

Introduction

In October 2001 we joined a large group of Thai pilgrims led by our friend in Dhamma and teacher Acharn (the Thai word for teacher) Sujin Boriharnwanaket, to the Buddhist sites in India. We still have the opportunity to pay respect to the excellent qualities of the Buddha and the arahats, and to recollect the teachings contained in the Tipiṭaka. If there had been no Buddha, there would be no way to understand our life as it really is: phenomena that arise and then fall away immediately. We would not be able to develop the understanding that sees things as they really are: impermanent, dukkha and non-self. Only this understanding leads to the eradication of ignorance, wrong view and all other defilements. The Buddha's teachings have been corrupted in the course of time and eventually they will disappear. Today we still have the opportunity to study the teachings, to consider them thoroughly and to apply them, so that we gain understanding of what our life really is: seeing, colour, hearing, sound, feeling, thinking and the other phenomena as they present themselves one at a time at this very moment. In this way we truly take our refuge in the Dhamma.

Throughout our journey Acharn Sujin taught us about the reality appearing at this moment because only understanding of the present moment can lead to the elimination of clinging to the concept of self. She taught with a great sense of urgency in view of the eventual disappearance of the teachings.

Mr. Suwat Chansuvityanant and his son Mr. Pakabutr were in charge of the organisation of the tour, just as many times before when we made this pilgrimage. We visited as usual Lumbini, the Buddha's birth place, Bodhgaya where he attained enlightenment, Sarnath, the place of his first sermon and Kusināra where he passed finally away. Our journey brought us also again to Savatthī, Rājagaha where we climbed the Vulture's Peak, Nālandā, the Bamboo Grove and Vesalī¹. In addition, a few other places were included most people had not visited before. We came to Saṅkassa, the place where the Buddha descended from the 'Heaven of the Thirtythree', after having explained the Abhidhamma to his mother. We also visited Kapilavatthu in Nepal, where he as a Bodhisatta grew up, and we visited the park where he saw an old man, a sick man, a dead man and a monk. We visited the place where Cunda offered the Buddha his last meal and also the river where he took his last bath before he finally passed away in Kusināra. Kosambī was also included, but not all of us went there since it was too far.

Most of the holy places we visited were already described by the Chinese monk Chi Fah Hian who in the fifth century A.D. travelled all the way from the China of the Sung Dynasty to India and Sri Lanka in order to seek comple-

¹ For the description of these places, see my 'In Asoka's Footsteps'.

te copies of the Buddhist scriptures and the Rules of the Vinaya ². It was very striking to find many places exactly as described by this monk 1600 years ago! In Sāṅkassa the remnants of Asoka's column are still there. In Kapilavatthu we paid respect at the Eastern Gate of the Palace where the royal prince Siddhatta left the city in order to go forth from worldly life. In Savatthī we had Dhamma discussion at the place where, Fah Hian tells us, "the Buddha resided for a long time and expounded the Dhamma for the salvation of men." With regard to Sarnath, where the Buddha began to turn the Wheel of the Dhamma, the Chinese monk wrote: "in all these places towers (stupas) have been erected which still exist". We paid respect at these same stupas!

In the course of time the holy places were neglected for many centuries. Bodhgaya and Sarnath were in a deplorable condition and wild beasts were roaming there. The Head Monk in Sarnath, the Ven. Kahawatte Sri Sumedha, told us about Anagarika Dharmapala who made great efforts to restore the holy places at the beginning of the twentieth century. After a life-long struggle to overcome all problems and legal battles the temple at Sarnath was built under his supervision, and relics of the Buddha that were given to the Mahā-Bodhi Society were placed in this temple in a vault underneath the pedestal of the Buddha image.

When we were in Sarnath we had the opportunity to pay respect to the Buddha's relics which are shown only once a year. However, on the occasion of our visit they were taken out by the Sinhalese monks who are guarding them and they were placed on Acharn Sujin's head. After that we all had the opportunity to pay respect.

Another holy place that was until recently neglected is the place where the Buddha preached the Mahā-Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta, the Discourse on Mindfulness. This is in Kailash, in the region which was formerly called Kuru. The place is marked by a rock with an old inscription of King Asoka, stating his conviction that both the low and the high, the poor and the rich can follow the Path of the Dhamma. A concrete roof has been erected over this rock. Even two years ago we had to step over dirt to reach this stone. I had written about the state of this place to a friend and former colleague of us of the Indian diplomatic service, Ambassador S.K. Singh. He visited the people living around this place, belonging to the lowest caste, the caste of the "Untouchables". He spoke to the families, especially to the mothers, explaining that the parents should educate their children in good morality according to the principles of the Lord Buddha. He persuaded the Department of Archaeology and the New Delhi Development Authority to take care of the place and as a consequence a high iron fence has been erected around it and a caretaker has been engaged to clean up the grounds. The Forest Department arranged for trees to be planted and we

² Travels of Fah-Hian and Sung-Yam, translated by Samuel Beal, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 1996. ISBN: 81-206-0824-0.

could see the young trees placed in pots. Lodewijk, my husband, and I were happily surprised of the change in outlook of this place and are most grateful to S.K. Singh. As soon as the group from Thailand arrived in Delhi we told them about this and Acharn Sujin wanted to go there immediately. We all climbed up to the old rock with the inscription and paid respect.

This place commemorates the development of satipaṭṭhāna which is specifically the teaching of the Buddha; no other teacher has taught this. Mindfulness of all realities, mental phenomena and physical phenomena, as they appear in our daily life is the greatest respect shown to the Buddha. Acharn Sujin spoke untiringly and with great patience about the development of right understanding. I am most grateful for the way she has given us guidance by explaining about the realities appearing at the present moment. I greatly appreciate all her Dhamma talks given day after day.

For the writing of this book I used the discussions we held, material from recordings and from the scriptures and commentaries which relate to the subjects we discussed.

The Disappearance of the Teachings

We live in a time close to the disappearance of the teachings. The Sangha, the order of the monks have as their foremost responsibility to preserve the teachings in explaining Dhamma and in developing right understanding. When we were in Sarnath, our group presented a meal to a large group of monks of different nationalities in the building of the Mahā-Bodhi Society. Acharn Sujin had requested my husband Lodewijk to address words of thanks to the monks after the meal. He spoke the following words:

“I know that it is conceit, but I cannot help feeling pleased and proud that, as one of the few foreigners in this group of Thai pilgrims of the Dhamma Study and Support Foundation, I may speak to you, venerable monks, to thank you for giving us the opportunity to perform dāna.

As foreigners, Nina and I came to Thailand more than thirtyfive years ago. This was kusala vipāka of a high degree, because in Thailand we received the highest gift one can receive in life: the gift of Dhamma. We received this gift through the hands of Acharn Sujin Boriharnwanaket, the spiritual leader of our group. We shall always remain most grateful to her. Also during this tour she never tires of explaining with great vigour the teachings of the Lord Buddha and she keeps exhorting us to study the present moment in order to understand the truth of impermanence and anattā.

At the end of one of these Dhamma discussions, she asked each person present to tell her what part of the teachings he or she found most striking. Each person answered according to his own conditions and accumulations. If I would have been present I would have answered: the Ten Perfections, Pāramīs. For me, the Ten Perfections are an unique, unsurpassed, unequalled set of moral and spiritual ideals to be pursued in everyday life, covering all aspects of human life.

In presenting these gifts to you, venerable monks, we wish to pay tribute and respect to you. We admire your courage, because you have chosen the difficult path of going forth from home into homelessness. By observing the Vinaya, penetrating the four noble Truths and by preserving the teachings, you perform sīla to a very high degree for the benefit of all mankind. For that, we are most grateful to you. Thank you for giving us this opportunity to perform dāna.”

Both monks and layfollowers have the duty to study the teachings in detail and to develop understanding of the Dhamma. Throughout our journey Acharn Sujin explained the Dhamma to us with a great sense of urgency and she encouraged us to develop understanding of the reality that appears now. She said:

“Dhamma is the truth and it can be verified. All that has been explained in the Tipiṭaka is appearing now, while we are seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, experiencing tactile object and experiencing objects through the mind-door. The Buddha had through his enlightenment penetrated the true nature of all realities. It was not known before that seeing arises and falls away, and that seeing does not belong to anybody. By listening and considering the Dhamma we can come to see realities appearing now. There is no self, but there are realities that can see, hear or experience objects through the other doorways.”

We read in the Gradual Sayings (Book of the Twos, Ch II, § 10) that the Buddha said:

“Monks, these two things conduce to the confusion and disappearance of true Dhamma. What two?

The wrong expression of the letter (of the text) and wrong interpretation of the meaning of it. For if the letter be wrongly expressed, the interpretation of the meaning is also wrong.....

Monks, these two things conduce to the establishment, the non-confusion, to the non-disappearance of true Dhamma. What two?

The right expression of the letter and right interpretation of the meaning. For if the letter be rightly expressed, the interpretation of the meaning is also right....”

In the course of time the Buddha’s teachings will be corrupted and then disappear. The last holy site we visited was Bodhgaya. Here one of our group read a text about the disappearance of the teachings. The “Dispeller of Delusion” (the commentary to the Book of Analysis, commentary to Ch 16, Classification of Knowledge) is one of the texts explaining about the disappearance of the teachings³. We read (431):

“For there are three kinds of disappearance: disappearance of theoretical understanding (pariyatti), disappearance of penetration (paṭivedha) and disappearance of practice (paṭipatti). Herein, pariyatti is the three parts of the Tipiṭaka; the penetration is the penetration of the Truths; the practice is the way....”

Further on we read that of the Scriptures first the Book of the Paṭṭhāna (Conditional Relations) of the Abhidhamma disappears, and then successively the other Books of the Abhidhamma. After that the Books of the Suttanta will successively disappear. We read:

³ This has also been explained in the Commentary to the “Dialogues of the Buddha”, the “Sumaṅgala Vilāsini” (III, no. 28, the Faith that satisfied).

“But when the two Piṭaka ⁴ have disappeared, while the Vinaya Piṭaka endures, the teachings (sāsana) endure.”

Also the Vinaya will disappear. Further on the text states that there are three kinds of complete extinction:

“Complete extinction of defilements, complete extinction of the aggregates (khandhas) ⁵ and complete extinction of the relics. Herein, complete extinction of the defilements took place on the Wisdom Seat, the complete extinction of the aggregates at Kusināra ⁶ and the complete extinction of the relics will take place in the future.”

It is then explained that all the relics will gather together and will go to the “Great Wisdom Seat” in Bodhgaya. We read:

“Heaped up on the Great Wisdom Seat, they will become one solid mass like a pile of gold and will emit six-coloured rays...”

We read that they will be burnt by the fire element and that then the teachings have come to an end.

After the Buddha attained enlightenment under the Bodhi-tree he began to teach the Dhamma. He taught satipaṭṭhāna, the development of right understanding, from then on until his passing away. When the relics disappear on the Great Wisdom Seat the teachings have come to an end. Therefore, it was very meaningful that the text of the disappearance of the teachings was read near the Bodhi-tree. It reminds us not to neglect the study of the Dhamma the Buddha had penetrated at the time of his enlightenment, and above all, to develop right understanding in daily life, so that the meaning of the teachings can be realized. After the reading of this text we all asked the Triple Gem forgiveness of our faults and shortcomings through action, speech or thought. This is done each time we visit the holy sites, at the very end of our visit, and in this case it was near the Bodhi-tree.

The Buddha explained the eightfold Path so that people could develop it and realize the four noble Truths, the Truth of dukkha, the fact that all conditioned realities arise and fall away and are thus not worth clinging to; the Truth of the origination of dukkha that is craving; the truth of the cessation of dukkha that is nibbāna; the Truth of the Path leading to the cessation of dukkha,

⁴ The Abhidhamma and the Suttanta.

⁵ The five aggregates or khandhas are: rūpakkhandha, all physical phenomena; vedanākkhandha, feelings; saññākkhandha, remembrance or perception; saṅkhārakkhandha, formations or activities, including all cetasikas other than feeling and perception; viññāṇakkhandha, consciousness, including all cittas.

⁶ At the final passing away of the Buddha there was the extinction of the khandhas; they would not arise again because there were no more conditions for rebirth.

that is the eightfold path. When there isn't anybody who can clearly explain the right practice, the development of the eightfold Path, people cannot develop it and they cannot realize the four noble Truths. When nobody in this world can penetrate the four noble Truths anymore, the world will be dark. The Dhamma will gradually disappear.

At the last day of our pilgrimage, when we were in Patna, Acharn Sujin said: "The teachings are almost dying, let us develop right understanding". We do not have to feel depressed when thinking of the disappearance of the teachings. On the contrary, we should have courage and cheerfulness to begin again and again developing right understanding. Each day Acharn Sujin exhorted us to take courage and to be cheerful. We read in the "Kindred Sayings" (I, Sāgātha vagga, IV, Māra, Ch II, §6, The Bowl):

"On one occasion, at Sāvattihī, the Exalted One was instructing, inciting and inspiring the monks by a sermon on the five khandhas of grasping (upadāna khandhas). And the monks with their whole mind applied, attentive and intent, listened with rapt hearing to the Dhamma."

The Commentary (the Sāratthappakāsini) explains that the Buddha was instructing, teaching under different aspects the specific and general characteristics of the khandhas of grasping. The Buddha was enlightening, inciting and inspiring them. The Commentary explains that he exhorted them to have energy and endeavour. As we read in the sutta text, the monks listened with enthusiasm, with rapture, to the Dhamma. Thus, this text reminds us to be courageous and not to give up developing understanding, and to be cheerful, glad about the Dhamma. We discussed courage and cheerfulness because of the Dhamma several times. Acharn Sujin explained that when akusala citta arises we may dislike it, we may feel bad about it, but akusala can be realized as only a conditioned reality. Then we shall not try to do something else but the development of right understanding of what appears now, even if it is akusala. We have accumulated akusala for countless lives, and thus there are conditions for its arising. We shall not be downhearted but we can be courageous and glad to be able to know the truth. We may be discouraged about our lack of awareness and understanding, our lack of progress. We should not expect the arising of a great deal of understanding when it has not yet been accumulated. Understanding should be developed very naturally in our daily life and in that way we can live happily, without anxiety. We can rejoice in the Dhamma we learnt and take courage to continue developing right understanding.

Acharn Sujin reminded us also time and again to have patience (khantī). She remarked that people may be able to be patient when they have lack of sleep or when they have to sit for a long time, but that it is most difficult to be patient with regard to the development of right understanding. Usually people wish for the arising of mindfulness and right understanding and they are impatient when they do not notice any progress. Acharn Sujin often recited the

text of the “Dhammapada”(vs. 184) about patience which is the highest form of asceticism:

“Forbearing patience is the highest asceticism, nibbāna is supreme say the Buddhas; he verily, is not a recluse who harms another; nor is he an ascetic who oppresses others.”

Patience is the highest asceticism (tapo). We read in the Commentary to the Cariyāpiṭaka, about the perfection of patience the Bodhisatta developed ⁷. It is defined as follows:

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

We can have patience with regard to the desirable and the undesirable when there is no attachment to a pleasant object nor aversion towards an unpleasant object. When there is more understanding we can see that whatever arises is conditioned, no matter it is pleasant or unpleasant, and then there are conditions for patience. As we read, “seeing things as they really are is the proximate cause of patience”. The Dhamma can be our refuge when we have patience while listening to the Dhamma, while studying and considering it. Then there will be conditions for mindfulness of realities and the development of right understanding. Time and again Acharn Sujin said that understanding very gradually develops. During this journey we listened to the Dhamma and heard things that we had heard before, but do we have the patience to really consider what we hear? We are still able to listen to the Dhamma, but the Dhamma will not last forever. Therefore, we should not waste time but develop more understanding now.

We are reminded to be aware of the realities that appear by the following text in the “Gradual Sayings” (Book of the Ones, Ch X):

“Monks, I know not of any other single thing that conduces to the confusion, to the disappearance of true Dhamma as does negligence. Negligence indeed conduces to the confusion and disappearance of true Dhamma.

Monks, I know not of any single thing so conducive to the establishment, to the non-disappearance of true Dhamma as earnestness ⁸. Earnestness indeed conduces to the establishment, to the non-disappearance of true Dhamma.”

Chapter 2

The Teaching of the Abhidhamma

⁷ Translated by Ven. Bodhi. See the All-Embracing Net of Views, B.P.S. Kandy.

⁸ Earnestness is a translation of the Pāli appamāda, non-negligence. It means non-forgetfulness, mindfulness.

We read in the “Expositor”, the Commentary to “Buddhist Psychological Ethics”, the first of the seven Books of the Abhidhamma (I, Introductory Discourse, 1-4), that the prefix “abhi” in Abhidhamma is used in the sense of preponderance and distinction. The Abhidhamma exceeds and is distinguished from the other Dhamma, namely the Suttanta. In the Abhidhamma all realities are classified fully and in all details. We read in the “Introductory Discourse” of the “Expositor” that the Buddha, during the fourth week after his attainment of Enlightenment, sat in the “Jewel House”, contemplating the Abhidhamma. I paid respect at this place when we were in Bodhgaya. Near the Jewel House is a stupa commemorating the cremation place of the great Commentator Buddhaghosa, and I also paid respect there. Buddhaghosa, who lived in the first half of the fifth century A.D. , compiled and translated from Singhalese into Pāli the ancient commentarial materials he found in Sri Lanka. He also wrote the “Visuddhimagga”, an Encyclopedia on Buddhism.

If the Buddha had not attained enlightenment nobody would know that what we take for a person or self, for things or for the world are only different phenomena which do not last and which are not self or belonging to a self. The Abhidhamma is not theory, it explains everything that is real and that appears in our daily life. Realities that appear in our daily life have each their own characteristic that can be directly known, without having to think about them. The Buddha did not need any words in order to penetrate the truth of realities, but he used words when he explained the truth to others.

We read in the Commentary to the “Dhammapada”(Buddhist Legends, Part 3, Book 14, Story 2) that the Buddha, after having performed the “Twin miracle”⁹, ascended the Heaven of the Thirtythree (Tāvatiṃsa) and taught the Abhidhamma for the sake of his mother who had passed away on the seventh day after his birth, as is always the case for the Bodhisatta’s mother. When the Buddha wished to return to the world of men, Sakka, the King of the Devas, created three ladders: one of gold, one of jewels and one of silver. The devas descended upon the ladder of gold, Mahā-Brahma and his retinue upon the ladder of silver, and the Exalted One himself upon the ladder of jewels. The Buddha came down at the gate of the city Saṅkassa. We visited this place and paid respect. We went up the hill that marks the place and there we had a Dhamma discussion. Acharn Sujin reminded us to have patience with regard to the development of the eightfold Path. She said that at the Buddha’s time there were four kinds of people with different capabilities to grasp the Dhamma. Some people could realize the Truth immediately when they heard the teaching (ugghaṭitaññū), others after a more detailed explanation (vipacitaññū), others could gradually realize the truth through advice and questioning,

⁹ This miracle consisted in the appearance of flames from the upper part of the body and streams of water from the lower part, and then alternatively, there were streams of water from the upper part of the body and flames from the lower part. Moreover, flames of fire and streams of water also proceeded each in alternation from the right side of the body and from the left side. The Twin Miracle and his ascent to the Heaven of the Thirtythree took place in the seventh year after his enlightenment.

wise consideration and association with a good friend in Dhamma (neyya puggala), and others again did not attain enlightenment, although they had heard much, learnt much, knew many things by heart (pada parama)¹⁰. The first two types of people do not exist anymore in this world. With regard to the third type of person, it is only after wise consideration of the Dhamma and mindfulness of realities over and over again that he can attain enlightenment. With regard to the fourth type of person, the pada parama, the understanding he has accumulated is not lost, it can lead to the attainment of enlightenment in a future life.

We read in the Commentary to the “Middle Length Sayings” (III, 134, Baddhekaratta Sutta, Discourse on “One Single Excellent Night”¹¹), that the Buddha, in the Heaven of Thirtythree, taught the Abhidhamma in alternation with the Baddhekaratta Sutta to the devas who could not penetrate the profound and detailed teaching of the Abhidhamma on rūpa and arūpa (nāma) that have the three characteristics (of dukkha, impermanence and non-self). We read in the “Bhaddekaratta Sutta of Lomasakaṅgiya” that the deva Candana approached the venerable Lomasakaṅgiya and asked him whether he remembered the exposition and analysis of the Baddhekaratta Sutta. It appeared that both of them could not remember this, but Candana remembered the verses. He related that the Buddha had taught these when he dwelled in the Heaven of the Thirtythree. They are the following verses:

“The past should not be followed after, the future not desired.
 What is past is got rid of and the future has not come.
 But whoever has vision now here, now there of a present dhamma,
 The unmovable, unshakable, let him cultivate it¹².
 Swelter at the task this very day. Who knows whether he will die tomorrow?
 There is no bargaining with the great hosts of Death.
 Thus abiding ardently, unwearied day and night,
 He indeed is “Auspicious” called, described as a sage at peace¹³.”

¹⁰ Pada parama: one for whom the words (pada) are the utmost attainment. See “Designation of Human Types”. Ch IV, §5.

¹¹ In the Middle Length Sayings III there is a series of four suttas (no. 131-135) the first one of which is the Bhaddekarattasutta. The P.T.S. translates it as “Discourse on the Auspicious”. The following suttas in this series of four are the Bhaddekarattasutta of Ānanda, of Mahākaccāna and of Lomasakaṅgiya.

¹² This is from the translation of Ven. Nāṇananda, Wheel 188, Kandy. The P.T.S. translation has: knowing that it is immovable, unshakable. “Vision” is the translation of vipassanā.

¹³ The Thai translation has: he is called someone who has only one night of development. Night in Pāli stands for day and night. Someone who knows that he may only have one day and night has a sense of urgency to develop insight.

The Buddha taught people to develop right understanding of what appears at the present moment, and this is satipaṭṭhāna. The Abhidhamma explains in detail all realities of our daily life, and therefore it is very meaningful that he taught in the Heaven of the Thirtythree Abhidhamma in alternation with satipaṭṭhāna. During our journey Acharn Sujin reminded us frequently not to follow after the past nor to desire for what has not come yet, but to be aware of what appears now. Seeing, hearing, attachment or aversion fall away immediately, but we keep on thinking of what is past already, or we may wish to be aware of what has not arisen yet. If there is mindfulness of the characteristic of reality that appears now, understanding can grow.

The Buddha taught that what we take for a person are in reality mental phenomena, nāma, and physical phenomena, rūpa. Seeing or hearing are nāmas, they experience something, they experience an object. Seeing experiences what is visible, colour or visible object. Hearing is quite different from seeing, it experiences sound. Visible object is rūpa, a physical phenomenon that does not experience anything. Visible object impinges on the eyesense that is also rūpa. Eyesense does not experience anything but it is a condition for seeing. Both visible object and eyesense are conditions for seeing. In the same way sound and earsense are conditions for hearing, odour and smellingsense for smelling, flavour and tastingsense for tasting, tangible object and bodysense for body-consciousness. The five senses are rūpas that are called the doorways through which the relevant sense objects, that are rūpas, are experienced. Through the mind-door all kinds of nāma and rūpa can be experienced. We are inclined to cling to a concept of self who is seeing, hearing or thinking, but in reality there are different moments of consciousness, cittas, that experience one object at a time and that do not last. When hearing arises there cannot be seeing at the same time. We cling to an idea of our body that belongs to us, but in reality the body consists of different kinds of physical phenomena, rūpas, that arise and fall away.

When we were in the Jeta Grove we saw gardeners at work who were gathering grass and sticks, just as in the Buddha's time. Later on Acharn Sujin reminded us of the Sutta in the "Kindred Sayings" about grass and sticks that are gathered and then burnt. We read in the "Kindred Sayings"(IV, Saḷāyatana vagga, Kindred Sayings on Sense, Second Fifty, Ch 5, §101, Not yours) that the Buddha said:

“What is not of you, monks, put it away. Putting it away will be for your profit and welfare.

And what, monks, is not of you?

The eye, monks, is not of you. Put it away. Putting it away will be for your profit and welfare.

Objects are not of you... eye-consciousness... eye-contact... that pleasant or unpleasant or indifferent feeling which arises owing to eye-contact...

Tongue is not yours...mind, mental objects, etc. are not yours. Put them away. Putting them away will be for your profit and welfare.

Just as if, monks, a man should gather, burn or do what he likes with all the grass, all the sticks, branches and stalks in this Jeta Grove, pray, would he say: This man is gathering, is burning us, doing what he pleases with us?

‘Surely not, lord.’

‘Why not?’

‘Because, lord, this is not our self, nor of the nature of self.’

‘Even so, monks, the eye is not of you. Put it away. Putting it away will be for your profit and welfare. Objects and the rest are not of you. Put them away. Putting them away will be for your profit and welfare.’ ”

Grass and sticks are physical phenomena, they are rūpas outside that are not part of the body, they do not belong to anyone. However, also the rūpas of the body do not belong to us, they arise because of the appropriate conditions and then they fall away. When right understanding is developed all objects can be seen as non-self, anattā, and there can be detachment from the concept of self.

The Buddha taught about realities, dhammas, that appear one at a time through the five senses and through the mind-door. He taught about mental phenomena, nāma, and physical phenomena, rūpa. Consciousness or citta is nāma. There is one citta at a time and it cognizes an object, be it visible object, sound or one of the other sense objects, or a mental object that can be experienced through the mind-door. There is one citta at a time but it is accompanied by several mental factors, cetasikas, that each perform their own function while they assist citta in cognizing an object. Feeling and remembrance, for example, are cetasikas accompanying citta. Thus, what we take for a person is in reality citta and cetasika, which are both nāma, and rūpa. Citta, cetasika and rūpa do not last, they arise and fall away.

If one does not learn about the Buddha’s teaching and develop more understanding of nāma and rūpa, the world seems to be full of people and things which last. We take fleeting realities for things that exist, such as a person, a table, a cup or a chair.

Citta, cetasika and rūpa are real in the ultimate or absolute sense, they are different from conventional truth or concepts (paññattis). What is true in the ultimate sense is called in Pāli: paramattha dhamma ¹⁴. We can also refer to paramattha dhammas as dhammas, realities. When we speak about the Buddha’s teachings we refer to it as the Dhamma, but the word dhamma has several meanings. Dhamma can mean that which has its own characteristic and is devoid of self. In that sense it is the same as dhātu, element. Nāma and rūpa are only elements, devoid of self.

Paramattha dhammas have each their own characteristic which is unalterable. Seeing has its own characteristic that cannot be changed, no matter how we name it. We can call it by another name, but seeing is always seeing, its characteristic cannot be changed. Seeing experiences what is visible, colour or

¹⁴ Parama means highest. Paramattha dhamma is what is real in the highest, the ultimate sense, what is fundamentally true.

visible object. Visible object has its own characteristic and when it appears it can be directly experienced without having to name it. Anger is a type of nāma that has its own characteristic which cannot be changed. Anger is always anger, no matter how we name it. Hardness is a kind of rūpa that can be directly experienced through the bodysense, no matter how we name it. When we touch a cup or a chair we know their different meanings in conventional sense: we drink from a cup and we sit on a chair. However, when we touch them hardness may appear. We can verify that hardness is only an element, a kind of rūpa that has the characteristic of hardness, to be experienced through the bodysense, no matter it is hardness of a cup, a chair or a hand. We can directly experience it without thinking of it, without naming it. It is important to learn the difference between paramattha dhammas and concepts. Right understanding developed through satipaṭṭhāna has as object paramattha dhammas, not concepts. Concepts are not real in the ultimate or fundamental sense, they are objects of thinking.

When we see people walking, we cling immediately to shape and form, to a conglomeration of things, to a concept of a whole. In reality seeing sees just visible object, no people. Thinking thinks of the concept of people who are walking; thinking is a paramattha dhamma, it is nāma, but the concept it thinks of is not a paramattha dhamma. Thinking is conditioned by seeing. Acharn Sujin asked us: “Can there be people without visible object?”

When we are reading we are immediately absorbed in the story we read and we have different feelings about it, we feel happy or sad. At such moments we live in the world of concepts and ideas that are real merely in conventional sense. When we are reading, different cittas experience different objects. The citta that sees experiences only colour or visible object which impinges on the eyesense. Other types of cittas think of the meaning of the letters and of the whole story. Acharn Sujin reminded us that in real life we are also as it were “reading”. We are looking at lines and shapes and we define these as this or that person.

We should not try to avoid thinking of concepts of people and things, but we can learn the difference between paramattha dhammas and concepts. When the object citta experiences is not a paramattha dhamma it is a concept. The Buddha spoke time and again of all the objects appearing one at a time through the six doors so that people would understand what paramattha dhammas are. Through mindfulness of paramattha dhammas as they appear one at a time, understanding of their nature of anattā can be developed. Acharn Sujin often reminded us that everything is dhamma. It is true that dhammas appear all the time: seeing, visible object, hearing, sound, thinking. Usually we are absorbed in our thoughts about the conventional world, we do not realize that there is dhamma. Acharn Sujin said that when we learn that everything is dhamma, we should not leave it at that, but that we should develop understanding until we know through our own experience that everything is dhamma. If there never is awareness of what appears through the eyes at this moment, realities cannot appear as just dhammas. Our life can change:

first we were clinging to a self who sees or hears, but now we can learn that there are only different dhammas each with their own characteristic. Dhammas are ephemeral, many conditions must coincide for one moment of seeing. We take seeing for granted and we think that it lasts, that we can control it. We see and then we remember what it is, but it is no longer there. How could we direct or control a reality that has fallen away already? Nāma and rūpa do not belong to anybody, they are beyond control, non-self. We cannot select the dhammas that appear now, seeing or hearing have arisen already. We have to see, we have to hear, we have to be born again and again so that we see, hear and experience objects through the six doors. We cannot select what reality arises at a particular moment, but understanding of them can be gradually developed.

The Buddha taught the Abhidhamma to the devas in the Heaven of the Thirty-three, and he also taught vipassanā when he expounded the “Discourse on the Auspicious”. He used conventional expressions in the sutta, when he said that one should not cling to the past nor have desire for the future, but attend to the present moment. We read in the Commentary to the “Discourse on no Blemishes” (Middle Length Sayings I, no 5):

“There is a twofold teaching of the Buddha, the Blessed One: the teaching in the conventional way and the teaching by way of ultimate realities. There is a human, a being, a woman, a man, a man of the warrior caste, a brahman, a god, and Māra. Such is the teaching in the conventional way. Impermanence, dukkha, anattā, the aggregates, the elements, the sensefields (āyatana), satipaṭṭhāna. Such is the teaching by way of ultimate realities. Here the Blessed One taught to those in the conventional way who by means of it, after having heard the teaching, penetrated the meaning and abandoned ignorance, and were skilled to attain distinction. But he taught by way of ultimate realities to those who, after having heard the teaching, penetrated the meaning and abandoned ignorance, and were skilled to attain distinction.”

Also when the Buddha taught by way of conventional terms he explained what is dhamma: namely, what appears right now.

Chapter 3

Clinging to Concepts

Citta, consciousness, experiences something, it experiences an object. Acharn Sujin reminded us many times during our journey that each citta experiences an object. Citta could not arise without experiencing an object. The object is

one of the conditions for the arising of citta. Without citta, colour, sound and the other sense objects could not appear. We should apply what the Abhidhamma teaches about citta and object to this moment of our daily life. We heard Acharn Sujin say many times that visible object appears now, and that it could not appear if there were no seeing that experiences it. We listen to the Dhamma and we read the texts about the objects experienced through the six doorways, but do we really consider this deeply and apply it to this very moment?

Theoretical knowledge, pariyatti, is a foundation for the understanding of the level of patipatti, practice, that is direct understanding of realities appearing one at a time through the six doorways. Acharn Sujin spoke during our journey about seeing, hearing, the other sense-cognitions and the sense objects time and again, but we found this not monotonous. It is a vivid reminder to begin to investigate those dhammas as they appear in daily life. In this way all we hear and read in the Suttas can become more meaningful, we can come to see that everything that appears is dhamma. Thus, studying dhamma, reality, is studying with mindfulness of what appears at this very moment. The purpose of our study should be understanding of our life at this moment.

This is a new approach to life, to the world. We are used to being infatuated with the world of people and all the things around us without understanding what is really there: nāma and rūpa that arise because of their appropriate conditions and then fall away immediately. When we perceive people there are in reality different moments of citta: seeing is different from thinking of the meaning of what we see. When we perceive a person or a thing, we pay attention to a mental image of a whole, and we are absorbed in all the details of what is seen. This happens during all our activities in daily life when we, for example, add sugar and milk to our coffee, use knife and fork when we are eating, when we are reading or walking. A mental image of a whole is not a reality, a dhamma, it is a concept, paññatti. The word concept, in Pāli paññatti, has different meanings: it is a name or term that conveys a meaning as well as the idea it makes known. Thus, it makes known and also, it is what has been made known. Names can denote persons or things that are not realities, or they can denote realities, such as different nāmas and rūpas. When we have a notion of a “whole”, such as a person or thing, we are thinking of an idea, a concept, not a reality, not a nāma or rūpa.

When we were in Nālandā, we went to the grounds where the ancient monastic university has been excavated and sat down on the grass for a Dhamma discussion. The Buddha used to stay in Nālandā in Pāvārika’s Mango Grove where people from different religious groups visited him to discuss with him. Several centuries later a university was founded in Nālandā that became a famous center of learning for different religious groups. The Chinese pilgrim Huiyen Tsang, who lived in the seventh century, became a bright scholar in this university and he stayed in Nālandā for a long time. At that time Buddhism was already disappearing from India. There must have been many debates in Nālandā between different schools of thought. Acharn Sujin mentioned that one should carefully consider different points of view and that one should in-

investigate the scriptures and commentaries in order to understand the subtle points of Dhamma, so that the teachings can be kept free from corruptions. She mentioned that, after her return, there would be a board meeting in Bangkok of the Dhamma Study and Support Foundation to compare different viewpoints and clear up misunderstandings. The goal of such meetings is preserving the purity of the Buddha's teachings ¹⁵.

In Nālandā we discussed the meaning of nimitta, the Pāli term for image or mental picture. She explained that we think of an image on account of what we see, hear, and experience through all the sense-doors. We pay attention to an image of a whole and we are absorbed in all its details (in Pāli: anuvyañjana). When we perceive a rose we think immediately of its shape and form, of an image, a concept; we may not even think of the name "rose", but when we perceive the shape and form of a rose we are bound to take it for something that really exists.

Each citta is accompanied by the cetasika saññā, perception or remembrance, that remembers or "marks" the object so that it can be recognized later on. The recognition of a thing or a person is the result of many different processes of cittas, each of which is accompanied by saññā performing its function of marking and remembering. We may reason about the way saññā operates and wonder how and when it remembers a past object. This is only thinking, and by thinking we shall not understand realities. When someone found it difficult to understand that saññā marks as well as remembers, she answered that it is difficult to find a term that covers the real meaning of saññā. Acharn Sujin said that we should not cling to terms but understand the characteristics of realities appearing at this moment. The purpose of our study of the Dhamma is detachment, detachment from the idea of self. We can begin to understand, whenever we perceive different things we handle or use in daily life, such as a cup and a saucer or the computer, or whenever we perceive people, that it is not due to a self who remembers but to saññā. Saññā is an important condition for clinging.

When we cling to concepts we misinterpret realities. We cling to an image of a "whole" such as a table or a chair, and we take it for something that exists. In reality different objects, such as visible object or tangible object, are experienced one at a time through different doorways.

We also fail to distinguish different cittas performing their different functions such as seeing and thinking. We believe that there is a long moment of seeing, that it lasts.

We have to think of concepts so that we can perform our daily activities. Also the Buddha used concepts when he went out on his alms rounds, when he recognized his disciples and spoke to different people. However, he did not cling

¹⁵ For more than thirty years Acharn Sujin has been given regular lectures in Temples and these have been recorded and relayed on the radio within Thailand and in neighbouring countries. The Dhamma Study and Support Foundation is an organisation set up around these activities. Some years ago a centre was built on donated land and, here, Acharn Sujin, the main teacher, and her students now teach and discuss the Dhamma.

to concepts and he had no ignorance about them. We should lead our daily life naturally, but we can learn the difference between concepts and realities, dhammas. Acharn Sujin said that seeing sees visible object and after seeing has fallen away, thinking can arise with a concept as object. We pay attention to concepts time and again, but we can learn to develop more understanding of a reality such as visible object appearing right now. We can learn to understand it as only a dhamma, not a person or thing that exists. Gradually we can know the difference between what is real and what is not real in the ultimate sense.

We read in the “Kindred Sayings” (IV, Saḷāyattana vagga, Kindred Sayings on Sense, § 78, Rādha, 3):

“Then the venerable Rādha came to the Exalted One... Seated at one side the venerable Rādha said to the Exalted One: -

‘Well for me, lord, if the Exalted One would teach me a teaching in brief, hearing which I might dwell remote and earnest, ardent and aspiring.’

‘What is non-self, Rādha, -for that you must abandon desire. And what is non-self, Rādha? The eye... visible objects... eye-consciousness... eye-contact... that pleasant or unpleasant or indifferent feeling, which arises owing to eye-contact. What is non-self, you must abandon desire for that.

Tongue... body... mind... mental objects... mind-consciousness... mind-contact... you must abandon desire for all that.’ ”

Time and again the Buddha spoke about realities appearing through the six doorways so that people could develop understanding of their true nature of impermanence and anattā. Usually we live in the world of concepts and ideas about life, but when understanding of dhammas such as seeing, visible object or feeling has been developed more, the concept of the whole world, a person, a body, can be resolved into elements. Then we learn that what we find so important are only insignificant dhammas that arise and fall away, which are non-self. When we read a Sutta about dhammas appearing through the six doorways we can be reminded to deeply consider its meaning: seeing, hearing or feeling appear time and again, even now. They are realities each with their own distinct nature and characteristic. The Buddha said that one must abandon desire for all realities. Understanding, paññā, is associated with a level of detachment: the development of paññā leads to detachment from the idea of self and eventually from all realities.

In India I had a conversation about concepts with Acharn Sujin:

Nina: “We forget to develop understanding of realities when we read the newspaper. We are absorbed in the news about events that occur such as wars.”

Sujin: “We take the stories for reality but actually they are contained in one moment of thinking. We can develop understanding of realities, no matter where we are, whatever event occurs.”

Nina: “We have accumulated so much forgetfulness of realities.”

Sujin: “We should listen to the Dhamma, consider it and develop more understanding.”

On other occasions we spoke about fear we may have on account of the truth of non-self:

Sujin: “The world appears dark and lonely without people. There are no family, no friends. There is nobody in this room.”

Nina: “Where is the gladness on account of the Dhamma?”

Sujin: “There can be gladness on account of paññā that knows the truth. You cannot change the characteristics of realities that make up the world. They are only elements. One should be very sincere as to one’s own development of understanding. When someone is frightened it shows that paññā has not sufficiently been developed. When he realizes this, he should be courageous to continue developing paññā. The concept of self is deeply rooted.”

She also reminded me:

“There is no Lodewijk, there is just our own world of thinking, thinking of Lodewijk. When we were born we were alone. When seeing, we are alone, there is just citta that sees. We are alone because there is no self. Seeing arises and then thinking of the world of concepts and this hides the reality of seeing, visible object and the other realities.”

Each citta that falls away conditions the arising of the next one, this is one of the many conditions for citta: *anantara-paccaya*, contiguity condition. Our life is an unbroken series of cittas, otherwise we could not stay alive. Cittas arise and fall away extremely fast. We see only what appears through the eyes, but it seems that we see and immediately know that this or that person is there, this or that thing, and that we also at the same time have like or dislike of what we see. In reality there are countless moments of cittas succeeding one another. The fact that many impressions seem to occur all at the same time shows that cittas which arise and fall away are succeeding one another extremely fast.

Cittas arise in succession, without a pause in between, and each citta conditions the following one. Therefore, good and bad qualities, *kusala cetasikas* and *akusala cetasikas*, can be accumulated from moment to moment, from one life to the next life. Attachment, aversion, loving kindness or understanding can be accumulated so that there are conditions for their arising again and again. Three *akusala cetasikas* are roots, *hetus*, and these are: attachment, *lobha*, aversion or hate, *dosa*, and ignorance, *moha*. *Akusala cittas* can be rooted in attachment, in aversion or in ignorance, but the *hetu* that is ignorance accompanies each *akusala citta*. Thus, ignorance of realities conditions all *akusala* that arises. Besides the three *akusala hetus*, several other *akusala cetasikas*

may accompany akusala citta such as wrong view, stinginess or conceit. There are three beautiful roots, sobhana hetus: non-attachment, alobha, non-aversion, adosa and wisdom or paññā. Alobha and adosa accompany each kusala citta and paññā may or may not accompany kusala citta. Besides the three sobhana hetus several other sobhana cetasikas accompany kusala citta, such as confidence in wholesomeness and mindfulness.

Cittas such as seeing or hearing arise within a series or process of cittas. When seeing experiences visible object, it arises in a process of cittas experiencing visible object through the eye-door, they are eye-door process cittas. Seeing does not like or dislike, it is not wholesome, kusala, nor unwholesome, akusala; it is citta that is result of kamma, of a wholesome or unwholesome deed performed in the past. Seeing is vipākacitta, citta that is result.

Thus, seeing arises when the right conditions are present, and the rūpas which condition it are eyesense and colour or visible object. What occurs at this moment? Shouldn't we verify realities at this moment? Seeing arises now, but there is no self who sees. Can we make seeing arise? It has arisen already because of conditions. Do we really consider and investigate this? We have to see, we have to hear, because there are conditions, no "I" who can cause their arising. If we do not consider this again and again we cannot understand the meaning of anattā.

Seeing is not the only citta arising in the eye-door process, there are other cittas that also experience visible object but perform each their own function. After seeing has fallen away, there are several more types of cittas and then kusala cittas or akusala cittas arise experiencing visible object in a wholesome or unwholesome way. When the sense-door process has ended a mind-door process of cittas arise that experience visible object. After that there may be other mind-door processes of cittas thinking of concepts.

When we experience a sense object through one of the sense-doors we often react with attachment, lobha, when the object is pleasant, and with aversion, dosa, when the object is unpleasant. Let us consider our daily life. When we experience a disgusting odour, aversion can arise even before it is known what kind of odour it is. When a delicious morsel of food is on the tongue, attachment can arise even before knowing what kind of flavour it is. When we are sitting on a soft chair, the rupa that is softness may appear through the body-sense and attachment arises already, but we may not even realize that there is attachment. This may happen just now while we are sitting. Many moments of akusala cittas arise but we do not even notice them. Cittas arise extremely fast, it seems that many impressions occur all at the same time. But there are different realities each with their own characteristic. We should verify this so that we can understand, at least in theory, the rapidity of the cittas arising and falling away in processes, cittas which have no owner and cannot be controlled. They have the characteristic of non-self, anattā. We don't have to do anything special to cause the arising of lobha or dosa, they arise already because of their own conditions. After odour or flavour is experienced during the sense-door process and aversion or attachment have arisen in that process, it is experienced through the mind-door, and again there is aversion or attach-

ment. It is still not known what kind of odour or flavour it is. That is known afterwards in other mind-door processes which experience concepts.

We can think of concepts with kusala citta or with akusala citta, but usually we think with akusala citta. When the objective of the cittas that think is not generosity, dāna, morality, sīla or mental development, bhāvanā, they are akusala cittas. There is no person who is good or bad, wholesomeness and unwholesomeness are particular cetasikas arising because of conditions that perform their functions in a wholesome way or in an unwholesome way. When we act, speak and think we can gradually find out that usually akusala cittas motivate deeds, speech and thinking. When we are stretching out our hands to take hold of things, when we walk or speak, cittas with attachment, lobha, are bound to arise. We like to speak, we speak with attachment or conceit. There are many degrees of akusala, they can be coarse or more subtle. Also when we do not hurt others there may be akusala cittas, but we do not notice them. Even when we consider the Dhamma, there can be clinging to the idea of self who wishes to make progress in understanding.

The Buddha spoke to the monks about sīla, morality, under the aspect of restraint of the sense faculties (indriya samvara sīla) by mindfulness of realities that are experienced through the six doors. At such moments one is not overwhelmed by defilements that may arise on account of what one experiences. The “Visuddhimagga” (I, 42) quotes from the “Middle Length Sayings” (I, 27, Lesser Discourse on the Elephant’s Footprint), explaining the virtue of restraint of the sense faculties as follows:

“... On seeing a visible object with the eye, he apprehends neither the sign (nimitta) nor the particulars (anubyañjana) through which, if he left the eye faculty unguarded, evil and unprofitable states of covetousness and grief might invade him, he enters upon the way of its restraint, he guards the eye faculty, undertakes the restraint of the eye faculty. On hearing a sound with the ear... On smelling an odour with the nose... On tasting a flavour with the tongue... On touching a tangible object with the body... On cognizing a mental object with the mind, he apprehends neither the signs nor the particulars through which, if he left the mind faculty unguarded, evil and unprofitable states of covetousness and grief might invade him, he enters upon the way of its restraint, he guards the mind faculty, undertakes the restraint of the mind faculty...”

We read in the “Visuddhimagga” (I, 54):

“ ‘Apprehends neither the signs’: he does not apprehend the sign (nimitta) of woman or man, or any sign that is a basis for defilement such as the sign of beauty, etc.: he stops at what is merely seen. ‘Nor the particulars’ (anubyañjana): he does not apprehend any aspect classed as hand, foot, smile, laughter, talk, looking ahead, looking aside, etc., which has acquired the name ‘particu-

lar' because of its particularizing defilements, because of its making them manifest themselves. He only apprehends what is really there..."

Further on the "Visuddhimagga" (I,56) explains: "He enters upon the way of its restraint: he enters upon the way of closing that eye faculty by the door-panel of mindfulness."

Understanding of realities should be naturally developed, we should not force ourselves to ignore concepts and try to know realities such as seeing or hearing. When we are listening to music we may try to know the reality that is just sound, different from the concept of a whole, of a melody, but this is not the way to develop right understanding naturally. Then there would be attachment that obstructs the development of paññā. Direct understanding of a characteristic of a reality is already developed paññā, and how can we expect that there is developed paññā in the beginning?

Chapter 4

A Long Way to go

Paramattha dhammas, ultimate realities, are all that appears now. Seeing, visible object, hearing, sound, and the other sense-cognitions that experience sense objects appear in our daily life, also at this moment. They each have their own characteristic that is unchangeable and that is true for everybody. We can verify this when they appear and this is what the Buddha taught time and again.

We read in the "Kindred Sayings" (IV, Saḷāyatana vagga, Kindred Sayings on Sense, Third Fifty, Ch 5, §152, Is there a method) that the Buddha said:

“Is there, monks, any method by following which a monk, apart from belief, apart from inclination, apart from hearsay, apart from argument as to method, apart from reflection on reasons, apart from delight in speculation, could affirm insight thus: ‘Ended is birth, lived is the righteous life, done is the task, for life in these conditions there is no hereafter?’”

“For us, lord, things have their root in the Exalted One... Hearing it from him the monks will remember it.”

“There is indeed a method, monks, by following which a monk...could affirm insight... And what is that method?”

Herein, monks, a monk, seeing an object with the eye, either recognizes within him the existence of lust, malice and illusion, thus: ‘I have lust (rāga), malice (dosa) and illusion (moha),’ or thus: ‘I have not lust, malice and illusion.’ Now as to that recognition of their existence or non-existence within him, are these conditions, I ask, to be understood by belief, or inclination, or hearsay, or argument as to method, or reflection on reasons, or delight in speculation?”

“Surely not, lord.”

“Are not these states to be understood by seeing them with the eye of wisdom?”

“Surely lord.”

“Then, monks, this is the method by following which, apart from belief... a brother could affirm insight thus: ‘Ended is birth... for life in these conditions there is no hereafter.’

Again, as to hearing a sound with the ear... smelling a scent with the nose, tasting a savour with the tongue... contacting a tangible with the body... cognizing a mental object with the mind... is that recognition to be understood by belief, or inclination, or hearsay, or argument as to method, or reflection on reasons, or delight in speculation? Are not these states to be understood by seeing them with the eye of wisdom?”

“Surely lord.”

“Then, monks, this is the method by following which a monk, apart from belief... affirm insight.”

Insight refers here to arahatship, according to the Commentary, the “Sāratthappakāsinī”. One can attain arahatship with this method, that is, developing understanding of realities appearing through the senses and the mind-door. In all the holy sites we visited Acharn Sujin explained about the way to develop understanding of the realities that appear at this moment. She stressed the difference between thinking of terms and words denoting realities and the direct awareness of nāma and rūpa, the development of satipaṭṭhāna. She reminded us that we need patience to listen to the Dhamma, to consider it and to develop right understanding of realities. We have a long way to go in order to see realities as they are. On the basis of her explanations and our discussions I would like to deal with some points stressed by Acharn Sujin and often raised by others.

We may know in theory that seeing sees what is visible, visible object, but it seems that we see people all the time. We usually think of concepts with ignorance and clinging, we are totally absorbed in them. Only through the development of direct awareness of realities can we prove that what the Buddha taught about the phenomena of our life is the truth. However, we need a firm foundation knowledge of paramattha dhammas so that we can verify the truth of these phenomena.

Acharn Sujin stressed many times that there are three levels of the understanding of the Dhamma: the level of study, *pariyatti*, the level of practice, *paṭipatti* and the level of direct realization of the truth, *paṭivedha*. *Pariyatti* is the firm foundation knowledge that can be a condition for *paṭipatti*, the practice or development of direct understanding. If we only think about it that *citta*, *cetasika* and *rūpa* are impermanent and that they arise and fall away, it is theoretical understanding that stems from listening to the teachings. Through the development of *satipaṭṭhāna*, which is the practice, the truth of what the Buddha taught can be directly realized. The aim of the study of the teachings should be direct understanding of the dhammas appearing at this moment.

We should understand what *satipaṭṭhāna* is and what the objects of *sati-paṭṭhana* are. *Satipaṭṭhāna* is the development of insight, *vipassanā*, the direct understanding of all realities of our life, of *citta*, *cetasika* (mental factors arising with the *citta*) and *rūpa*.

Only one *citta* at a time arises and experiences one object. It seems that we see and hear at the same time, but when visible object is experienced, sound cannot be experienced at the same time. Acharn Sujin explained about the development of *satipaṭṭhāna* when we were sitting on the ground in the Jeta Grove, near the place where once the Buddha stayed. In the Jeta Grove he taught the Dhamma to the monks and to the layfollowers who visited him daily. Acharn Sujin said:

“Dhamma is what is real, it has no owner. There are two kinds of dhammas: *nāma* and *rūpa*. Hearing and sound arise and fall away very rapidly, can we slow them down? *Sati* can arise and be aware of them. In the beginning there cannot be awareness of all realities that can be experienced through the six doors, because understanding has to be developed. *Sati* can arise and *paññā* can begin to understand realities, there is no other way. Thinking arises in between moments of awareness and there is bound to be doubt about realities, because doubt has not been eradicated. When *sati* arises, *paññā* must arise together with it. We should have understanding of the characteristics of realities and of *satipaṭṭhāna* and this can condition the arising of *sati* and *paññā* that directly understands *nāma* and *rūpa*. This is not intellectual understanding, but it is *paññā* of another level that penetrates thoroughly the characteristics of realities, that realizes them as only elements, *dhātus*.”

How do we experience the body? We think of our whole body but what we take for our body consists of different groups of *rūpas*. The *rūpas* that are the four Great Elements arise in each group of *rūpas* no matter whether they are

of the body or rūpas outside, and these are: the Element of Earth or solidity, the Element of Water or cohesion, the Element of Fire or heat and the Element of Wind or motion. In addition to these four there are other rūpas arising together with them in different combinations. Through touch three of these Great Elements can be directly experienced, one at a time, and these are: solidity appearing as hardness or softness, heat appearing as heat or cold, and motion appearing as motion or pressure. Cohesion cannot be experienced through touch, it can only be known through the mind-door.

Hardness or heat are characteristics of rūpa, and these cannot be changed, no matter how we name them. We can experience the characteristics that appear without the need to think of them. In this way we can begin to consider in our own life what the Abhidhamma teaches. The Abhidhamma is not a dry subject that concerns theoretical knowledge, it deals with our life. We learn about nāma and rūpa through the study of the Abhidhamma, but this relates to daily life. Do characteristics of rūpa such as hardness, softness, heat or cold not appear all the time whenever we touch things? The purpose of the enumeration of different nāmas and rūpas is not merely to memorize them or to think of them, but to realize their true nature by the development of satipaṭṭhāna.

Apart from the three rūpas of solidity, heat and motion that can be directly experienced in daily life, there are in addition four rūpas that appear all the time: visible object or colour, sound, odour and flavour. Also these rūpas arise in a group together with the four Great Elements and other rūpas. Thus, there are seven rūpas that appear time and again in daily life, they have characteristics that can be directly experienced without the need to name them or to think about them. We do not have to think of sound or odour in order to experience them, they appear just for a moment and then they disappear. We cannot cause their arising, they arise when there are the right conditions and then they disappear. We cannot prevent them from disappearing, and they are beyond control, non-self. Development of right understanding leads gradually, from the very beginning, to detachment until the ultimate stage, when arahatship is reached. First there will be detachment from the wrong view of self and later on other defilements will be abandoned, but this is a long way. We have accumulated ignorance for aeons and therefore there cannot be right understanding immediately.

We are attached to the idea of my body, but, as Acharn Sujin explained, what is it that appears? When hardness impinges on the bodysense its characteristic can be experienced. Hardness appears and then falls away immediately. We know through remembrance (saññā) that we have arms, legs, and all the other body-parts, but these cannot be experienced, they are concepts that are remembered. When we truly consider that only one characteristic of rūpa is experienced at a time when it impinges on the rūpa that is the body-sense, and that it falls away immediately, we can understand, at least in theory, that our whole body we find so important does not exist in the ultimate sense. We think of “I” who is sitting, we are attached to the idea of a sitting posture. In the ultimate sense rūpa does not sit. A posture is a conglomeration of rūpas we can think of, but it is not real in the ultimate sense. We cling to the idea of

my body that is sick or healthy, but the rūpas of which the body consists arise and then fall away immediately, and they do not return. We can begin to consider rūpas such as hardness, sound or visible object as they appear in daily life, but thinking, even in the right way, is not satipaṭṭhāna, the development of direct awareness and understanding. It is a foundation for satipaṭṭhāna. Acharn Sujin explained:

“When we touch something, hardness appears. The thinking of a concept follows instantly. Understanding develops if we know that hardness only appears at the point where it touches. The whole body does not appear, we just think of the whole body. What we take for our whole body is not my body, only hardness appears through touch. When one touches hardness one thinks that it is there all the time, but when hardness appears it must have arisen because of conditions. Whatever is real has conditions to arise; the rūpa that has arisen and appears can be the object of understanding. Paññā should be developed so that one will understand that at each moment there is no person there. Realities are not what we think them to be, we think of concepts on account of what is experienced. Understanding should be developed so that the level of pariyatti, intellectual understanding, conditions the level of paṭipatti, the practice, and that again the level of paṭivedha, the penetration of the true nature of realities.”

Some people believe that they should just practise, that study is not necessary, but it should be known what sati and paññā are, what the object of satipaṭṭhāna is, and what the conditions are for their arising. As we have seen, the object of satipaṭṭhāna is a paramattha dhamma, an ultimate reality, that appears, not a concept. We should not forget that sati of satipaṭṭhāna is a cetasika that arises when there are the appropriate conditions, that it is not self. It is non-forgetful, mindful of the reality that appears, so that right understanding of that reality can be developed at that moment.

Sati can be of different levels of kusala, it accompanies each kusala citta, it is non-forgetful of kusala: it arises with dāna, generosity, with sīla, morality, with samatha and with the development of satipaṭṭhāna. Only through satipaṭṭhāna the wrong view of self can be eradicated. When we perform dāna, sati accompanies the kusala citta that is non-forgetful of kusala, but when sati is not of the level of satipaṭṭhāna, we are bound to take dāna for “our dāna”, for self. It is the same in the case of sīla and samatha; if satipaṭṭhāna is not developed, one is bound to take these ways of kusala for self.

Paññā is a cetasika that arises when there are the appropriate conditions, it is non-self. It may arise with dāna and sīla, but it does not always accompany these ways of kusala. Paññā always accompanies mental development, including samatha and vipassanā. When we study the teachings and we acquire intellectual understanding of nāma and rūpa, sati and paññā accompany the kusala citta. However, thinking of paramattha dhammas is not the same as direct awareness and understanding of the reality appearing at this moment, and this is satipaṭṭhāna.

The development of satipaṭṭhāna is a gradual process, because there have to be the right conditions for the arising of sati and paññā of satipaṭṭhāna. The right condition is the firm foundation knowledge of the teachings. Thus, study of realities of our life and considering them as they appear in our life. It depends on the individual's inclinations to what extent he will study the details about citta, cetasika and rūpa and the different processes of citta, but a basic knowledge of realities is necessary. Each person is unique, there are no rules with regard to the development of understanding. But at the present time it has to be a development that takes a long time (cira kala bhavana).

Acharn Supee Thumthong who teaches Pāli in Bangkok remarked that when he studies realities he keeps firmly in mind that the results become apparent only when the conditions are fulfilled. If paññā does not arise to realize the dhammas that appear, it means that understanding stemming from listening and considering is not firm enough. He said that if one truly realizes this, one will not struggle and strive for results. In other words, one will develop understanding naturally and not force oneself, trying to reach a level one is not yet ready for.

Acharn Sujin reminded us that people living at the time of a previous Buddha, the Buddha Dīpaṅkara, were very patient. We read in the “Khuddhaka Nikāya”, “Chronicle of the Buddhas” (II A, Account of Sumedha, vs. 71-75) that devas and men rejoiced when they heard that the Buddha Dīpaṅkara proclaimed Sumedha to be the future Buddha. We read that they said:

“If we should fail of the Dispensation (teachings) of this protector of the world, in the distant future we will be face to face with this one.

As men, crossing a river but, failing of the ford to the bank opposite, taking a ford lower down cross over the great river, even so, all of us, if we miss (the words of) this Conqueror, in the distant future will be face to face with this one ¹⁶.”

They realized that the development of satipaṭṭhāna takes a long time, that it takes aeons. The Bodhisatta had to listen to twentyfour Buddhas before he could attain Buddhahood in his last life. We can still study his teachings, but time will come that these disappear. There will be a future Buddha, Ariya Metteyya, and if we do not attain enlightenment in this Buddha era, we may have an opportunity to listen to his teachings. When Acharn Sujin spoke of the gladness and patience of people at the time of Sumedha, I said that I found it difficult to be glad about the prospect of having to wait for many aeons until paññā is developed. But Acharn Sujin reminded us to have courage and gladness while developing right understanding. It is true, when paññā arises there cannot be anxiety at the same time. Paññā can be developed at the present moment and we should not think of the future and how long the road is; what counts is only the present moment. There is no self who can do anything and

¹⁶ They will be face to face with the Buddha Gotamma, who was previously the Bodhisatta Sumedha.

thus, it is of no use to think of an idea of “my progress”. Listening to the Dhamma, studying it and considering it are the right conditions for satipaṭṭhāna.

We had Dhamma conversations in different places: apart from the holy sites, we discussed the Dhamma in hotel halls when waiting for the bus, in dining rooms and also in a teashop along the road when the drivers had to rest. I quote from a discussion in a teashop where we sat at a long table, drinking Indian tea. Acharn Sujin said:

“We say, everything is dhamma, but are these just words? How can we understand the characteristics of nāma and rūpa if there is no direct awareness of them? We are talking about seeing and hardness, but there may not be direct awareness of a characteristic, just one at a time. There is seeing now, but no awareness of it. When awareness arises we are beginning to understand seeing right now. There is no need to think about it whether there is awareness of this citta that sees or a past moment of citta that sees, that is thinking. There can be awareness of the reality that sees now. However, we should first study and understand what citta, cetasika and rūpa are, so that there are conditions for the arising of awareness. If someone says that one should just be aware from the very beginning without study of realities, without knowing about the conditions for sati, it is wrong.

Seeing sees all the time but there is no development of understanding of seeing, we are only thinking about seeing. Seeing appears, and this means that seeing at that moment is the object of satipaṭṭhāna, and only in this way right understanding of it can develop. Paññā begins to grow by understanding the characteristics of nāma and rūpa, and the characteristic of sati. The development of satipaṭṭhāna should be very natural, if it is not natural one is on the wrong way. Someone is on the wrong way if he clings to an idea of self who can act in a particular way to make sati arise, instead of just understanding reality. Paññā can understand any reality that has arisen because of its own conditions. We cannot know of what object sati will be aware, this is beyond expectation.”

By study, listening and considering the Dhamma there can each time be just a little more understanding and we should be grateful for that. It should be enough for the moment, because, as Acharn Sujin often said, paññā works its way. It is accumulated little by little.

Chapter 5

The True Refuge.

We read in the "Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta" (Dīgha Nikāya 16, The Book of the Great Decease, 100-101) 1 that the Buddha spoke to Ānanda about his old age, being in his eightieth year, and that he said that his life was spent:

“Therefore, Ānanda, be an island to yourself, a refuge to yourself, seeking no external refuge; with the Dhamma as your island, the Dhamma as your refuge, seeking no other refuge.

And how, Ānanda, is a monk an island to himself, a refuge to himself, seeking no external refuge; with the Dhamma as his island, the Dhamma as his refuge, seeking no other refuge?

When he dwells contemplating body in the body... feeling in the feelings, mind in the mind, and mental objects in the mental objects, earnestly, clearly comprehending, and mindfully, after having overcome desire and sorrow in regard to the world, then, truly, he is an island to himself, a refuge to himself, seeking no external refuge; with the Dhamma as his island, the Dhamma as his refuge, seeking no other refuge.

Those monks of mine, Ānanda, who now, or after I am gone, abide as an island to themselves, as a refuge to themselves, seeking no other refuge; having the Dhamma as their island and refuge, seeking no other refuge; it is they who will become the highest, if they have the desire to learn.”

When we were sitting near the Bodhi Tree for a Dhamma discussion, Acharn Sujin said that we are an island to ourselves when we develop understanding ourselves. We listen in order to have more understanding and we consider what we heard. It has to be our own understanding, nobody else can develop it for us.

We read in this Sutta about the four Applications of Mindfulness: physical phenomena, feelings, cittas, and dhammas, that is, cetasikas and other realities under different aspects not included in the other three Applications of Mindfulness. Acharn Sujin explained that when we read about these four Applications of Mindfulness, we should not merely think of their names. They should remind us to be aware of the reality that appears now. When people read in the section on the Application of Mindfulness of the Body about mindfulness of breath or the cemetery meditations, they wonder in what way they should apply this. People have different accumulated inclinations: some people may develop meditation subjects such as breath or the foulness of the body and they may even attain a high degree of calm, whereas others do not have such inclinations. There is no rule that people should develop samatha, calm, to a high degree before they develop insight. But no matter what one's inclinations are, one should know and understand that what appears because of conditions is impermanent and non-self. After each section of the Applications of Mindfulness, it has been repeatedly stated that one should contemplate the origination and dissolution of realities. This understanding can only be acquired by the development of insight, right understanding of the reality that appears now. Also the citta that develops mindfulness on breathing as a meditation subject of samatha is impermanent and non-self. We should not forget that the four Applications of Mindfulness include all the common realities of our daily life, such as pain, pleasant feeling, hearing, tasting, sound or tangible object. These are the objects of satipaṭṭhāna.

We have ignorance and wrong view of all realities, we see all the pleasant things of life as a true refuge. We do not realize that all conditioned dhammas are susceptible to change and decay. We should listen to the Dhamma as it is explained by the right friend in Dhamma. In India Acharn Sujin proved again and again to be our right friend in Dhamma. We should consider carefully what we learnt through her and apply it by the development of right understanding of nāma and rūpa. Gradually the characteristics of nāma and rūpa can be understood as they really are and they can be seen as impermanent, dukkha (unsatisfactory or suffering) and anattā, non-self. In this way we shall realize that Dhamma is our true refuge, that there is no external refuge.

We should know what can be the object of sati and paññā when satipaṭṭhāna is developed: one reality at a time as it appears through one of the sense-doors or the mind-door. When we taste a flavour we usually are forgetful of realities and we think of the concept of the flavour, such as an apple or a sweet. When we have studied the Dhamma there may be conditions for the arising of sati that is non-forgetful of the reality that appears. It can be mindful of the flavour and then understanding can develop of its true nature so that it can be realized as a rūpa appearing through the tongue. Flavour has a characteristic that can be known directly, without the need to think about it or to name it flavour. We can change the name flavour, but its characteristic is unalterable. Thus, characteristics of realities can be directly understood when they appear one at a time, without the need to think about them. Satipaṭṭhāna is at first very weak, we hardly know what it is. But when it arises more often we know. It is followed by thinking, but we can realize that it is thinking.

Acharn Sujin said: "The theory of satipaṭṭhāna is not too difficult, but there may not be enough conditions for the arising of right awareness. One is not used to the characteristic of awareness. If there can be thinking of nāma and rūpa, why can't there be awareness of them? Right now there is the test of one's understanding of seeing, hearing or thinking. While one is listening all realities arise and fall away because of the appropriate conditions... Paññā can know at which moment there is satipaṭṭhāna and at which moment there is not. Sati of satipaṭṭhāna arises and falls away very rapidly and one thinks about satipaṭṭhāna and the object of satipaṭṭhāna. Later on the difference between sati and thinking can be known. Paññā should be keen enough to see the difference. The eightfold Path is difficult because it has to be developed with detachment. Having the intention or the wish to develop it is not the Path; if one wishes to know a reality even if that reality seems to be clear, it is wrong, and paññā should be very keen to realize this. The Path cannot be developed by the intention to know realities. The wrong practice can only be eradicated by the path-consciousness (magga-citta) of the sotāpanna, the person who attains the first stage of enlightenment."

Satipaṭṭhāna is not concentration or trying to focus on a specific reality. There are so many pitfalls by which we mistake for satipaṭṭhāna what is not satipaṭṭhāna. For example, we experience for a moment just sound, no other reality and then we believe that this is satipaṭṭhāna. However, akusala citta with attachment can also experience the paramattha dhamma that is sound. Acharn Sujin spoke about hardness that can be experienced by different types of citta. She said that we all notice when something hard impinges on the bodysense, that also a child can notice this. Body-consciousness experiences hardness, it is vipākacitta, result of kamma, and this citta is not accompanied by awareness. One may fix one's attention with lobha on a paramattha dhamma such as hardness, but that is not satipaṭṭhāna. Or there may be a moment of sati and then immediately after that there is again lobha trying to hold on to the object. Cittas arise and pass away so fast. Paññā must be very keen to discern all tho-

se different moments. We are likely to have many misconceptions of what sati is. We forget that sati falls away in splitseconds, just like all other conditioned realities. Do we believe that sati does not fall away and, while it is lasting, that it can be aware now of this reality and then of that reality? We may have intellectual understanding of the fact that sati falls away immediately, but, unknowingly, we may still tend to hold on to sati as if it could last. We take sati for self and that is a hindrance to its arising.

Listening to the Dhamma and considering what we heard can condition the arising of sati. It depends on someone's accumulated inclinations how deeply he will consider what he hears. Nobody can control the arising of mindfulness, it all depends on the accumulated conditions for it. Nobody can control the object of mindfulness either. As we were often reminded: nobody can choose to see, nobody can choose to hear, nobody can choose to have sati. It will arise when there are the right conditions. We may try to have conditions as a support for paññā but this is motivated by clinging to the concept of self. Acharn Sujin stressed that we need more understanding of the truth of non-self as a firm foundation that can condition the arising of right awareness. She said:

"When a characteristic of a reality appears, do we just remember the name of that reality, or is there sati arising because of its own conditions? A reality such as seeing may appear, but it appears for a very short time, and then it falls away. Sati arises for a very short moment and then it falls away. Sati that is aware without trying to focus on a reality is right awareness. But the clinging to the concept of self comes in between all the time. It is very difficult to become detached from it. Gradually we can become familiar with the different characteristics that appear."

Acharn Sujin explained many times how important it is to be sincere as to one's own development. We should realize when there is satipaṭṭhāna and when there is not, we should realize what we understand already and what not yet. She stressed that it is the task of sati to be mindful of realities, not our task. If we deeply consider this, we shall be less inclined to think of sati with attachment, or to try to induce sati. By listening to the Dhamma and considering what we hear, right understanding of the way to develop satipaṭṭhāna grows, and thus, conditions are gradually accumulated for the arising of sati of satipaṭṭhāna. When sati of satipaṭṭhāna arises and is aware of a characteristic, paññā can understand what sati is and in this way the difference can be discerned between the moment that there is sati and the moment that there is forgetfulness of realities. When sati is mindful of a reality, paññā, understanding of that characteristic, can gradually develop.

Acharn Sujin reminded us many times that we should have no expectations with regard to the arising of sati and paññā:

"One can live happily with regard to the development of understanding, and this can be very natural. If there is very little paññā, one sees one's own accumulations and one knows that one cannot have what has not been accumula-

ted. Someone may dislike his accumulations, but if there is more understanding he will not be downhearted. When paññā arises there are no expectations, paññā conditions detachment. If there is not enough understanding and there is desire for sati and paññā, they cannot arise.

We should know, if there is an interest to listen, that it is not self who has an interest, but that it arises because of conditions."

When we were in Sarnath, the Head Monk, the Ven. Kahawatte Sri Sumedha, showed us great kindness and hospitality, inviting us to use his office for Dhamma discussions, and later on arranging for a "high tea" to be offered to us. While we were sitting at a long table in his office we heard every now and then the call of a bird that was kept there. When we hear sound, almost immediately we think of a concept. We should not try to avoid thinking of concepts, thinking arises naturally and it is also a kind of nāma. When we hear a bird's call or the voices of people it is natural to think of concepts, of mental images we have of animals and people. However, we do not think all the time, there are also other realities such as hearing, seeing or experiencing hardness. They arise and fall away in splitseconds, but we do not realize this and we remember concepts on account of what was perceived.

Nāma and rūpa are not concepts, they are not imaginary, but they are dhammas each with their own characteristic. When a characteristic of nāma or rūpa appears, sati can be aware of them without thinking of their names.

During our journey Acharn Sujin stressed often that no names or words are needed when there is awareness of characteristics of realities. This is a reminder for us, since we are so used to thinking in words about realities instead of being directly aware of them. She explained:

"Awareness should be natural; it just follows the moment of experiencing an object by 'studying' it with awareness, so that there is a beginning of understanding, instead of just thinking in words. Without thinking in words there can be right awareness of a reality, and awareness falls away. There should be no expectation of other moments of awareness."

Listening to Acharn Sujin's explanations is a condition for more understanding of paramattha dhammas, such as hearing and sound. Intellectual understanding of them is a foundation for the arising of direct awareness, provided we do not obstruct the arising of satipaṭṭhāna by wishing to have sati. When sound appears there must be the nāma which hears that sound, but paññā has to be developed so that it clearly understands nāma as nāma and rūpa as rūpa. Acharn Sujin explained:

"Rūpa cannot experience anything and nāma is quite different from rūpa. When sati of satipaṭṭhāna arises it is aware of only one characteristic at a time, for example of sound. There is nobody who hears, there is nothing else but sound and hearing that hears the sound. There is nobody at all, nowhere. If there is an idea of somewhere, there is thinking of some place, memory of pla-

ce and people, of me, of the whole body. When understanding of sound is developed, it is just sound. People try to focus, to concentrate with the idea of self. Sound is appearing and citta experiences it, there are only these realities. There is nobody in this room. This can be directly experienced by gradually developing right understanding and this is the right Path."

When we meet other people and we talk to them, we forget that, in the ultimate sense, there is nobody, that we are alone with nāma and rūpa. If we do not know the characteristic that appears we think of this or that person. There must be citta that experiences an object. Colour appears, thus there must be a citta that is seeing. Visible object or colour is the only rūpa that is visible, that can be seen. Seeing sees for an extremely short moment and then it is gone, and also visible object falls away, nothing remains. When we look at people they seem to last, and this is because we think for a long time of shape and form of people and of things. There are many different moments of thinking and these fall away. Thinking is a paramattha dhamma, but the concepts that are the objects of thinking are not paramattha dhammas. We can learn to discern the difference between concepts and paramattha dhammas. We cannot immediately have right understanding of paramattha dhammas, but we can begin to develop it.

I asked Acharn Sujin why, in particular, visible object seems to appear for a long time. She answered:

"It seems to appear for a long time, but when there is more understanding of it, it will appear more shortly. Only one kind of rūpa can be seen. When we are thinking of shape and form, it is remembrance of a concept, different from visible object. There is thinking and remembrance of what is seen. Other rūpas such as hardness or sound do not interest us as much as visible object."

The Buddha has taught us the truth of paramattha dhammas he had realized when he attained enlightenment, and that is why we can develop today right understanding of all phenomena of our life. From the following Sutta we can learn that the Dhamma is our true refuge when we see the five khandhas¹⁷, conditioned nāma and rūpa, as they are, as impermanent, dukkha and anattā, non-self. This understanding is developed through satipaṭṭhāna. We read in the Kindred Sayings (III, Khandhā-vagga, The First Fifty, Ch 5, On Being an Island to oneself¹⁸) that the Buddha said:

"Monks, be islands to yourselves, be your own refuge, having no other; let the Dhamma be an island and a refuge to you, having no other. Those who are islands to themselves... should investigate to the very heart of things: 'What is

¹⁷ The five khandhas are: rūpakkhandha, physical phenomena; vedanākkhandha, feelings; saññākkhandha, remembrance or perception; saṅkhārakkhandha, mental formations including all cetasikas except feeling and remembrance; viññāṇakkhandha, consciousness.

¹⁸ I used the translation by M O' C. Walshe, Wheel Publication No. 318-321.

the source of sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair? How do they arise?’

Here, monks the uninstructed worldling... regards the body as self, the self as having body, body as being in the self, or the self as being in the body. Change occurs in this man's body, and it becomes different. On account of this change and difference, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair arise. (similarly with feelings, perceptions, mental formations, consciousness.)

But seeing the body's impermanence, its changeability, its waning, its ceasing, he says, ‘formerly as well as now, all bodies were impermanent and unsatisfactory, and subject to change.’ Thus, seeing this as it really is, with perfect insight, he abandons all sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair. He is not worried at their abandonment, but unworried lives at ease, and thus living at ease he is said to be ‘assuredly delivered.’ " (Similarly with feelings, perceptions, mental formations and consciousness.)

Chapter 6

Clinging to Self

The Buddha taught that there is no self and therefore it was very appropriate that in all the holy sites Acharn Sujin reminded us of our clinging to a self. She said:

"We say that there is no self, but do we understand by insight knowledge realities as *nāma dhamma* and as *rūpa dhamma*? Nobody can change their characteristics, they have no owner. We have to listen in order to understand their characteristics and if there is gradually more understanding, *sati* will arise. It is the task of *sati* to be aware, not our task."

We cling to ourselves, to our actions, speech and thoughts, but we do not notice this. When we listen to the Dhamma or read a sutta, is there not an idea of self who is doing this? The test is always at this moment. Only *paññā* can eliminate clinging to the idea of self and all kinds of *lobha*, "we" cannot do this.

There are different ways of thinking of ourselves. We may think of ourselves with wrong view, *diṭṭhi*, or just with clinging that is unaccompanied by wrong view, or with conceit, *māna*. There are eight types of *citta* rooted in *lobha*, *lobha-mūla-cittas*, four of which are accompanied by wrong view and four without wrong view. Conceit can accompany *lobha-mūla-citta* that is without wrong view, but it does not arise all the time with these types of *lobha-mūla-*

citta¹⁹. Wrong view is eradicated at the attainment of the first stage of enlightenment, the stage of the streamwinner, sotāpanna. However, he can still think of himself with attachment, or with conceit.

We have accumulated these three ways of clinging to self for aeons. Attachment to sense objects, kāmarāga (which is lobha cetasika), wrong view, diṭṭhi, and conceit, māna, are latent tendencies, anusayas, that are very persistent. Latent tendencies are subtle defilements that lie dormant in the citta and do not arise with the citta, but they condition the arising of akusala dhammas time and again.

Acharn Sujin referred to a Sutta about lobha in the "Kindred Sayings", the "Resident Pupil" (IV, Kindred Sayings on Sense, Fourth Fifty, Ch 5, § 150), where lobha is compared to a resident pupil, a companion one lives with, and to a teacher, who tells someone what to do. Lobha is our life-long companion, it follows us everywhere. Lobha can also be compared to a teacher, who, as Acharn Sujin said, suggests going here or there, and who is followed by citta who obeys the teacher. There is seeing and then clinging, there is hearing and then clinging, there is thinking and then clinging. She said that we know the coarse lobha, but not the more subtle lobha. For example, when we are seeing now we may not notice that we like what we see, but still, there may be a subtle clinging to seeing or to visible object. We often do not notice it when there is akusala citta, in particular when attachment or aversion are not strong. When our objective is not dāna, sīla or bhāvana, our actions, speech and thoughts are motivated by akusala cittas, and these are bound to be lobha-mūla-cittas very often. When we, for example, are just daydreaming, we may not notice it when there is lobha.

We read in the Sutta of "The Resident Pupil" that the Buddha said:

“Without a resident pupil, monks, and without a teacher this righteous life is lived.

A monk who dwells with a resident pupil or dwells with a teacher dwells woe-fully, dwells not at ease. And how, monks, does a monk who has a resident pupil, who has a teacher, not dwell at ease?

Herein, monks, in a monk who sees an object with the eye, there arise evil, unprofitable states, memories and aspirations connected with fetters. Evil, unprofitable states are resident, reside in him. Hence he is called ‘co-resident’. They beset him, those evil, unprofitable states beset him. Therefore he is called ‘dwelling with a teacher.’

¹⁹ In the second Book of the Abhidhamma, the "Book of Analysis" Ch 17, "Analysis of Small Items" different ways of craving have been explained in connection with oneself. One thinks of oneself with craving, with wrong view and with conceit. Craving, taṇhā, wrong view, diṭṭhi and conceit, māna, are three factors that slow down the development of insight. They are also called papañca, diffuseness or aberrations. See my "In Asoka's Footsteps", Ch 4.

So also with the ear... the tongue... the mind... Thus, monks, a monk who has a resident pupil, who has a teacher dwells not at ease.”

The opposite has been stated about a monk who dwells without a resident pupil and without a teacher. He dwells at ease.

Acharn Sujin asked someone of our group who had gone shopping whether "the teacher" had told her to go to the market. Everything is dhamma, lobha and dosa are dhamma, but we still consider them as "my lobha", "my dosa". We had a Dhamma discussion sitting on the grass near the great Stupa in Sarnath, where the Buddha gave his first sermon to his five disciples. There were many people going around the Stupa and Burmese pilgrims were beating a drum and chanting to express their respect to the Buddha. After our discussion we were also going around the Stupa three times with lighted candles. Instead of thoughts of reverence I happened to have thoughts of dosa because of something that worried me. However, I remembered a conversation I had with a friend who had told me that we do not necessarily have wholesome thoughts at the holy sites. It is very natural that there are also akusala cittas. Then I considered that it did not matter to have dosa. Later on Acharn Sujin reminded me that even such thoughts can be motivated by lobha: someone may like it that he is unconcerned about his dosa. This shows again how easily we can be deceived with regard to ourselves.

Attachment to sense objects can only be eradicated at the attainment of the third stage of enlightenment, the stage of the non-returner, anāgāmī. First wrong view of realities, diṭṭhi, has to be eradicated before other defilements can be eradicated. We have the latent tendency of wrong view, diṭṭhanussaya, and this can condition the arising of lobha-mūla-citta (citta rooted in attachment) that is accompanied by wrong view. When we have studied the Dhamma we may have intellectual understanding of the Buddha's teaching on nāma and rūpa, but we may still follow the wrong practice instead of developing right understanding of what appears now. We may engage in wrong practice without noticing this. We may, for example, believe that we should visit the holy sites and pay respect to the Buddha's relics in order to have more sati of satipaṭṭhāna. Acharn Supee reminded us that we may try to induce sati by acting in a specific way. That is not the right Path. He explained that the "teacher" lobha may tell us to follow special techniques in order to gain more understanding, but that this is not the development of right understanding of realities that are conditioned and appear now.

Acharn Sujin always stresses that we cannot do anything to have sati, it arises because of its own conditions. When we listen to the Dhamma conditions for the arising of sati are accumulated. However, we may still unknowingly try to be aware. It is paññā that can detect such moments.

Conceit, māna, is another akusala cetasika that can arise with lobha-mūla-citta. When there is conceit we attach importance to ourselves. Because of conceit we compare ourselves with others: we think ourselves better, equal or less than someone else. However, also when we do not compare ourselves with others we may find ourselves important and then there is conceit. Acharn Su-

jin reminded us that even when we laugh, conceit may arise. When we laugh about the way someone else is dressed, there can be conceit: we may find that he is dressed in a funny way while we are well dressed. Also when we are with other people who tell us stories and we join in their laughter we may find ourselves important, we may attach importance to our way of laughing, our manners. Acharn Supee explained that when there is a sense of "me" and "he" there may already be conceit. Conceit may arise when we think of someone else who takes medicine while we do not have to take it; when we think of ourselves who perspire in the hot climate of India, while others do not; when we think of ourselves who have taken the food from the buffet table already while others have not yet; when we think of ourselves who visit the holy sites, while others do not. There are countless instances of thinking with conceit, but these are very intricate. When we have a thought of "me and the others" and our objective is not dāna, sīla or bhāvanā, very often conceit is bound to arise. Even when we think, "He sits there and I am here", there can already be conceit, Acharn Supee said.

When we have mettā, loving kindness, for someone else, we do not think with conceit, thus this is a way to have less akusala when we are with others. However, cittas arise and fall away very rapidly, and there may even be clinging to the idea of trying to have mettā instead of conceit. Mettā and conceit can arise very rapidly one after the other. Only paññā can know these different moments. Acharn Sujin said:

"If we try to analyse different moments it is not paññā, it is thinking. When there is more understanding there will be less thinking about 'me' all the time. We should think of other people rather than thinking of ourselves. Any time satipaṭṭhāna arises, it is so useful. It is like a drop of water falling in a big jar, even if it is a tiny drop."

In other words, eventually the jar will be filled with water, even if there is a little drop at a time. Evenso, a short moment of sati is useful, because it is accumulated little by little, so that right understanding can grow.

We learn that all realities are anattā, but we have wrong understanding of anattā. We forget that the reality appearing at this moment is anattā. Acharn Sujin stressed the importance of truthfulness and sincerity. We should be sincere as to our development of understanding and not pretend to know what we do not know yet. Someone asked what an "upright person" is. Acharn Sujin answered:

"An upright person knows that dhamma is dhamma, non-self. One becomes an upright person by listening, considering and awareness. When satipaṭṭhāna arises, and a person is aware of the characteristic that appears, studies it and understands it, he follows the right Path. He is not following another practice, different from the right Path. Gradually he studies realities and understands them, and he is not neglectful, so that insight knowledge can arise. He knows that he cannot select any object of satipaṭṭhāna."

She reminded us many times that the development of paññā should be very natural, that we can learn about our own accumulations. Lobha arises because it is accumulated, otherwise it would not arise. We have to be sincere, truthful. It is good to know our accumulated inclinations. Akusala arises, and thus we know that it has not been eradicated. Thus, we can learn from our akusala. This is the way to develop understanding.

Acharn Sujin explained in particular the different conditions for the arising of lobha, because it arises more often than we ever thought and we are inclined to take it for self. The Buddha taught twentyfour classes of conditions, paccayas, for the phenomena of our life, so that we can have more understanding of the truth of non-self. Nāma can condition nāma, rūpa can condition rūpa, nāma and rūpa can condition each other in various ways. Citta, cetasika and rūpa cannot arise without conditions.

There are several conditions that operate at the same time when a reality arises. The object citta experiences is one of the conditions for the arising of citta. Each citta experiences an object, and there cannot be citta without experiencing an object; the object conditions citta by way of object-condition, ārammaṇa-paccaya. Some objects are very desirable and then one gives preponderance to them; they condition the citta by way of object predominance-condition, ārammaṇādhipati-paccaya ²⁰. Only desirable objects can condition the citta by way of object predominance-condition, not unpleasant objects, such as painful feeling. Wholesomeness such as dāna or the development of right understanding can be object predominance-condition for the kusala citta that esteems it and gives preponderance to it. A desirable object that is experienced can condition lobha by way of object predominance-condition. In the hotels where we stayed there was a large selection of delicious foods displayed on the buffet table in the dining hall. Each one of us selected different dishes. Acharn Sujin said:

"When you go to select food, what conditions the selection? When an object is so very pleasant, you will not let go of it, you want to have it more than anything else. When you see many different things and you select something in particular, this is because of the object predominance-condition, the object conditions one to cling to it. Lobha is so attached to that object."

When we like an object, we may want to have it again and again, not merely once. We accumulate clinging to that particular object. That object conditions clinging by way of object strong dependence-condition, ārammaṇūpanissaya-paccaya ²¹; it has become a powerful inducement, a cogent reason for lobha. Acharn Sujin said:

²⁰ Ārammaṇa means object and adhipati means predominance.

²¹ Upanissaya means support or dependence. Ārammaṇūpanissaya-paccaya is also translated as decisive support-condition of object.

"You may like a special kind of fruit, and it will happen again that you like it. That object becomes your strong dependence-condition for continuing to like it; you like it not just once. You want to have it again and again, and this becomes a habit. That is why we like different things."

The teaching of conditions is not theory, we can understand conditions whenever they appear. We can know what object we like in particular and what object can be a strong dependence-condition for liking it. Thus, in the case of clinging, the object predominance-condition indicates that the object is highly desirable so that it conditions lobha to have preference for it. The object that is strong dependence-condition indicates that lobha becomes strongly dependent on it, that it is a cogent reason for lobha. These conditions do not operate only in the case of defilements, but also in the case of kusala citta.

There are several more conditions for the arising of lobha in daily life. We accumulate different tendencies, different likes and dislikes, because each citta that arises and falls away is immediately succeeded by the next citta without any interval. Each citta conditions the succeeding citta by way of proximity-condition, *anantara-paccaya*²². That is why all our accumulated tendencies can go on from one citta to the next citta, from life to life. Another condition that concerns the way a preceding citta conditions the succeeding citta is the proximity strong dependence-condition, *anantarupanissaya-paccaya*²³. This condition is similar to the proximity-condition, but it is not identical. The proximity strong dependence-condition indicates how forcefully a preceding citta can condition the subsequent citta: the preceding citta is a cogent reason for the arising of the subsequent citta. Thus, with regard to proximity-condition and proximity strong dependence-condition there is a difference in the conditioning force that brings about the appropriate effect. When, for example, strong dosa, aversion, arises quite suddenly, we may ask ourselves how that could happen. Our accumulated dosa conditions the arising of dosa at the right time; the preceding citta is then a powerful inducement for the arising of such a degree of dosa at the succeeding moment. It has to happen, it is beyond control, because it is depending on the appropriate conditions. This is also true for lobha, and for kusala. Our accumulated tendencies are carried on from moment to moment in the series of cittas of which our life consists. This series must go on and on from this life to the next life, by way of proximity-condition and by way of proximity strong dependence-condition. Nothing can arrest this chain of life except the dying-consciousness of the arahat, which is not succeeded by rebirth-consciousness.

The wholesome and unwholesome tendencies we accumulate today condition future moments of kusala citta and akusala citta. They condition these by way

²² Anantara means without any interval.

²³ This is also translated as decisive support of proximity-condition.

of natural strong dependence-condition, pakatupanissaya-paccaya ²⁴, another condition among the twentyfour classes of conditions. We think of kusala and akusala that we performed as "ours", but they are just dhammas, devoid of self, that arise because of their own conditions. We see that people have different manners, different ways of walking or sitting. This is due to experiences and tendencies accumulated in the past.

Thus, there are three kinds of strong dependence-condition:

object strong dependence-condition
 proximity strong dependence-condition
 natural strong dependence-condition

The Buddha realized the conditions for all phenomena of life thoroughly when he attained Buddhahood. All these conditions are realities, not terms, but the terms are needed to explain realities.

When we listen to the Dhamma the tendency to listen and to consider what we hear is accumulated from moment to moment. Right understanding can become an object strong dependence-condition: we see the value of understanding based on listening and this conditions us to listen again and again. We accumulate the tendency to listen and to consider what we hear, this becomes a natural strong dependence-condition for right understanding. The different conditions that play their part in our life are very intricate. Understanding that arises with the citta can condition the arising of a succeeding moment of understanding, not only by way of proximity condition, but also by way of proximity strong dependence-condition, anantarupanissaya-paccaya. The accumulation of sobhana cetasikas such as confidence, saddhā and mindfulness, sati, and other wholesome qualities may be ready to condition that very moment of paññā. When the accumulated conditions are sufficient they can condition higher levels of paññā: stages of insight knowledge and even lokuttara (supramundane) paññā, arising at the attainment of enlightenment, but "we" cannot induce this. It is most valuable to understand more about the different kinds of conditions that play their part in our life. This understanding will prevent us from following the wrong Path and it will help us to realize this moment as non-self, no matter it is kusala or akusala.

The Buddha exhorted people to eradicate akusala and to develop kusala, but can "we" do this? Acharn Sujin said:

"Is it correct to say that a self can eradicate akusala and develop kusala? Kusala is dhamma and akusala is dhamma, they arise because of their appropriate conditions. One does not like to have akusala, and one likes to have kusala,

²⁴ Pakati means natural. The natural strong dependence-condition is very wide, it also includes, for example, kusala that can condition the arising of akusala later on, or akusala that can condition the arising of kusala later on .

but can kusala arise often? If there is right understanding, it is a condition to have gradually less akusala, because one can be aware of akusala as akusala. But there is no self who wants to have kusala and to eradicate akusala. Kusala and akusala are anattā. We can verify for ourselves whether we can have kusala to the degree we wish or not."

If there are no conditions for kusala, we cannot force its arising. There are many degrees of kusala that can eliminate akusala. It depends on the individual to which kind of kusala he is mostly inclined, to dāna, sīla, samatha or to the development of right understanding.

We read in the "Dhammapada" (Khuddaka Nikāya), vs. 183:

“Not to do any evil, to cultivate wholesomeness, to purify one's mind,- this is the teaching of the Buddhas.”

This is a short text but deep in meaning. When we develop right understanding of all realities appearing through the six doors we "purify the mind". Then we can see akusala and kusala as dhammas that arise because of the appropriate conditions and that are non-self. This understanding is the condition to refrain from akusala and to cultivate kusala.

Chapter 7

The Understanding of the four noble Truths

Attachment, lobha, and aversion, dosa, frequently arise in our daily life. We know in theory that they are dhammas, non-self, but when they arise, do we realize them as only nāma elements? We notice it when we have dosa but we think about "our dosa" or name it dosa, instead of realizing it as a nāma element. Lobha and dosa are cetasikas accompanying akusala citta. In theory we know that citta is different from cetasika. Citta experiences an object, it is the chief in knowing the object, and the accompanying cetasikas that share the same object have each their own characteristic and function. Lobha and dosa are different cetasikas. We can begin to be aware of them when they appear, but only when paññā has been developed to the stage of insight knowledge can it clearly see lobha and dosa as nāma elements devoid of self. At this moment we still confuse the characteristic of nāma such as seeing with rūpa such as visible object, and thus, we are bound to take them for self. It is necessary to listen to the Dhamma and consider it over and over again, otherwise there is no foundation for right awareness of nāma and rūpa. This should not discourage us, we can continue to study with awareness any kind of reality that appears. This kind of study is the beginning of understanding the characteristics of realities. Acharn Sujin said:

"Intellectual understanding is not enough, it is only thinking about realities. But knowing this is in itself a condition for right awareness. Awareness can arise very naturally. We touch many things in a day without awareness. When there is a moment of right understanding, there is sati, samādhi (concentration or one-pointedness) and effort, and there is no need to think, "I should try more." There is effort already. The understanding of non-self will grow. Nobo-

dy can condition anything, even a reality such as sound. Sound arises when there are conditions for it. Who can do anything? There are conditions for each reality."

Effort, viriya, is a cetasika arising with many cittas, it can accompany akusala citta and kusala citta. Thus, when there is mindfulness of a nāma or rūpa, effort, viriya, accompanies the kusala citta. With regard to concentration, samādhi, this is a cetasika that accompanies each citta, thus also the kusala citta with mindfulness. We should not try to focus on one particular dhamma, then there is a concept of self who selects an object of mindfulness and that is a hindrance to the development of paññā.

The last day of a long and strenuous bus journey we traveled from Gaya to Nālandā and then on to Patna. The road from Gaya to Nālandā was full of deep holes, and while the bus was trying to avoid these holes it was rocking to and fro, from side to side, like a boat going on a rough sea. We had lunch in the Thai monastery of Nālandā where we offered dāna to the monks. After Nālandā the bus was frequently held up in the towns and villages where huge, sometimes frightening crowds celebrated the last day of the Hindu festival of Durka Pujjā. We arrived in Patna around nine in the evening and this was the end of our two weeks journey. This extremely long day caused me to have severe stomach aches while sitting in the bus and during these moments I was considering painful feeling and pondering over it. Later on, in Patna, Acharn Sujin reminded me of the difference between awareness and thinking:

"There is still the idea of, 'it is my pain'. Even though pain has a characteristic it is still me, me, me. There can be thinking, 'pain is not mine, it is just a reality', but pain arises and falls away while there is thinking about it. Do we really know nāma and rūpa? We should know that pain is a reality which is nāma, but is there development of understanding of any kind of dhamma so that insight knowledge, vipassanā ñāṇa can arise? Everyone knows that there is pain, but it is 'my pain' until it is understood as just a reality. The concept of me or mine is deeply rooted, until understanding is developed to the stage that nāma is realized as nāma and rūpa as rūpa.

There can be awareness of a reality as nāma, as just the reality that experiences, even if it is not clear yet. It is developing, there can be some understanding of the characteristic of nāma. When paññā has been developed to the degree of vipassanā ñāṇa the understanding of nāma and rūpa will be clearer. How can that degree of understanding arise if there are no moments of developing understanding now? Paññā has to begin."

When sati of satipaṭṭhāna arises, it can be aware of realities that appear through the six doorways. One can begin to be aware of nāma, the reality that experiences, and rūpa, the reality that does not experience, even though their characteristics are not yet clearly understood. Gradually, there can be more understanding of nāma and rūpa.

There are seven kinds of rūpa that appear all the time in daily life: visible object appears through the eye-door, sound through the ear-door, odour through the nose-door, and flavour through the tongue-door. Through the bodysense there is the experience of solidity, appearing as hardness or softness, temperature, appearing as heat or cold, and motion, appearing as motion or pressure. After these rūpas have been experienced through their relevant sense-doors, they are experienced through the mind-door. Afterwards other mind-door processes of cittas arise that know concepts on account of the rūpas that have been experienced. Processes of cittas experiencing rūpas through the sense-door and then through the mind-door arise and fall away extremely rapidly. We do not notice it that a particular rūpa is experienced through the mind-door after it has been experienced through a sense-door. We are ignorant of the mind-door process. Nāmas, citta and cetasika, are experienced only through the mind-door. When there is awareness of seeing it has arisen in a sense-door process and then fallen away, but its characteristic still appears and it can be object of mindfulness arising in another process.

We listen to the Dhamma and in this way we have more understanding of the reality appearing at this moment, be it nāma or rūpa, be it kusala or akusala. When understanding based on listening has been developed there are conditions for the arising of direct awareness of the characteristics of nāma and rūpa as they appear one at a time. When satipaṭṭhāna has been developed more thoroughly, stages of vipassanā ñāṇa, insight knowledge, can be reached. The first stage is: distinguishing the difference between the characteristic of nāma and the characteristic of rūpa, nāma-rūpa-pariccheda-ñāṇa. This kind of paññā realizes through the mind-door the difference between nāma and rūpa. A moment of insight knowledge is different from the moments when nāma and rūpa seem to appear together, such as seeing and visible object. When insight knowledge arises there is no self, nāma and rūpa appear one at a time as non-self. There is no world, no thinking of concepts of person or thing, there is nothing else appearing but nāma and rūpa.

When nāma and rūpa appear as they are through the mind-door, there is no doubt about what nāma is and what rūpa is, and no confusion about what the mind-door is. There is no thinking about the different doorways, the cittas arising in a sense-door process and the mind-door process succeed one another extremely rapidly. After the moments of vipassanā ñāṇa have fallen away, doubt arises again, and thus, one has to continue developing insight so that the following stages of vipassanā ñāṇa can arise. However, one should be detached and not try to reach higher stages. Acharn Sujin said:

"Ignorance and desire are hindrances to the development of vipassanā. One should not be interested in it whether the next stage of vipassanā ñāṇa arises or not, otherwise there are expectations again. It does not matter when the next stage of vipassanā ñāṇa arises. With vipassanā ñāṇa, paññā has reached another level. Paññā is non-self."

So long as enlightenment has not been attained, the idea of self has not been eradicated yet and one has to continue developing satipaṭṭhāna so that higher stages of insight can be reached and eventually enlightenment can be attained.

At this moment lobha and dosa may appear, but they do not appear as merely dhammas, elements devoid of self. Acharn Sujin said, "Kusala and akusala appear, but it is 'us' all the time. We think of kusala or akusala that has fallen away with an idea of self."

Someone asked, when lobha and dosa are realized as only nāmas, whether their different characteristics are also known. They have different characteristics but now we do not know them yet as nāmas. When paññā has been developed to the degree of insight knowledge, their characteristics do not change, but they are realized as nāma elements devoid of self. Paññā realizes akusala as dhamma and kusala as dhamma, it realizes all that appears as dhamma. We discussed different sounds that can be loud or soft, and different flavours that can be sweet or sour. Someone wondered whether these different characteristics appear when there is awareness and they are realized as just rūpa. Acharn Sujin answered:

"Citta can experience everything, there is no need to use the names low or loud sound. Citta can know everything and paññā can understand everything that appears."

It is the same with the different flavours, their characteristics cannot be altered; they are, for example, sweet or sour and they appear as such. Paññā can realize them as only rūpa, and this is different from thinking of concepts, such as an apple that is sour or sugar that is sweet. There can be awareness of realities as they naturally appear, we should not imagine that there is a neutral sound or a neutral flavour.

Someone had doubts whether it would ever be possible to attain insight knowledge. Acharn Sujin answered that what the Buddha taught is the truth and that what is true can be realized. If we do not know the characteristic of the reality appearing at this moment we cannot realize the four noble Truths and become enlightened. The understanding of the four noble Truths is not merely knowing their names: the noble truth of dukkha, of the origin of dukkha, of the cessation of dukkha and of the way leading to the cessation of dukkha. Dukkha is the truth that all conditioned phenomena are impermanent and thus unsatisfactory, that they are no refuge. The origin of dukkha is craving: so long as there is craving we are in the cycle of birth and death and there is no end to dukkha. The cessation of dukkha is nibbāna. The way leading to the cessation of dukkha is the eightfold Path. The Truth of dukkha has to be understood, the Truth of the origin of dukkha, craving, has to be abandoned, the Truth of the cessation of dukkha, nibbāna, has to be realized, and the Truth of the way leading to the cessation of dukkha has to be developed.

We read in the "Kindred Sayings" (V, The Great Chapter, Kindred Sayings about the Truths, Ch 2, The Foundation of the Kingdom of the Dhamma), that

the Buddha, when he was dwelling at Isipatana, in the Deer-park, explained to the five disciples the four noble Truths.

The Commentary to this Sutta, the "Sāratthappakāsinī, explains about three "rounds" ²⁵ of realizing the four noble Truths:

knowledge of the truth, sacca ñāṇa

knowledge of the task that has to be performed, kicca ñāṇa

knowledge of the task that has been done, kata ñāṇa ²⁶

We read in the Sutta referred to above (in § 2) that the Buddha, after he explained the four noble Truths, said:

“ Monks, at the thought: This is the noble Truth about dukkha, - there arose in me, concerning things unlearnt before by Tathāgatas ²⁷, vision, insight, understanding and wisdom, there arose in me light.

Monks, at the thought: This noble Truth about dukkha is to be understood...

At the thought: This noble Truth about dukkha has been understood (by me), - there arose in me, concerning things unlearnt before by Tathāgatas, vision, insight, understanding and wisdom, there arose in me light.

Monks, at the thought: This is the noble Truth about the arising of dukkha... there arose in me light.

Monks, at the thought: This arising of dukkha must be put away...

Monks, at the thought: This arising of dukkha has been put away... there arose in me light.”

In the same way the Buddha explained about the third noble Truth, the ceasing of dukkha: the comprehension of it, knowledge of the task, namely, that it is to be realized, and knowledge that it has been realized. He explained about the fourth noble Truth, the way leading to the ceasing of dukkha: the comprehension of it, knowledge of the task, namely that it has to be developed, and knowledge that it has been developed.

Acharn Sujin referred very often to these three "rounds" or phases and explained that without the first phase, the firm understanding of what the four noble Truths are, there cannot be the second phase, the performing of the task,

²⁵ In Pāli parivattam, which means cycle or round. There are three rounds or intertwined phases, that is to say, one phase runs into the next one. As will be explained, when there is the second phase, the first phase is not abandoned, and when there is the third phase, the first and the second phases are not abandoned.

²⁶ Sacca means truth and ñāṇa means knowledge; kicca means task; kata means what has been done.

²⁷ Tathāgata or "thus gone", an epithet of the Buddha.

that is, satipaṭṭhāna, nor the third phase, the fruit of the practice, that is, the penetration of the true nature of realities.

With regard to the first phase, she said that there should be the firm intellectual understanding of the first noble Truth, and that means understanding that there is dhamma at this moment, that everything that appears is dhamma. Dukkha is the characteristic of dhamma that arises and falls away at this moment. We cannot control what has arisen because of conditions. It only lasts for an extremely short time, it has to fall away. When seeing appears there cannot be hearing, hearing must have fallen away. There can only be one citta at a time experiencing an object. Seeing, hearing or thinking are insignificant dhammas that arise just for an extremely short moment and are then gone. They are impermanent and thus dukkha, unsatisfactory.

As regards the second noble Truth, we should thoroughly understand that attachment is the cause of dukkha. We should realize it when we cling to the idea of self. When we are seeing, thinking or considering the Dhamma there may be an idea of self who does so. When we are looking for ways and means to have more awareness, we cling to wrong practice which causes us to deviate from the right Path. Wrong practice prevents us from naturally developing the understanding of realities. It is necessary to have a keener and more refined knowledge of attachment, otherwise it cannot be eradicated. We can find out that it arises countless times, more often than we ever thought.

As regards the third noble Truth, this is nibbāna, and nibbāna means the end of clinging and all other defilements. We should have the firm intellectual understanding that detachment and the eradication of defilements is the goal. We should be convinced that it is possible to attain this goal if we follow the right Path.

As regards the fourth Noble Truth, the way leading to the end of dukkha, we should have the firm understanding that the development of satipaṭṭhāna is the only way leading to this goal. We should understand the difference between right view and wrong view. When we are really convinced that there is no other way but the development of satipaṭṭhāna, we shall not deviate from the right Path. Thus, we should not hanker after the past nor cling to the future, we should be aware of any reality appearing now.

When we listen to the Dhamma and consider what we hear the intellectual understanding of realities, that is, the first phase, sacca ñāṇa, gradually develops and then it can condition the arising of satipaṭṭhāna. This means that the second phase, knowledge of the task, kicca ñāṇa, begins to develop. The practice, paṭipatti, is actually knowledge of the task that is to be performed, kicca ñāṇa. Thus, there are different levels of paññā: intellectual understanding based on listening to the Dhamma, and paññā accompanied by sati that is directly aware of the characteristics of realities appearing now through one of the six doorways. These are the dhammas we studied and considered before, but now they can gradually be verified and directly understood. Knowing the difference between the moment there is no sati but only thinking about nāma and rūpa, and the moment there is awareness of one characteristic of nāma or rūpa at a time is the beginning of the development of satipaṭṭhāna. Gradually

we shall realize nāma as nāma, and rūpa as rūpa, we shall realize their different characteristics.

When one has reached the second phase, knowledge of the task or the practice, the first phase, intellectual understanding of the truth, is not abandoned but develops further. One understands more deeply what the four noble Truths are and one sees more clearly that satipaṭṭhāna, awareness of what appears now is the only way leading to detachment from the idea of self and to nibbāna which is the end of defilements. The clinging to self is deeply accumulated and very persistent. When paññā develops it sees even the more subtle clinging to a self or the clinging to sati. A moment of right awareness is very short and attachment can arise in between moments of awareness. If paññā is not keen enough, one will deviate from the right Path. There cannot be immediately clear understanding of realities, but we can begin to develop understanding of the realities we used to take for people, beings and things.

Acharn Sujin reminded us that we should not move away from the present moment and that we should abandon desire for sati. She said that it seems that we wish to develop sati, reach the stages of insight and attain enlightenment, all for our own sake. However, the goal of the development of satipaṭṭhāna should be understanding of the truth of anattā, thus, the truth that there is no "me".

When the first stage of insight knowledge arises, paññā has reached a higher level. At the first stage of insight the difference between nāma and rūpa is realized, but not yet their arising and falling away. As we have seen, there is at that moment no notion of self, no world, only nāma and rūpa. However, paññā has to be developed further. One begins to realize the arising and falling away of realities at the third stage of insight knowledge, and more fully at the fourth stage that is called the first stage of mahā-vipassanā ñāṇa. In the course of the different stages of insight paññā penetrates more thoroughly the three characteristics of impermanence, dukkha and anattā, and it realizes the danger and disadvantages of conditioned dhammas, of nāma and rūpa. Paññā sees the unconditioned dhamma, nibbāna, as true peace, as the deliverance from conditioned dhammas. When finally nibbāna is attained, the four noble Truths are penetrated, and the third phase, kata ñāṇa, which through the successive stages of insight knowledge has gradually been developing, has become more accomplished.

When the third phase develops, the first and the second phases are not finished or abandoned, they also develop together with it. Thus we see that there are many degrees in each of the three phases of knowledge of the four noble Truths. They are intertwined phases. When the first stage of enlightenment, the stage of the "streamwinner", sotāpanna, is attained, the latent tendency of wrong view and of doubt about realities is completely eradicated. However, before enlightenment was attained, the tendencies to wrong view and doubt were gradually being eliminated by the development of insight, otherwise they could not become completely eradicated. After the first stage of enlightenment has been attained, paññā has to develop further to the second, the third and the fourth stage of enlightenment. At the stage of arahatship the task has been

completely fulfilled: what had to be understood has been fully penetrated and what had to be abandoned has been completely eradicated.

Acharn Sujin stressed the importance of the three phases because they make it apparent that sati and paññā of satipaṭṭhāna can only arise when there are the right conditions, a firm foundation knowledge of what the objects of satipaṭṭhāna are and of the way of its development, that is, the development of right understanding of dhamma appearing now. The three phases make it clear that the development of satipaṭṭhāna is very gradual and they remind us of the importance of the goal of the development of understanding: detachment from the clinging to self and the abandonment of all defilements.

In the following sutta we are reminded that ignorance and wrong view give rise to all kinds of akusala, whereas right understanding leads to freedom from all defilements. The "streamwinner", sotāpanna, who has attained the first stage of enlightenment, has eradicated wrong view and wrong practice, he cannot deviate from the right Path. He has no more conditions to commit evil deeds leading to an unhappy rebirth. We read in the "Gradual Sayings" (Book of the Tens, Ch XI, § 5, By knowledge):

“Monks, when ignorance leads the way, by the reaching of states unprofitable, shamelessness and recklessness follow in its train. In one who is swayed by ignorance and is void of sense, wrong view springs up. Wrong view gives rise to wrong thinking, wrong thinking to wrong speech, wrong speech to wrong action, wrong action to wrong livelihood, wrong livelihood to wrong effort, wrong effort to wrong mindfulness, wrong mindfulness to wrong concentration, that to wrong knowledge, and that to wrong release.

But, monks, when knowledge leads the way, by the attainment of profitable states, the sense of shame and self-restraint follow in its train. In one who is swayed by knowledge and has good sense, right view springs up. Right view gives rise to right thinking... right concentration gives rise to right knowledge, and that to right release.”

Chapter 8

The Cycle of Birth and Death

In Lumbini we sat down for a Dhamma discussion near the pool that reminds us of the two streams of water coming down from the sky which were used as a water libation for the Bodhisatta and his mother, just after he was born. As we read in the Commentary to the "Chronicle of Buddhas" (the "Clarifier of Sweet Meaning"), the Bodhisatta took seven strides and, scanning all the quarters of the world, he said: "I am chief in the world, I am best in the world, I am eldest in the world. This is the last birth, there is not now again-becoming."

We still cling to rebirth and we are very far from reaching the end of rebirth. We cling to the five khandhas that constitute what we call a "person". One of our friends asked Acharn Sujin why the five khandhas are a burden. She was referring to the following sutta: "The Burden" (Kindred Sayings III, Khandhāvagga, Kindred Sayings on Elements, First Fifty, Ch 3, §22) ²⁸. We read:

"Monks, I will explain to you the burden, the laying hold of the burden, the holding on to the burden, the laying down of the burden. Listen.

What, monks, is the burden?

'The five khandhas of clinging' is the answer. Which five? They are the khandha of clinging to corporeality... to feelings... to perceptions... to mental formations... to consciousness. This, monks, is called 'the burden'.

What is the laying hold of the burden?

The answer is that it is the person, the Venerable So-and-so, of such-and-such a family. This, monks, is called 'the laying hold of the burden'.

What is the holding on to the burden? The answer is that it is that craving which gives rise to fresh rebirth and, bound up with lust and greed, now here now there finds ever fresh delight. It is sensual craving, craving for existence,

²⁸ I used the translation by M.Walshe, Wheel no. 318-321, B.P.S. Kandy.

craving for non-existence. This, monks, is called 'the holding on to the burden.'

What is the laying down of the burden? It is the complete fading away and extinction of this craving, its forsaking and giving up, liberation and detachment from it. This, monks, is called 'the laying down of the burden.'

Thus said the Blessed One, the Wellfarer spoke thus; the Teacher then said:

The five khandhas are the heavy load,
The seizing of the load is man.
Holding it is dukkha,
Laying down the load is bliss (sukha).
Laying down this heavy load,
And no other taking up,
By uprooting all desire,
Hunger is stilled, Nibbāna is gained."

Acharn Sujin said about seeing the five khandhas as a burden:

"The body, rūpakkhandha, is a burden, because we have to look after it from birth to death. Also the nāma-khandhas are a burden, but we do not consider them as a burden. We have to see and we have to hear already for countless aeons. We are not tired of seeing. It is not self. It must arise, it lasts for an extremely short while and then it must fall away, it is dukkha. Visible object impinges just for a moment on the eyesense, it is seen and then it falls away. Realities appear through the six doors very shortly and then fall away, there is nothing left. We keep on thinking on account of what is experienced through the six doors, but there is no self who thinks. There must be right understanding so that the khandhas can be seen as a burden."

So long as there is ignorance and clinging the khandhas have to arise again and again, there will be the continuation of the cycle of birth and death. The khandhas have to arise and to fall away, and thus, they are dukkha. In the above-quoted sutta it is explained that craving, the second noble Truth is the cause of dukkha and that the extinction of craving means the ceasing of dukkha.

After our discussion we showed our respect to the Buddha by walking three times around in the area of the pillar erected by King Asoka. This pillar, impressive because of its simplicity, has the inscription commemorating King Asoka's visit:

"By His Sacred and Gracious Majesty the King, when he had been consecrated twenty years, having come in person and reverence having been done- inasmuch as 'Here was born Buddha, the sage of the Sākyas'- a stone bearing a horse was caused to be made and a stone pillar was erected.

Inasmuch as 'Here the Holy One was born,' the village of Lurṃmini was released from religious cesses and required to pay one-eighth as land revenue."

One can still see the small remnant of an old statue placed on the ground next to the pillar.

During our pilgrimages in India we always discussed the perfections, pāramīs, accumulated by the Buddha during his lives as a Bodhisatta. The perfections are most important, because if they are not developed together with sati-
paṭṭhāna defilements cannot be eradicated. Each of the perfections helps to eliminate the clinging to the idea of self and they can support the paññā which can eventually eradicate all defilements. The perfections are: liberality, morality, renunciation, wisdom, energy, patience, truthfulness, resolution, loving kindness and equanimity. These qualities are only perfections when they are developed without thinking to gain something for oneself. They should be developed with the aim of having less selfishness, less defilements. Acharn Sujin explained that we should not think, "Now I shall develop this perfection, then that", because then we try to develop them with an idea of self. The development of the perfections is conditioned by listening to the Dhamma. If we do not listen and study there is a concept of self who performs kusala. She said:

"When we listen to the Dhamma there is the perfection of patience already. There can be perfections at each moment of our life, and there is no need to think of a specific perfection. There can be more patience. We accumulate the perfections and see ever more clearly the ugliness of akusala. However, when there are conditions, akusala arises."

Dāna is opposed to lobha, dosa and moha. When we are generous, there is alobha, non-attachment, otherwise we would not be able to give. There is also adosa, non-aversion: there is no aversion or sadness when the receiver is unkind and does not appreciate our gift. When we are angry, we are absorbed in an idea of a person instead of being aware of nāma and rūpa. At the moment of generosity there cannot be moha, the cetasika arising with all akusala cittas. All perfections are opposed to lobha, dosa and moha. When satipaṭṭhāna arises at the moments we perform wholesome deeds, the idea of self who performs them can be eliminated. When mettā arises, there is also patience, patience with regard to people and circumstances. In Savatthī we had a bad hotel room full of insects everywhere, even in bed. One of our friends laughed about it that these crawled into her ears. Acharn Sujin reminded me that if we would complain and ask for a change of room, someone else would have the uncomfortable room and thus, we would have lack of mettā, we would think of ourselves instead of other people. When we see the value of mettā we can develop it. We can understand that whatever happens arises because of conditions. Akusala kamma conditions akusala vipāka and kusala kamma conditions kusala vipāka, nobody can prevent this. Sometimes we have to experience an unpleasant object and sometimes a pleasant object. We admired Acharn Sujin's great patience when she had to pose for the cameras countless times. Sometimes she could not take any step without the cameras being focussed on her. She told me that she just thinks of the happiness of others. Thus, mettā conditions patience. When we were in Kusināra, in the temple of the reclining Bud-

dha, we recollected the Buddha's parinibbāna. Ever since the moment of his enlightenment until his passing away he had taught satipaṭṭhāna, the only way leading to the end of the cycle of birth and death, and he himself had reached the end of the cycle. The monk held a long discourse and it was extremely hot in this temple. Acharn Sujin reminded me that we should have mettā for the monk who held the discourse. If there is mettā we have no aversion. When we were sitting near the Bodhi Tree in Bodhgaya there was a good opportunity to express my appreciation of all the kusala performed by my friends. This is a way of dāna, it is anumodana ²⁹ dāna. I paid respect to Acharn Sujin who had given us so much Dhamma every day, explaining to us with great patience the development of satipaṭṭhāna and helping us to see our clinging to the self more and more. I also expressed my appreciation to all my friends who had been full of kindness to me and had helped me with their generosity and consideration in many ways. When during bus stops we had to walk through bushes and on rough grounds there was always someone helping me. Or when I was coughing I immediately received a medicine from one of my friends.

The morning before our departure from the hotel in Gaya, I said to Acharn Supee that, when I would be back in Holland, I would miss the company of my friends and the countless Dhamma reminders we received all day. We had the following conversation:

Supee: "The firm understanding of the Dhamma is the condition for the arising of sati of the level of considering, even though it is not yet of the level of direct awareness, satipaṭṭhāna. We can consider the Dhamma everywhere, it does not matter what we are doing."

Nina: "But in India we have more opportunities for Dhamma conversations and for considering the Dhamma."

Supee: "There are more conditions in India, but if the understanding of realities is firm enough, there are conditions for the arising of satipaṭṭhāna, even if you have complicated work to do. If one's understanding is not firm enough, one can read the scriptures and study them, so that there are more conditions for sati of the level of considering realities. When we have Dhamma discussions with friends there are conditions for the arising of sati of the level of considering realities, but this is not sufficient. Satipaṭṭhāna can arise in daily life, also when your work is complicated, and it can be aware of all kinds of realities in all circumstances. Even when you are angry, there can also be awareness of anger. We should not select a specific situation and believe that we have to be with Dhamma friends."

Nina: "We cannot select a particular situation or force the arising of sati. The arising of sati depends on the conditions in the case of each individual, people are not the same."

Supee: "In the beginning satipaṭṭhāna does not have enough strength. It seems that it arises more often when we have Dhamma discussions with friends, but

²⁹ Anumodana means thanksgiving or appreciation.

it does not arise naturally in daily life. When satipaṭṭhāna is firmly established there are conditions for its arising, no matter where we are, and it can be aware of all realities. Paññā becomes keener and more refined.”

Nina: “It is paññā that performs its own task. I always forget that it is not self who understands.”

Supee:” It is natural that we have an idea of self who considers the Dhamma. Paññā should become keener so that it can understand that it is not self who considers the Dhamma. When there is more understanding, paññā realizes that even an idea of self considering the teachings is also a dhamma, a reality.”

Nina: “I understand more that there is clinging to a self so often.”

Supee: “There can gradually be more understanding about the clinging to a self, paññā can realize all such moments. When paññā is keener it knows that it is a kind of nāma that clings to the idea of self. Paññā can understand the more subtle lobha and the other defilements.

If there is no awareness and understanding of all realities, there is lobha that selects to go to a particular place in order to hear Dhamma discussions. One may want to avoid doing complicated work. There may be paññā that sees the value of Dhamma discussions or there may be lobha that selects such a situation. The moments of clinging and of real understanding are very close.”

Nina: “The moments of lobha and of paññā arise alternately.

There may be wrong practice but we may not notice this. Even when there is an idea of self who guides just a little it prevents us from knowing the present moment. We may unknowingly separate satipaṭṭhāna from daily life. Wrong practice does not lead out of the cycle of birth and death whereas right practice does. We still cling to rebirth and we may not see the disadvantage and danger of rebirth. However, we may come to see the ugliness of defilements and the benefit of having less defilements. When all defilements have been eradicated by paññā, it means that there will be no more rebirth. We read in the "Kindred Sayings" (II, Nidāna-vagga, Kindred Sayings on Cause, Ch I, § 3, The Way) that the Buddha, while dwelling near Sāvattihī, said to the monks:

“Which, monks, is the wrong way? ‘Conditioned by ignorance activities come to pass; conditioned by activities consciousness’... even (the way of) the uprising of this entire mass of dukkha. This is called the wrong way.

And which is the right way? ‘But from the utter fading away and ceasing of ignorance (comes) the ceasing of activities; from the ceasing of activities (comes) ceasing of consciousness’... even (the way of) the ceasing of this entire mass of dukkha. This is called the right way.”

Ignorance is the factor that is mentioned first in the teaching of the conditions for the cycle of birth and death, the "Dependent Origination", Paticcasamuppāda. Ignorance conditions the "activities", or "kamma-formations" (abhisankhāra), which are: akusala kamma or "demeritorious kamma formations" (apu-

ññābhisaṅkhāra ³⁰), kusala kamma of the sense-sphere and rūpa-jhāna (fine material jhāna) or "meritorious kamma-formations" (puññābhisaṅkhāra), and kusala kamma of the degree of arūpa-jhāna (immaterial jhāna ³¹) or "imperturbable kamma-formations" (āneññābhisaṅkhāra). Kusala kamma of the degree of arūpa-jhāna is more subtle and more refined. These three kinds of kamma-formations are links in the Dependent Origination, they condition consciousness that is vipāka in the form of rebirth and in the form of vipāka arising in the course of life. So long as ignorance of realities has not been eradicated, there are kamma-formations that condition vipāka and thus, the cycle of birth and death continues, there is no end to dukkha. When ignorance and the other defilements have been eradicated, the cycle comes to an end. One may wonder why even meritorious kamma-formations and imperturbable kamma-formations are the wrong way. These lead to rebirth in the happy sensual planes, in the fine material planes, which are the result of rūpa-jhāna, or in the immaterial planes, which are the result of arūpa-jhāna, and therefore, they lead to the continuation of the cycle of birth and death.

The Commentary to this Sutta, the "Sāratthappakāsinī", states: "The wrong way ³² is the way that does not deliver beings from dukkha." The Commentary explains that in this respect also the attainment of the stages of jhāna (the eight jhāna samāpatti, including rūpa-jhāna and arūpa-jhāna) and the five "supra-natural powers" (abhiññās ³³) are part of the cycle (vaṭṭa) and are as such the wrong way of practice. The way of practice by which ignorance and the other defilements are completely eradicated and nibbāna is attained is the right way of practice. Further on, the Commentary explains that in this sutta the practice is considered from the point of view of the result it leads to: the continuation of the cycle (vaṭṭa) or the end of the cycle (vivaṭṭa). When it leads to the end of defilements, nibbāna, it is the right way practice.

The Commentary states that even the offering of one ladle of rice or a handful of leaves can be the right way of practice, leading out of the cycle. When someone performs dāna together with satipaṭṭhāna, without the idea of self who is giving, the giving is very pure, it is the right practice.

³⁰ Puñña means merit or kusala, and apuñña means akusala. In the teaching of the Dependent Origination kamma is called: abhisaṅkhāra, that which arranges, forms or conditions.

³¹ Jhāna is absorption concentration that can be attained through the development of calm, samatha, by means of a meditation subject. Rūpa-jhāna is attained by means of a meditation subject still dependent on materiality, and arūpa-jhāna is attained by means of a meditation subject that is not dependent on materiality.

³² In Pāli: patipadā, meaning: way, path, means of reaching a goal, progress.

³³ The five supramundane powers, abhiññās, such as magical powers, Divine Ear, are the results of jhāna. There is a sixth supramundane power and that is the extinction of all defilements at the attainment of arahatship.

We read in the "Basket of Conduct" (Cariyāpiṭaka, Khuddhaka Nikāya, Minor Anthologies III) Division I, the Perfection of Giving, Conduct of Akitti, that the Buddha, during the life he was the ascetic Akitti, gave alms to Sakka, the King of the Devas of Thirtythree who came to him in the disguise of a brahman. Akitti only had leaves without oil or salt, but he gave all he had gathered. Also a second and a third time he gave as before. He went without food but he was delighted. He said:

“If for only a month or for two months I were to find a worthy recipient, unmoved, unflinching, I would give the supreme gift. While I was giving him the gift I did not aspire for fame or gain. Aspiring for omniscience I did those deeds (of merit).”

By awareness of nāma and rūpa, the idea of self developing kusala can be eliminated. The Buddha praised all kinds of kusala: dāna, sīla, samatha and vipassanā. For people who have accumulations for the development of calm, even to the degree of jhāna, but who do not develop insight as well, defilements can be subdued but not eradicated. As we have seen, jhāna leads to rebirth in higher planes and thus sustains existence in the cycle. Those who develop calm to the degree of jhāna as well as insight, can be aware of realities appearing through the six doorways, including the jhāna-citta. Then they follow the right practice leading to the elimination of wrong view, ignorance and all defilements, thus, the practice leading to the end of the cycle.

We read in the Scriptures that the Buddha spoke about exerting right effort for kusala, and people may misunderstand such passages. They believe that they should try to have kusala and make an effort for satipaṭṭhāna. However, effort, viriya, is a cetasika arising with many cittas, with akusala cittas as well as with kusala cittas. When we perform kusala, kusala viriya accompanies the kusala citta already because of conditions. We discussed the four right efforts, sammā-padhānas: the effort of avoiding akusala not yet arisen, of overcoming akusala already arisen, of developing kusala not yet arisen and of maintaining kusala already arisen. They are part of the factors pertaining to enlightenment, bodhipakkhiya dhammas.

The 37 factors pertaining to enlightenment, bodhipakkhiya dhammas are:
 the four applications of mindfulness (satipaṭṭhānas)
 the four right efforts (sammā-padhānas)
 the four bases of success (iddhi-pādas)
 the five "spiritual" faculties (indriyas)
 the five powers (balas)
 the seven factors of enlightenment (bojjhangas)
 the eightfold Path (ariya magga)

All these factors develop together with satipaṭṭhāna and reach fulfillment when enlightenment is attained. The four bases of success are desire-to-do (chanda), energy (viriya), citta and investigation (vīmaṃsa) which is paññā.

The five spiritual faculties or indriyas are: confidence, saddhā, energy, viriya, mindfulness, sati, concentration, samādhi, and paññā. The five powers are the same cetasikas as the five spiritual faculties, but when the latter have been developed they have become powers, and then they are unshakable by their opposites. The seven factors of enlightenment, bojjhāngas, are: sati, investigation of the Dhamma (dhamma-vicaya), energy (viriya), rapture (pīti), tranquillity (passaddhi), concentration (samādhi) and equanimity (upekkhā). The eight Path-factors are: right understanding (sammā-diṭṭhi), right thinking (sammā-saṅkappa), right speech (sammā-vācā), right action (sammā-kammanta), right livelihood (sammā-ājīva), right effort (sammā-vāyāma), right mindfulness (sammā-sati) and right concentration (sammā-samādhi).

Acharn Sujin explained that when there is a moment of satipaṭṭhāna the four right efforts perform their functions. When they accompany the citta that is "mundane", lokiya, not yet lokuttara, they have not yet reached fulfillment. They develop together with satipaṭṭhāna and the other factors pertaining to enlightenment until lokuttara citta arises when enlightenment is attained. Then lokuttara paññā accompanying the magga-citta, path-consciousness, experiences nibbāna and eradicates the latent tendencies of defilements in accordance with the stage of enlightenment that is attained. Also the other factors accompanying paññā experience nibbāna while they perform their functions at that moment. Acharn Sujin explained:

"When at the moment of enlightenment supramundane (lokuttara) paññā experiences nibbāna, it supports the other factors pertaining to enlightenment, so that they can perform their functions completely. When there is a moment of understanding that accompanies lokiya citta the latent tendencies, anusayas, are eliminated to a certain extent, but not completely. If there is no gradual decrease of them, how could paññā eradicate them at the moment of enlightenment? Then paññā, that was developed through satipaṭṭhāna and reached the stages of insight knowledge, vipassanā ñāṇa, can completely eradicate latent tendencies."

During the two weeks of our pilgrimage we heard day after day Acharn Sujin's most valuable explanations about the development of satipaṭṭhāna. Also during our long bus trips we could listen to tapes on Dhamma and in between we had many opportunities for dhamma discussions with our friends. Acharn Sujin often reminded us of the importance of the three "rounds" or intertwining phases: understanding of the truth, sacca ñāṇa, knowledge of the task to be performed, kicca ñāṇa, which is the practice, and knowledge of the task that has been done, kata ñāṇa. When we carefully consider these three phases we can see the necessity of intellectual understanding as a firm foundation of understanding of the level of the practice, paṭipatti, that is, awareness of the present moment. The more we understand the appropriate conditions for the arising of satipaṭṭhāna, the less shall we have anxiety about the countless

moments of forgetfulness. When we unknowingly try to have sati it is wrong practice, a form of wrong view that is only eradicated by the sotāpanna. When there are no conditions for the arising of sati, it does not arise, but, someone may wonder, is there any action that can be taken? We should continue to study and consider all realities of our daily life, with the aim to have more understanding of them. Our aim should not be having more moments of sati, that is desire and thus counteractive to the arising of sati.

The four Applications of Mindfulness of body, feelings, cittas and dhammas include, as we have seen, all realities of daily life. They are explained under many different aspects with the aim to remind us that whatever appears in our life can be the object of mindfulness and right understanding. We cling to "our feeling", be it pleasant, unpleasant or indifferent feeling. We cling to "our remembrance" (saññā), whenever we remember or recognize someone or something. Feeling and remembrance are dhammas, they are cetasikas arising with the citta. We have intellectual understanding of the difference between citta and cetasika, but they are not clearly understood as different nāmas before the first stage of insight knowledge has been reached. Still, we can begin to be aware of nāma such as feeling or remembrance when they appear, so that understanding can gradually develop and the different characteristics of citta and cetasika can be realized as nāma elements devoid of self.

We heard each day that we should develop understanding with courage and gladness. Acharn Sujin asked me whether I have gladness of the level of pariyatti, intellectual understanding, or of the level of practice. I answered that it is of the level of pariyatti. Her question was a good pointer for me. We think about courage and cheerfulness, but when there is satipaṭṭhāna there is no need to think of them, because there are conditions already to be courageous continuing its development and not to be downhearted. The difference between the levels of intellectual understanding and understanding based on the practice, I found, became clearer during our pilgrimage. If we do not know the difference we are bound to take thinking for awareness.

Acharn Sujin stressed all the time that everything is dhamma, and that means, realities are non-self. It became more apparent to me how deeply rooted our clinging to the idea of self is. We wish to develop satipaṭṭhāna "for our own sake", as Acharn Sujin said, and this had not occurred to me before. We may cling to "our progress". There is such a deeply rooted idea of "I know, I understand, I consider", but we usually do not notice this. There are many moments of listening to the Dhamma, they do not last, and therefore, we should not take them for self. I had not noticed before that also listening can be taken for self.

I am most grateful to Acharn Sujin for pointing out the different moments of more subtle clinging that are bound to arise. When we see the extent of the clinging to ourselves, we shall have more confidence in the teachings and we shall have a deeper respect for the Buddha who taught all realities in detail. Considering the Dhamma is the greatest respect we could show to the Buddha

at the holy sites. We know that understanding should be developed until we realize that in truth all that appears is dhamma.
