", "my body", instead of knowing different realities which appear one at a time. When we are lost in concepts of people and things we live as in a dream and we do

not know what is really there: ever-changing *nāmas* and *rūpas*. When there is right mindfulness of one *nāma* or *rūpa* which presents itself now we begin to see the difference between the world of concepts and the world of absolute realities, of *paramattha dhammas*. Time and again we think of concepts. Concepts are not real, but thinking itself is a reality, it is conditioned because we have accumulated inclinations to thinking. Thinking can be object of mindfulness. Does it not have its own specific characteristic, different from experiences such as seeing or hearing? Also thinking should be known as it is, as a conditioned *nāma*, otherwise it will always be "my thinking".

If we see the value of knowing the truth we can become more resolute as to the development of *satipaṭṭhāna* and this is always now. There are many moments that we are not faithful to our resolution to develop all kinds of wholesome qualities together with *satipaṭṭhāna*. It may not seem appealing to be mindful of seeing, visible object, hearing, sound or thinking. The stories we think of, our dreams, seem to be more attractive. When we begin to see that the Buddha taught everything which is real and that he showed the Path leading to the end of defilements we do not want to deceive ourselves anymore. It is clinging to *nāma* and *rūpa* which is the cause of being subject again and again to birth, old age, sickness and death, the cause of all our suffering, *dukkha*. When we see the disadvantages of ignorance of realities, of selfishness, of conceit and of all the other defilements, we are motivated to develop all the perfections together with *satipaṭṭhāna*.

If the perfections have not been accumulated it is difficult to develop them, but we can begin to develop them at this moment so that there will be conditions for them to reach fulfilment in the future. The commentary to the *Cariyapīṭaka*<sup>19</sup> mentions the difficulties the Bodhisatta may encounter while he develops the perfections. In such circumstances he reflects about his self-surrender, his complete dedication to the Buddhas. We read:

“For when the Great Man, straining and striving for the fulfilment of the requisites of enlightenment, encounters troubles difficult to endure, depriving him of happiness and his means of support, or when he encounters injuries imposed by beings and formations-difficult to overcome, violent, sapping the vitality- then, since he has surrendered himself to the Buddhas, he reflects: ‘I have relinquished my very self to the Buddhas. Whatever comes, let it come.’ For this reason he does not waver, does not quake, does not undergo the least vacillation, but remains absolutely unshaken in his determination to undertake the good.”

Whatever comes, let it come. No matter what will happen in our life, let us be determined to continue to develop right understanding of the present object. When we are busy in our daily life, working in an office, doing cooking or driving the car, we are often absorbed in the world of concepts. When we are in a hurry or when we are tired it seems that realities do not appear as they are, one at a time. Right understanding has not been developed yet and that is why mindfulness has to begin again and again. *Nāma* and *rūpa* have to be studied with mindfulness at the moment they appear, one at a time. Maybe our whole life consists of mere beginnings of understanding, we have to begin again and

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<sup>19</sup> Ven. Bodhi, p. 323.

again, but this is the only way to develop right understanding. We have to be resolute now, there is no alternative. The resolution is in the doing, not in thoughts or words.

There are many moments of forgetfulness of realities, but now and then there may be mindfulness of one characteristic of *nāma* or *rúpa* at a time, although there is not yet clear understanding of *nāma* as *nāma* and of *rúpa* as *rúpa*. When there is mindfulness of one reality at a time one does not forget the goal of one's life: to know *nāma* and *rúpa* appearing through the six doors, so that wrong view and ignorance can be eradicated. If we are resolute nothing can distract us from the development of right understanding, no matter how tired we are, no matter how unpleasant the object is. Whatever comes let it come, it is conditioned already and it can be object of mindfulness. We may worry whether we should do this or should not do that, in order to have more mindfulness. Even our worry is a conditioned reality, it is only a reality, not self. When the *nāma* or *rúpa* which appears is seen as only a reality, there is a lessening of the clinging to self. Then there will be less worry. Acharn Sujin said:

"Just awareness now, no worry, what about this, what about that, that is the perfection of determination, *adiñhāna pāramí*."

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## Chapter 9

### THE PERFECTION OF METTĀ

Mettā, loving kindness, is another of the perfections the Bodhisatta developed. He had loving kindness for all beings and he was always intent on their welfare, no matter whether he was an animal or a human being. The perfection of mettā is mentioned immediately after the perfection of determination. The commentary to the Cariyāpiṭaka<sup>20</sup> gives the reasons for this:

“ a) Because loving kindness perfects the determination to undertake activity for the welfare of others.

b) In order to list the work of actually providing for the welfare of others right after stating the determination to do so, for ‘one determined upon the requisites of enlightenment abides in loving kindness’.

c) Because the undertaking (of activity for the welfare of others) proceeds imperturbably only when determination is unshakable.”

The same commentary<sup>21</sup> also states that one should reflect on mettā as follows:

“One resolved only upon his own welfare cannot achieve success in this world, or a happy rebirth in the life to come, he cannot succeed without some concern for the welfare of others; how then, can one wishing to establish all beings in the attainment of nibbāna, succeed without loving kindness?...

‘I cannot provide for the welfare and happiness of others merely by wishing for it. Let me put forth effort to accomplish it.’ ”

The commentary states that one should arouse an especially strong inclination towards promoting the welfare of all beings. Further on we read:

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<sup>20</sup> Ven. Bodhi, p. 258.

<sup>21</sup> Ven. Bodhi, p. 284.



“. . .And why should loving kindness be developed towards all beings? Because it is the foundation for compassion. For when one delights in providing for the welfare and happiness of other beings with an unbounded heart, the desire to remove their affliction and suffering becomes powerful and firmly rooted. And compassion is the first of all the dhammas issuing in Buddhahood- their footing, foundation, root, head and chief.”

When we develop mettā we should not cling to any gain for ourselves. We may be inclined to develop mettā because we cling to calm. When we are angry, we have aversion about our anger and, since anger is so unpleasant, we want to subdue it by trying to develop mettā. However, mettā cannot be developed if there is no right understanding of kusala as kusala and akusala as akusala. Mettā cannot be developed when we take for kusala what is akusala. We cling to calm, we cling to an idea of self who should have mettā and then the citta is akusala. We should have a detailed knowledge of the different types of cittas which arise and which motivate our thoughts about others, our actions and speech. When there is more understanding of the different characteristics of kusala citta and of akusala citta we can learn to see the disadvantage of akusala and the benefit of kusala. We can notice that there is very little mettā in a day because akusala citta arises more often than kusala citta. We should consider with what types of citta we think of others. We are always quick at judging other people or criticizing them. We may find someone else peculiar in his appearance or behaviour and then there is already conceit, there is no mettā. We are inclined to think of our own welfare more often than of the welfare of others. We are often forgetful and we overlook opportunities to help others, but if we consider the teachings and develop satipaṭṭhāna there are more conditions for the arising of mettā. When we do something for someone else, even if it is only a small service, it helps us to become less selfish. At that moment the citta is soft and gentle. When true mettā arises we consider someone else as a friend even if we do not know him. There is a feeling of closeness and sympathy. When mettā arises there is no longer a barrier or separation between people. Mettā can be developed naturally in our daily life. There is no need to think first, “I should develop mettā”, or to recite first texts about mettā. Mettā conditions other wholesome qualities such as generosity in giving and kind, agreeable speech. It conditions humbleness due to absence of conceit <sup>22</sup>. Mettā conditions patience and forbearance when others are unfriendly to us. Also when there are no people around we still think of them, we have conditions to think of people time and again. We should find out whether there are at such moments kusala cittas or akusala cittas. Instead of thinking of them with annoyance or conceit we can have friendly thoughts, we can think of ways to help them. The Buddha preached to the monks about mettā, exhorting them to show each other kindness through body, speech and mind, both in public and in private. We read in the “Gradual Sayings” (Book of the Sixes, Ch II, §1, On being considerate):

“Monks, there are six ways of being considerate. What six?

Herein, monks, a monk’s part is amity in deed towards his fellows in the godly life, openly and in private; verily, this is a way of being considerate.

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<sup>22</sup> Expositor II, Book III, 395.

Again, his part is amity in word. . . amity in thought towards his fellows in the godly life, openly and in private; this also is a way of being considerate.

Then, those proper gains, gotten according to rule- be they but bowl-scrap, he loves to share them impartially, to have them in common with his virtuous fellows in the godly life; this also is a way of being considerate.

And those virtues that are unbroken, without flaw, spotless, without blemish, bringing freedom, praised by wise men, incorruptible, leading to concentration- he dwells one in virtue with them among his fellows in the godly life, openly and in private; this also is a way of being considerate.

And that ariyan view, saving, leading him who acts accordantly to the utter destruction of Ill- he dwells one in view with that among his fellows in the godly life, openly and in private; this is also a way of being considerate.

Verily, monks, these are the six ways of being considerate.”

These six ways of being considerate, and above all satipaïhãna, lead to harmony and unity between the monks. The sixth way which is mentioned by the Buddha can remind us to develop satipaïhãna, no matter what we are doing. There can be mindfulness of nãma and rúpa when we are helping others or when we speak to them with kind words. If right understanding is not being developed while one applies oneself to mettã, mettã can become an object of clinging. One may think of oneself as having a great deal of mettã. The perfection of mettã should be developed together with right understanding so that mettã will become purified. We should not expect any gain for ourselves, but the goal should be the eradication of defilements, otherwise mettã is not a perfection.

During this pilgrimage I appreciated the many acts of generosity and kindness of my friends. When we were in Delhi we went to the Thai Embassy because one of our friends who had been robbed of her passport needed a new one. Although it was Sunday morning, the Thai Ambassador and his wife received us all with great kindness and hospitality. When we boarded the bus again the Ambassador came into the bus to see us off and he had a kind word and a smile for everyone. His genuine kindness made me realize how much kindness can mean to other people who are traveling and who may be in need of help. Even a small gesture of kindness can give great comfort to others and when there is an opportunity to do something for someone else it is not to be overlooked. When we notice that we have hardly any mettã we should consider how we would like to be treated by others, and that will remind us to show more kindness to others. I discussed with Acharn Sujin the kindness of the Thai Ambassador and she said that kings in the Buddha's time who were “men of the people” could become sotãpanna. We should be confident that it is possible to develop right understanding also when one leads a busy social life or one has to attend to the needs of many people. Are there not nãma and rúpa all the time, appearing through the six doors? Also while one is sitting at a dinner party are there not sound, hearing, thinking, visible object, lobha or dosa? When boredom or aversion appears it is possible to get to know that characteristic. Even if there is only coarse awareness and not yet precise knowledge, there can be a beginning of right understanding. If there are areas of our daily life which are not object of awareness, it

shows that there has not been enough development of s satipaïhåna. The enlightenment of the Buddha and of his disciples proves that it is possible to develop right understanding in daily life.

Mettå can be developed together with satipaïhåna, during our work, when we have to deal with people. When one works in an office and the telephone rings is there aversion about the disturbance, or can there be mindfulness of nåma and rúpa? There is sound, there is hearing, there is hardness or thinking and these characteristics present themselves one at a time, at different moments. One thinks of a person when the telephone rings, one wonders who is ringing now. In the absolute sense there is no person, only nåma and rúpa which do not stay. However, thinking of people is conditioned, thinking is a reality and it has a characteristic which can be known when it appears. We may think about someone else with aversion, with attachment or with mettå. Mettå is a conditioned reality and when it appears it can be studied with mindfulness, so that it can be known as not self, not “my mettå”. Even the telephone can become a reminder to develop mettå together with satipaïhåna. If we are sincere in the development of the wisdom which can eradicate the clinging to self, there will be more conditions for thinking of other people’s happiness instead of thinking of our own welfare.

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## Chapter 10

### THE PERFECTION OF EQUANIMITY

Equanimity, *upekkhā*, is another perfection the Bodhisatta fulfilled. *Upekkhā* is in this case not neutral feeling but the *sobhana cetasika* which is *tatramajjhataṭṭā*, evenmindedness or equanimity. The commentary to the *Cariyāpiṭaka* <sup>23</sup> gives the following definition of equanimity:

“Equanimity has the characteristic of promoting the aspect of neutrality; its function is to see things impartially; its manifestation is the subsiding of attraction and repulsion; reflection upon the fact that all beings inherit the results of their own *kamma* is its proximate cause.”

The Bodhisatta developed the perfection of equanimity together with right understanding. Through equanimity he was imperturbable in the face of abusive speech and wrong done to him. He was impartial even to those who wished him well and he did not expect any reward.

The same commentary <sup>24</sup> states that equanimity is indispensable to the practice of the other perfections. We read:

“... For without equanimity, the aspirant cannot relinquish something without making false discriminations over gifts and recipients. When there is no equanimity, he cannot purify his virtue without always thinking about the obstacles to his life and to his vital needs. Equanimity perfects the power of renunciation for by its means he overcomes discontent and delight. It perfects the functions of all the requisites (by enabling wisdom) to examine them according to their origin. When energy is aroused to excess because it hasn't been examined with equanimity, it cannot perform its proper function of striving. Forbearance and reflective acquiescence (the modes of patience) are possible only in one possessed of equanimity. Because of this quality, he does not speak deceptively about beings or formations. By looking upon the vicissitudes of worldly events with an equal mind, his determination to fulfil the practices he has undertaken becomes completely unshakable. And because he is unconcerned over the wrongs done by others, he perfects

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<sup>23</sup> Ven. Bodhi, p. 261

<sup>24</sup> Ven. Bodhi, p. 285.

the abiding in loving kindness. Thus, equanimity is indispensable to the practice of all the other perfections.”

We need equanimity with the other perfections. While we are generous we should also be impartial. We should not think that we should only give to this person and not to that person. Equanimity helps us not to be disturbed when we lose dear people or when other people hurt or harm us. We can remember that what-ever happens has to happen because it has been conditioned already. When we see others suffer and we cannot do anything for them, we can remember that we all are heirs to our own kamma, that we receive the results of our own deeds. Then kusala citta with equanimity can arise instead of aversion. When other people behave badly we can realize that there are no people, only akusala dhammas which appear and that these arise according to their conditions. Then we will be more tolerant, we will not say or think, “These people are terrible”. There are accumulations of kusala dhammas and akusala dhammas which appear in our own and other people’s behaviour. We can learn to have equanimity towards our own akusala and kusala. Instead of being disturbed by our anger, there can be right understanding which realizes anger as a conditioned nāma, and at that moment the citta is kusala. Neither kusala nor akusala belongs to us. We know that the perfections have to be developed so that kusala can become one’s nature, but we should not think of accumulating kusala for ourselves, there should not be clinging to “my kusala”. When kusala dhammas arise they are beneficial, they can condition the arising of kusala dhamma again in the future.

The commentary states that because of equanimity towards the vicissitudes of life the Bodhisatta’s mind becomes completely unshakable in his determination to fulfil the practices he has undertaken. The vicissitudes of life are gain and loss, praise and blame, honour and dishonour, bodily ease and misery. These worldly conditions change all the time but one can face them with equanimity. If we really understand that the different situations in our life are conditioned, that they are beyond control, we do not prefer a particular situation to another one, we do not prefer anything else to the development of understanding of the present object. In that way the perfection of determination can develop, it can eventually become unshakable.

During our pilgrimage we were in many kinds of situations, some pleasant, some unpleasant. One of our friends fell on a piece of iron grill and wounded her knee so badly that it had to be stitched, but she remained calm. Another friend was robbed, she lost in the train to Bodhgaya her handbag with her money and her passport. She had aversion at first, but later on she realized that one cannot change what has happened already. She said that if she would think of it again and again it would only cause her more unpleasantness. We also had many pleasant experiences. It was a happy occasion to be in the holy places where we could recollect the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha. At times there was dāna all around me. One of the last evenings in Delhi there were in front of me friends making an offering to the monks, and while I looked backwards I saw the leader of our group making a speech to the drivers in order to thank them and offering them the money we all had collected for them.

Whatever situation occurs, be it pleasant or unpleasant, it is conditioned. During our journey we were often reminded, “This is a new situation and it is conditioned”. This helped me not to try to control things when the situation was not as I wanted it to be. Acharn Sujin said:

“A new situation can be a condition for the development of satipaṭṭhāna. One should be ready to accept many kinds of situations. Gain and loss. No lobha when there is gain, not too much dosa when there is loss. Each moment is in itself another situation. Awareness can arise at any time. Then there is no clinging to another situation or another object, there is no selection of objects.”

Acharn Sujin also said that right understanding should be developed in order to see that all realities are the same in the sense that they cannot stay, that they arise and fall away. In that way there will be less clinging to them. I was inclined to think that one can only learn about realities in situations when there are Dhamma discussions, and I was clinging to such situations. During this journey I came to understand more that, if we do not cling to particular situations and we can see them as only nāma and rūpa which are conditioned, we can learn from any kind of situation. We can learn that there are nāma and rūpa while we are in different places such as the Thai Embassy, while we are walking in the park or having lunch with friends and eating delicious food.

If we see each moment as a completely new situation which is conditioned we can be reminded to be aware of the present moment, without planning or selecting objects, without thinking of the future. Nāma and rūpa arise because of their own conditions and we never know what kind of reality will arise next, we cannot plan anything. If we really understand this we will not be distracted from our goal, that is, the development of understanding of this moment.

Out of compassion the Bodhisatta developed all the perfections for innumerable lives. He aspired to help other beings to attain enlightenment as well. The commentary to the Cariyāpīṭaka<sup>25</sup> states that each perfection goes together with compassion and skilful means. The same commentary<sup>26</sup> explains that “skilful means” is the wisdom which makes the noble qualities of the Bodhisatta into requisites of enlightenment. When he developed these virtues he always had in mind the attainment of Buddhahood for the sake of other beings. The “great aspiration” to help other beings to attain the goal is the condition for all the perfections without exception, the same commentary states.

We read about the “Great Compassion” of the Buddha in the “Path of Discrimination” (Patisambhidāmagga, Part I, Treatise on Knowledge, Ch 71). First all the dangers and disadvantages of the cycle of birth and death which are seen by the Buddhas are summed up, such as:

“Worldly life moves on.

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<sup>25</sup> Ven. Bodhi, p. 262.

<sup>26</sup> Ven. Bodhi, p. 271.

Worldly life is on the wrong road...  
 The world has no lastingness and is led on.  
 The world has no shelter and no protector.  
 The world has nothing of its own, it has to leave all and pass on.  
 The world is incomplete, insatiate, and the slave of craving.  
 Worldly life is without shelter.  
 Worldly life is without shield.  
 Worldly life is without refuge...  
 Worldly life is no refuge...  
 The world is agitated and disturbed...  
 Worldly life is wounded by darts, pierced by many darts;  
 there is none other than myself to draw out the darts..."

We then read about numerous other disadvantages of worldly life. Only a Buddha can by his omniscience fully see the extent of the danger of being in the cycle of birth and death. This arouses his compassion so that he is determined to help other beings to attain freedom from the cycle. Further on we read:

"Upon the Enlightened Ones, the Blessed Ones, who see thus, 'I have crossed over and the world has not crossed over; I am liberated and the world is not liberated; I am controlled and the world is uncontrolled; I am at peace and the world is not at peace; I am comforted and the world is comfortless; I am extinguished and the world is unextinguished; I, having crossed over, can bring across; I, being liberated, can liberate; I, being controlled, can teach control; I, being at peace, can pacify; I, being comforted, can comfort; I, being extinguished, can teach extinguishment,' there descends the Great Compassion.

This is the Perfect Ones knowledge of the attainment of the Great Compassion."

The compassion of a Buddha cannot be fathomed by ordinary people, it is unequalled. Out of compassion the Buddha taught people the development of right understanding in daily life. The ultimate goal cannot be reached in one life, but even when right understanding just begins to develop we come to know things we did not know before. We discover many defilements and also learn to know the more subtle ones. Instead of being distressed about them we can be grateful to the Buddha who taught us the wisdom which can eradicate them. When we come to realize our defilements we may remember at once that this is due to the Buddha's teachings and then there can be recollection of the qualities of the Buddha (Buddhanussati). Also a moment of gratefulness to the Buddha is a conditioned moment and it can be object of mindfulness so that it can be known as not self.

We read in the "Discourse on the Simile of the Cloth" (Middle Length Sayings I, no. 7) that the Buddha speaks about the defilements of the mind which are: greed, covetousness, malevolence, anger, malice, hypocrisy, spite, envy, stinginess, deceit,

treachery, obstinacy, impetuosity, arrogance, pride, conceit and indolence. When the monk knows them as they are he can get rid of them. The text states:

“When, monks, the monk thinks that greed and covetousness is a defilement of the mind... that indolence is a defilement of the mind, and having known it thus, the defilement of the mind that is indolence is got rid of, he becomes possessed of unwavering confidence in the Awakened One and thinks: ‘Thus indeed is he the Lord, perfected, wholly self-awakened, endowed with knowledge and right conduct, well-farer, knower of the worlds, incomparable charioteer of men to be tamed, teacher of devas and mankind, the Awakened One, the Lord.’ ”

We read that some people attained arahatship by making the Recollection of the Buddha their object of meditation, but they could not attain it without developing satipaïhãna in daily life.

We read in the “Gradual Sayings” (Book of the Sixes, Ch III, §5) that the Buddha spoke to the monks about six recollections, six states of everminding. We read about the first one:

“Herein, monks, the ariyan disciple ever minds the Tathãgata:

‘He is the Exalted One...’ Monks, what time the ariyan disciple minds the Tathãgata, his heart is not lust-obsessed, nor hate-obsessed, nor obsessed by infatuation; upright in heart is he at that time, moved free, raised from greed; and this greed, monks, is a name for the fivefold sensuous pleasures. Verily, monks, by making this thought their object, some men thereby are purged.”

Ariyans have an unwavering confidence in the Buddha, because they have discovered the reason why the Buddha had become enlightened: he had developed all the perfections and he had, through right understanding, realized the true nature of all realities appearing at the present moment. The ariyans proved for themselves that by following the Path the Buddha taught they could reach the goal.

We may say that the perfections must be developed together with right understanding, in our daily life, but are we doers of the teachings? We need to develop all the perfections, and if one of them is lacking we cannot reach the goal. Whenever there is an opportunity for generosity we should use it in order to be less selfish. We need to develop sïla, wholesomeness in action and speech, without an idea of self who could suppress akusala. We should remember that in sïla is also included mindfulness of whatever appears through the six doors. We need the perfection of renunciation, renunciation from selfish clinging to sense pleasures. We should remember that all kusala dhammas are renunciation. We need to develop the perfection of wisdom, comprising wisdom of different levels: understanding based on listening and considering and direct understanding of realities. We need the perfection of energy so that we will not become discouraged but continue on the way, no matter what will happen. We need the perfection of patience, especially when we are in difficult situations or when other people are disagreeable to us. We should regard such circumstances as a test, an opportunity to accumulate patience. We need truthfulness to investigate all realities of our daily life, our



defilements included. The perfection of truthfulness is the sincere inclination to follow the way leading to the eradication of defilements. We need determination to develop all the perfections so that eventually enlightenment can be attained. We need the perfection of mettå, so that we think more of the welfare of other people and cling less to the importance of self. We need the perfection of equanimity to face the worldly conditions without being disturbed by them. Satipaïihåna should be developed together with all the perfections. This will help us to reduce the clinging to an idea of self who has to develop the perfections. All the perfections support the growth of right understanding so that it can eventually perform the function of detachment from all conditioned realities.

It is thanks to the Buddha that we can begin to develop right understanding of the realities of daily life. We can learn to be aware, while working in an office or doing house work, while talking or being silent, while laughing or crying. All these moments can be known as they are. One moment of right mindfulness is very effective, because it is a condition for mindfulness to arise again and, thus, right understanding can grow. If there can be mindfulness now, it is thanks to the Buddha's teaching.

Iti'pi So Bhagavå

Arahåy, Sammåsambuddho

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