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Listening to the Dhamma

There is no Self

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The book is a report of five days of Dhamma discussions in northern Thailand, organised by the Dhamma Study and Propagation Foundation, with Acharn Sujin Boriarnwanaket as principal teacher. Nina van Gorkom elaborated the discussions and added passages from the Pāli scriptures and from Acharn Sujin’s talks.

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Contents

Introduction	4
Chapter 1 — The Value of Listening	5
Chapter 2 — The Meaning of Dhamma	10
Chapter 3 — The Development of Satipaṭṭhāna	16
Chapter 4 — The Stages of Insight	20
Chapter 5 — The Objects of Insight	26
Chapter 6 — The Eradication of Defilements	31
Chapter 7 — The Perfections	37

Introduction

December 1998

This is a report of the discussions on Buddhism which took place for five days in the North of Thailand. These sessions were organised by the Dhamma Study and Propagation Foundation, an association formed by lay people in Thailand, with the aim of encouraging the study of Buddhism according to the Pali Scriptures. They have radio programs daily throughout Thailand, and they publish and distribute books and tapes. Acharn Sujin Boriharnwanaket is the principal teacher of the Foundation and she discusses with endless patience questions from monks and laypeople alike. Acharn Sujin inspires everybody with her deep knowledge and Understanding; she exhorts people to develop understanding of all that is real and that appears at the present moment.

The Foundation holds now and then sessions with discussions outside Bangkok so that people who live in the provinces can take part in them. Khun Sukol Kalyanamit had organized this trip to the North of Thailand and he greatly contributed to it that our stay in the different places was very agreeable. Acharn Somphon Srivarathit and Acharn Santi Phantha Keong-Amon who are both experts in Pali assisted Acharn Sujin in explaining the Dhamma and answering questions. Acharn Somphon translates commentaries from Pali into Thai.

For the writing of this report I elaborated on the topics of the discussions, and I also used Acharn Sujin's radio programs and tapes. I added suitable texts from the Scriptures.

Chapter 1 — The Value of Listening

The value of listening to the Dhamma was one of the main themes of our Dhamma sessions in the North of Thailand. We had heard before about the benefit of listening, but this time we gained more confidence in its value.

The Buddha, during his past lives as Bodhisattas, listened to former Buddhas and considered what they taught. In his last life he penetrated the true nature of all that is real and attained Buddhahood. He taught the truth to his disciples who listened to him, who developed understanding of what is real and attained enlightenment. Today we can still listen to the Dhamma. The Dhamma is subtle, difficult to grasp, and therefore we have to listen again and again, we have to consider carefully each word of the teachings. By listening we learn what we did not know before, we learn what is true in the ultimate sense and what is true merely in conventional sense. Before we listened to the Buddha's teachings we took it for granted that there are people, that there is "my body", "my mind", but what we take for a person or self are only mental phenomena, nama, and physical phenomena, rupa, which are impermanent and not self. A person is real in the conventional sense, but nama and rupa are real in the ultimate sense. It is difficult to accept that there is no self, but the truth can be verified by developing understanding of nama and rupa, the realities in and around ourselves. We have to listen a great deal, investigate what we hear, and ponder over it, so that ignorance of nama and rupa can be eliminated. The goal of listening to the Dhamma is detachment from the idea of self.

We read in the "Kindred Sayings" (IV, Salayatana Vagga, Kindred Saying on Sense, Second Fifty, Ch 2, 69, Upasena):

Once the venerable Sariputta and the venerable Upasena were staying near Rajagaha in Cool Grove, at Snakeshood Grotto.

Now at that time a snake had fallen on the venerable Upasena's body. Then the venerable Upasena called to the monks, saying:

"Come here, friends, lift this body of mine on to a couch and take it outside before it be scattered here and now, just like a handful of chaff."

At these words the venerable Sariputta said to the venerable Upasena: "But we see no change in the venerable Upasena body, no change for the worse in his faculties."

Then the venerable Upasena repeated what he had said, adding: "Friend Sariputta, he who should think, I am the eye, the eye is mine, or I am the tongue, the tongue is mine, or I am the mind, the mind is mine,- in him there would be a change in his body, there would be a change for the worse in his faculties. But I, friend, have no such ideas. How then could there be any change in my body, any change for the worse in my faculties?"

Now the venerable Upasena had long since quelled the lurking tendencies that make for "I" and "mine". Therefore the venerable Upasena had no such ideas as, "I am the eye, the eye is mine," or "I am the tongue, the tongue is mine," or "I am the

mind, the mind is mine."

So those monks put the venerable Upasena body on a couch and bore it outside. And the venerable Upasena body there and then was scattered just like a handful of chaff.

Upasena had listened to the Buddha's teaching and developed right understanding of nama and rupa so that attachment to the "self" could be completely eradicated. What we call dying occurs at each moment: the body consists of rupas which arise and then fall away very rapidly. Rupas which have fallen away are replaced by new ones and therefore we do not notice that rupas are impermanent. Even so what we call mind are namas which arise and fall away. We may think of the fact that everything in life is impermanent, but this is not the direct realisation of the truth of impermanence. The Buddha taught the way to develop the understanding which can penetrate the truth of impermanence, the arising and falling away of nama and rupa. The development of this understanding will take a long time, it may take many lives. However, the development of understanding begins with listening to the Buddhas teachings.

During our journey in Thailand we listened to the Dhamma in different locations, under different circumstances. We experienced a great deal of hospitality and thoughtfulness from our friends in Thailand. When we were in Bangkok Khun Banyong Jongjitnant and Khun Sukol invited us to lunch together with Acharn Sujin, so that we could meet old friends and new friends. Acharn Sujin is our true friend in Dhamma and our teacher who explains the Dhamma with tireless efforts. We met Jack Tippayachan and his wife Oy who had come from Los Angeles together with other friends, and later on Pinna Indorf from Singapore whom we knew already for a long time joined us. We spoke with Acharn Sujin about the practice of Dhamma when problems arise concerning the behaviour of those who are close to us. It is difficult to be patient under all circumstances. We were reminded to be an "understanding person". The troubles in the world arise through lack of understanding. When we understand that our experiences at this moment arise because of appropriate conditions we will be less inclined to correct other people. When they say unpleasant things or act in a disagreeable way they do so because of inclinations which have been accumulated from the past and therefore, how could we change them? We continued our conversation in the house of Ell and Ivan Walsh for several hours. Acharn Sujin reminded us that no matter what kind of problems arise, we can only solve them by remembering that in the ultimate sense there is no person, only citta, consciousness, cetasika, mental factors which accompany citta, and rupa. Citta and cetasika are nama. Each citta is accompanied by several cetasikas which arise together with the citta and fall away immediately together with the citta. The citta which falls away is succeeded by the next citta, and each citta conditions the next citta. Good and bad qualities are different cetasikas, they fall away together with the citta, but these qualities are accumulated from one moment of citta to the next moment of citta, from life to life. When we have more understanding that life is actually citta, cetasika and rupa, we will be less inclined to think of a "self", of this or that person who speaks or acts in a particular way towards "us". We make our life

complicated when we think with worry about situations, about problems concerning people, about the way we should act in this or that situation. Instead of thinking of problems we should remember that there are only citta, cetasika and rupa. Thinking and worry are only namas which arise because of conditions and which are beyond control. By right understanding of citta, cetasika and rupa problems can be solved in a more direct, effective way.

Acharn Santi who was also present reminded us that listening to the Dhamma is not merely hearing, or listening passively. We should listen with attention and respect, and carefully consider what we hear. We read in the "Gradual Sayings" (III, Book of the Fives, Ch XVI, IV, The confounding of Saddhamma):

Monks, these five things lead to the confounding, the disappearance of Saddhamma. What five?

Herein, monks, carelessly the monks hear Dhamma; carelessly they master it; carelessly they bear it in mind; carelessly they test the meaning of the things borne in mind; knowing the meaning and knowing Dhamma, carelessly they practise Dhamma by Dhamma.

(But acting with care in respect to these five leads to its stability, to its being unfounded, to its non-disappearance.)

It depends on someone's accumulated understanding to what degree he can benefit from listening. We should carefully investigate all the details of the teachings and ponder over them, we should verify in our daily life the truth of the Dhamma. In that way understanding can develop. Understanding is a cetasika arising because of its own conditions. If we expect understanding to develop rapidly there is clinging to the concept of self, whereas the goal is detachment from the self.

The next day, in the house of Kunying Nopphrath Snidwong, we discussed the nature of different types of citta. Kunying Nopphrath gives once a month in her house the opportunity for a day of Dhamma discussions with Khun Sujin, and here Acharn Somporn and Acharn Santi assist with the explanation of ultimate realities and of the Pali terms which designate them. This time the subject of discussion was "rootless cittas", ahetuka cittas, cittas which are neither wholesome, kusala, nor unwholesome, akusala. There is one citta at a time and each citta experiences an object. Cittas experience objects through six doors. Seeing-consciousness experiences through the eyes what is visible, visible object or colour; hearing-consciousness experiences through the ears sound; smelling-consciousness experiences through the nose odour; tasting-consciousness experiences through the tongue flavour; body-consciousness experiences through the bodysense tangible object, namely: hardness or softness, heat or cold, motion or pressure. The sixth door is the mind-door and through this door citta can experience all realities, namas and rupas and also concepts which are not real in the ultimate sense.

A citta which experiences an object through one of the six doors arises in a process or series of cittas all of which experience that object. Seeing, for example arises in a process of cittas succeeding one another. Seeing is neither kusala nor akusala, it is

vipakacitta, a citta which is the result of kamma, of a deed done in the past. We receive pleasant or unpleasant objects through the senses, and nobody can control which kind of objects are experienced. When a pleasant object is experienced through the senses, it is the result of kusala kamma, and when an unpleasant object is experienced it is the result of akusala kamma. After the vipakacittas have fallen away kusala cittas or akusala cittas experience the object in a wholesome or unwholesome way. When the object which is experienced is pleasant, cittas with attachment may arise, and when it is unpleasant cittas with aversion may arise.

Some cetāsikas are "roots", hetus, three of which are akusala hetus, unwholesome roots: lobha or attachment, dosa or aversion and moha or ignorance. Three hetus are sobhana hetus, beautiful roots: alobha or non-attachment, adosa or non-aversion and panna or wisdom. Akusala citta is accompanied by several akusala cetāsikas, and it can be rooted in moha and lobha, in moha and dosa, or it may have moha as its only root. Kusala citta is accompanied by several sobhana cetāsikas, and it can be rooted in alobha and adosa, or in alobha, adosa and panna. The cetāsikas which are hetus are so called because they are the foundation of the citta just as the roots of a tree are its foundation. Thus, in a process of cittas which experience an object through the five senses and the mind-door, some cittas are accompanied by roots, namely akusala cittas and kusala cittas, and some are ahetuka, not accompanied by roots, and these are neither kusala nor akusala.

Cittas can be of four jatis (nature or class): kusala, akusala, vipaka and kiriya. Kiriya-cittas or "inoperative cittas" [functional cittas that are themselves results and therefore do not cause further reactions], also arise in a process, such as the five-sense-door advertizing-consciousness, panca-dvaravajjana-citta, which adverts to the object before the sense-cognition (seeing, hearing etc.) which is vipakacitta arises in a sense-door process. The kiriya-cittas which arise in a process of cittas in the case of non-arahats, are ahetuka cittas.

One may find the subject of ahetuka cittas not interesting, but ahetuka cittas arise time and again in daily life. Seeing is an ahetuka citta, but we do not know that seeing is a citta so long as we take it for self. Seeing is real in the ultimate sense, it is dhamma. Everything which is real is dhamma. Visible object or colour is real, it is dhamma. Dhammas have each their own inalterable characteristic which cannot be changed. Attachment is real, it has its own characteristic. We can call it by another name, but its characteristic cannot be changed. Aversion has its own characteristic; we can call it by another name but its characteristic cannot be changed. The name seeing can be changed, but its characteristic cannot be changed: it experiences what is visible through the eyes. Colour is appearing because there is a citta which sees. Seeing is dependent on conditions: eyesense and colour are conditions for seeing. Seeing is result of kamma, vipakacitta, and eyesense is also result of kamma, it is the physical result of kamma. If kamma would not produce eyesense we could not see. Kamma produces the senses throughout our life so that sense objects can be experienced.

The dhammas which arise in our daily life are beyond control, we cannot own them. Seeing and hearing do not belong to us, they are non-self. We cannot choose what we see and hear, this depends on the appropriate conditions.

After our discussions in Bangkok we went to the North of Thailand, to Chiangmai, Chiang Dao and Thaton where we continued our discussions. We had many opportunities for anumodana dana, the appreciation of other peoples kusala, which is a way of generosity. In Chiangmai we stayed in the "Holiday Resort" of Khun Walee and Khun Kanok Devahastin. Khun Walee and her husband have adopted children of poor families and in this way they give them opportunities to learn a profession and find a job. When these children are grown up they adopt again other small children and thus far they have adopted twenty-six children. Khun Walee and her husband who greatly support the printing of books by the "Dhamma Study and Propagation Foundation" in Thailand gave our group much hospitality. Friends from Chiangmai took great trouble to cook three times daily the most delicious food for us.

Listening to the Dhamma can have a great impact on one's life. We were impressed when we heard about someone with severe alcohol problems who could start to change his life after he listened to Acharn Sujin. He moved away from where he used to live in order to avoid the company of bad friends and now he is openminded for the Dhamma and he can gradually change his behaviour towards his wife and children.

After our stay in Chiangmai we traveled to Chiang Dao, but on the way we visited the Dong Devi Temple, where Khun Sukol's brother is the Abbot. Here we had a very beneficial discussion on the development of understanding. People who lived in the surroundings of the temple cooked lunch and dinner for us with great care and kindness. After a night in Chiang Dao we went on to Thaton near the Burmese border. We stayed in a resort near the river which belongs to a relative of Khun Sukol. Here we had Dhamma discussions morning, afternoon and evening in the most pleasant surroundings.

Chapter 2 — The Meaning of Dhamma

In the Dong Devi Temple the Abbot reminded us of our ignorance of dhamma. We do not know the meaning of dhamma, that which is real in the ultimate sense. We should not merely say, "everything is dhamma", without deeply considering the meaning of what dhamma is. We should come to know the characteristic of the dhamma appearing at this moment. But for the development of understanding we need patience and perseverance. It is not difficult to learn the terms of citta, cetasika and rupa, but this is not enough. They are realities, each with their own characteristic which can be directly known when they appear at the present moment.

The Abbot stressed that seeing is dhamma, that there is no "I" who sees. Hearing is dhamma, there is no "I" who hears. Seeing and hearing are nama-elements, realities which experience something, they experience an object. Seeing experiences colour, which is rupa, a reality which does not know anything. Sound is rupa, a reality which does not know anything. When people hear about seeing, colour, hearing and sound, they may find this subject too ordinary. However, we are ignorant about these realities when they actually appear. We are confused with regard to ultimate truth, nama and rupa, and conventional truth, concepts and ideas. Seeing is a citta experiencing colour which is a kind of rupa. However, we still think that we see people or trees. People and trees are concepts we think of but which do not appear through eyesense.

On account of what is seen we can think of concepts, the thinking is conditioned by seeing. We believe that we can hear words, but hearing only hears sound, that which appears through the ears, and on account of what is heard we can think of words and their meaning. What we hear is interpreted immediately, it seems that hearing and knowing the meaning of words occur all at the same time, but in reality there is only one citta at a time which experiences one object. There are many different cittas which arise and fall away extremely rapidly, succeeding one another, but it is difficult to distinguish between them. It is the same in the case of the other sense-cognitions, we interpret immediately what kind of odour is smelt, what kind of flavour is

tasted, what thing we are touching. We think of concepts for a long time, we are forgetful of ultimate realities which are non-self. We can gradually learn the difference between ultimate realities, paramattha dhammas, and concepts. When we are not thinking but seeing, paramattha dhammas are the object of citta. When we are not thinking but hearing, paramattha dhammas are the object of citta. They appear in between the moments of thinking about the meaning of what we experience. When we listen to the Dhamma we can begin to understand the meaning of anatta, non-self. Paramattha dhammas are anatta.

We are used to thinking of "my body", "I see", "I hear", "I think". We have to consider carefully what the Buddha taught about nama and rupa so that understanding of the truth can develop. Our life consists of nama and rupa which are impermanent and non-self. We are attached to the idea of "my body", "my hand", "my

feet", but the body consists of different kinds of rupas which arise and then fall away. The rupas which have fallen away are replaced by new rupas so long as there are conditions. It seems that the body lasts for some time, but in reality there are only different rupas which are impermanent. There are four factors which produce rupas of the body: kamma, citta, temperature (or heat) and nutrition. These factors keep on producing rupas throughout our life. The body as a whole is a concept we can think of, it is not real in the ultimate sense. One characteristic of rupa at a time such as hardness or heat can be experienced and these are ultimate realities. Gradually the difference between ultimate realities and concepts can be understood. Also understanding is impermanent and non-self, it is a cetasika which arises for a moment and then falls away, but it can be accumulated so that understanding can arise again.

The Buddha classified realities in different ways in order to help people to develop understanding of them. He classified realities as four paramattha dhammas, ultimate realities, namely as citta, cetasika, rupa and the unconditioned reality which is nibbana. Another way of classification is by way of ayatanas, sometimes translated as bases or sources. They are:

- eye: visible object
- ear: sound
- nose: odour
- tongue: flavour
- bodysense: tangible object
- mind-base (manayatana): mind-object (dhammayatana)

Manayatana includes all cittas, and dhammayatana includes objects which can be experienced only through the mind-door, namely: subtle rupas, cetasikas and nibbana.

Visible object "meets" the eyebase so that there can be seeing, the experience of visible object. It is the same with sound and the other sense-objects, they "meet" the respective sensebases so that the sense-cognitions arise. The association of objects with the different bases occurs at this moment, we can verify the truth of the Buddha's teachings. If visible object would not meet the eyebase, seeing could not arise. Visible object and the eyebase are rupas. The eyesense is a rupa in the eye which is capable to receive visible object or colour, so that seeing can experience it. Rupa arises and falls away, but it does not fall away as rapidly as citta. Visible object is experienced by seeing and by several other cittas arising in a process of cittas, the eye-door

process. When a pleasant visible object is experienced attachment is likely to arise and when an unpleasant object is experienced aversion is likely to arise and this happens already during the eye-door process, before we think of the meaning of what we experience. It all occurs because of conditions, it is beyond control what type of citta arises within the processes of cittas. The cittas arising in the different processes do so according to a specific order and nobody can change this order. After the

sense-door process of cittas is over, the same object is experienced through the mind-door, and after that mind-door processes of cittas may arise which think about the object. One rupa lasts as long as it takes seventeen cittas to arise and fall away in succession. Visible object and the eyebase have not fallen away yet when the cittas of the eye-door process arise and experience visible object. Thus we see that the conditions for the different cittas which arise are very intricate. Visible object does not meet the ear-base, it can only meet the eyebase. When there is seeing, there cannot be at the same time the meeting of sound and the ear-base.

This is a difficult subject we discussed for many hours while we were in Thaton. However, we did not only sit, we were also walking in between the sessions on the terrace above the river. Acharn Sujin thinks of the welfare of everybody, she arranges for agreeable places to stay. She also thought of my husband Lodewijk who does not understand Thai and could not follow the sessions. One should not torture oneself by sitting all day, that is not the "Middle Way". She herself took a short boat trip on the river. Lodewijk was reading my "Abhidhamma in Daily Life" on a terrace above the river, while we were having our sessions in the garden under an awning. Here we were somewhat protected from the cold wind which was blowing in the early morning and in the evening.

No matter we are walking or sitting, discussing Dhamma, there are conditions for all the ayatanas of daily life, for the sense-bases and the sense objects, for the mind-base, mental objects, and for the cittas which experience these objects.

We read in the "Visuddhimagga" (XV, 5, 6) about the ayatanas:

Furthermore, base (ayatana) should be understood in the sense of place of abode, store (mine), meeting place, locality of birth and cause...

And these various states of consciousness and its concomitants (cetasikas) dwell in the eye, etc., because they exist in dependence on them, so the eye, etc., are their place of abode. And they frequent the eye, etc., because they have them (respectively) as their (material) support and as their object, so the eye, etc., are their store. And the eye, etc., are their meeting place because they meet together in one or other of them, (using them) as physical basis, door, and object. And the eye, etc., are the locality of their birth because they arise just there, having them as their respective supports and objects. And the eye, etc., are their reason (hetu or cause) because they are absent when the eye, etc., are absent.

Seeing-consciousness and its accompanying cetasikas "dwell in the eye", the eye is their place of dependence and the place where they originate: seeing-consciousness arises at the eyebase; hearing-consciousness arises at the ear-base and the other sense-cognitions arise at their respective bases.

The "Atthasalini" (I, Part IV, Ch II, Discourse on the Section of Exposition, 141) explains that in the case of manayatana, mind-base, which includes all cittas, the three terms of birth-place, meeting-place and reason (or cause) are suitable:

...For mind is ayatana in the sense of birth-place as in the passage:- "dhammas such as contact (phassa), are born in the mind." And mind is ayatana in the sense of a meeting-place, as in the passage:- "External objects, visible, audible, olfactory, gustatory and tangible assemble there as objects in the mind." And mind is ayatana in the sense of reason (or ground), because of its being the cause-in-relation of the co-existence, etc., of contact and so on.

Citta is the leader in experiencing an object, and the cetasikas (contact and the other accompanying cetasikas) perform each their own function while they experience the same object. The cetasikas could not arise without citta, citta is their reason or cause.

There are six pairs of ayatanas, each pair comprising an inner ayatana and an outer ayatana. The five sensebases and the manayatana are the inner ayatanas, the sense objects and dhammayatana (mental objects) are the outer ayatanas. Cetasikas arise together with the citta, but they are included in dhammayatana which is an outer ayatana. Dhammayatana are the objects which can be experienced only through the mind-door. Cetasikas such as contact or feeling can be experienced only through the mind-door.

The "Visuddhimagga" (XV, 15) states about the ayatanas which are conditioned realities:

As to how to be seen: here, however, all formed (conditioned) bases should be regarded as having no provenance and no destination. For they do not come from anywhere previous to their rise, nor do they go anywhere after their fall. On the contrary, before their rise they had no individual essence, and after their fall their individual essences are completely dissolved.

And they occur without mastery (being exercisable over them) since they exist in dependence on conditions and in between the past and the future. Consequently they should be regarded as having no provenance and no destination.

Likewise they should be regarded as incurious and uninterested. For it does not occur to the eye and the visible object, etc., "Ah, that consciousness might arise from our concurrence." And as door, physical basis, and object, they have no curiosity about, or interest in, arousing consciousness. On the contrary, it is the absolute rule that eye-consciousness, etc., come into being with the union of eye with visible object, and so on. So they should be regarded as incurious and uninterested.

Furthermore, the internal ayatanas should be regarded as an empty village because they are devoid of lastingness, pleasure and self; and the external ones as village-raiding robbers because they raid the internal ones. And this is said: "Bhikkhus, the eye is harassed by agreeable and disagreeable objects" (Kindred Sayings, IV, 175).

We read in the text to which the "Visuddhimagga" refers, in the "Kindred Sayings" (IV, Salayatana Vagga, Kindred Sayings on Sense, The fourth Fifty, Ch 5, The Chapter on the Snake, 197, The Snake) that the Buddha explained by way of similes the

disadvantages and danger of conditioned dhammas. He compared the inner ayatanas to an empty village and the outer ayatanas to robbers who plunder the village:

"The empty village", monks,- that is a name for the personal sixfold sense-sphere (inner ayatanas). For if a man, however wise, clever, intelligent he be, searches it through by way of the eye, he finds it empty, finds it void, unoccupied. If he searches it through by way of the tongue... by way of the mind, he finds it empty, finds it void, unoccupied.

"The village-plunderers", monks, - that is a name for the external sixfold sense-sphere (outer ayatanas). For the eye, monks, destroys with entrancing shapes, the ear destroys with entrancing sounds, the nose... the tongue with entrancing savours... the body... the mind destroys with entrancing mind-states....

Acharn Somphon reminded us time and again that we think of "our eyes, our ears", but in reality they are empty, devoid of "self". The teaching of the ayatanas pertains to daily life. We attach great importance to our eyes, ears and all the sense-organs, we are attached to seeing, hearing and the other sense-impressions. We are attached to the objects we experience. However, they arise because of their appropriate conditions and they are beyond control. The teaching of the ayatanas makes clear that the experiences through the senses and the mind-door are conditioned. As we read in the "Visuddhimagga", "it is the absolute rule that eye-consciousness, etc., come into being with the union of eye with visible object." It is the absolute rule that hearing comes into being with the union of ear and sound, it is the absolute rule that smelling comes into being with the union of nose and odour, and so it is with the other sense-cognitions. It is beneficial to be reminded that we are attached to our eyes and ears, because most of the time we do not realize this. There are ayatanas at this moment: seeing and hearing do not last, they fall away immediately. They are vipakacittas, results of kamma, but we forget that they are results of kamma which have to arise when it is the right time.

As we read in the above quoted sutta text of the "Kindred Sayings", "the eye, monks, is harassed by entrancing shapes" and the same is true with regard to the other doorways. When a pleasant sense object is experienced there is likely to be clinging. So long as there is clinging there will be rebirth and the cycle of birth and death will continue. Birth is followed by old age, sickness and death and this is dukkha, suffering. Actually, each moment of life is dukkha, because what arises has to fall away, it is impermanent and thus it is dukkha, unsatisfactory. Being infatuated by the sense objects, is destructive, it is dangerous. We read in the same sutta that the man who is in terror and flees from danger sees a great broad [body of] water, of which this side is full of dangers, and the other side free from danger. He makes a raft to cross over to the other shore. The other shore is nibbana and the raft is the ariyan eightfold Path. He has crossed over and stands on dry land, this means: he has reached arahatship.

We read in the "Samyutta Nikaya" (I, Part I, Ch I, The Devas, 7, 10 The world) that the world is in trouble because of the ayatanas. We read:

*What being given, comes the world to pass? What being given holds its intercourse?
On what depending does it hold its way? Because of what is it so sore oppressed?
"Six" being given, comes the world to pass. "Six" being given, holds its intercourse.
On "Six" depending does it hold its way. Because of "Six" it is so sore oppressed.*

In the planes where there are nama and rupa the six bases arise. The meeting of the bases and the objects causes one to be agitated: after the sense-cognitions defilements such as like or dislike are bound to arise. So long as defilements arise one is not freed from birth, old age, sickness and death, not freed from dukkha. The Buddha taught the development of right understanding of paramattha dhammas so that defilements can finally be eradicated.

Chapter 3 — The Development of Satipaṭṭhāna

In all the different places where we were we discussed satipaṭṭhāna, because satipaṭṭhāna is the essence of the Buddha's teaching. The term satipaṭṭhāna has three meanings: it can mean the object of sati, of mindfulness, classified as the four Applications of Mindfulness; it can mean the way the Buddha and his disciples went to realize the four noble Truths: the Truth of dukkha, the Truth of the cause of dukkha, which is craving, the Truth of the ceasing of dukkha which is nibbana and the Truth of the Way leading to the ceasing of dukkha; finally it can mean sati, mindfulness, which is aware of nama and rupa.

Sati is a cetasika, a mental factor which accompanies sobhana citta, beautiful citta. Each kusala citta is accompanied by sati which is non-forgetful of what is wholesome. There are many levels of sati: there is sati when we perform deeds of generosity; there is sati of the level of sila, which is non-forgetful to abstain from unwholesomeness; there is sati with mental development which includes the development of calm, the study or teaching of the Dhamma and the development of insight, vipassana. Sati of satipaṭṭhāna is sati of vipassana which is mindful of paramattha dhammas.

The object of satipaṭṭhāna is not a concept or a name but a characteristic of nama or rupa as it appears one at a time through the sense-doors or the mind-door. By being directly aware of the reality which appears understanding can gradually develop so that eventually nama and rupa can be seen as they are, as impermanent and non-self. The object of satipaṭṭhāna is not a concept, because a concept is not real in the ultimate sense, it is merely an object of thinking. Concepts do not arise and fall away, they do not have the characteristics of impermanence and non-self which are the objects of understanding.

When we listen to the Dhamma and investigate nama and rupa which appear we can think in the right way of realities and this way of thinking is accompanied by sati. Then we begin to have right understanding of realities. Sati which is directly aware of the characteristic of a reality which appears is still another level of sati and this is different from thinking of realities. When there is awareness of a reality, understanding of that reality can gradually develop at that moment. Understanding, panna, is a sobhana cetasika, a beautiful cetasika. Panna does not accompany each kusala citta: some kusala cittas are accompanied by panna, some are not.

When we develop satipaṭṭhāna we come to understand the difference between realities, paramattha dhammas, and concepts. A chair, for example, is a concept. When we touch a chair, the chair is not experienced through touch, but the reality of hardness can be experienced through the bodysense. Through the bodysense the following rupas can be experienced: the Element of Earth or solidity, appearing as hardness or softness, the Element of Fire, appearing as heat or cold, and the Element of Wind, appearing as motion or pressure.

When we see a chair, the chair does not impinge on the eyesense, it is colour or visible object which impinges on the eyesense and can be experienced through the eyes. Someone asked what seeing-consciousness sees, whether particular colours like red or blue are experienced by seeing-consciousness. Seeing-consciousness sees whatever is visible, all that appears through the eyesense, but it does not pay attention to a particular colour like red or blue. When we notice that something is red or blue, it is not seeing, but there are cittas arising in a mind-door process which think of visible object or define it. When there is no sati we confuse paramattha dhammas and concepts. When I was watching someone who was talking on T.V., Acharn Sujin reminded

me, asking, "Can visible object talk?" When we see the outlines of things, when we notice the shape and form of things it is not seeing but there are cittas arising in a mind-door process which define what was seen. Because of remembrance of former experiences we know the meaning of things. Remembrance, *sanna*, is a *cetasika* which accompanies each *citta* and which remembers or marks the object so that it can be recognized later on.

Through ears hearing-consciousness hears sound. It seems that we hear words spoken by someone, but at such moments there are cittas arising in a mind-door process which think of concepts. Cittas arise and fall away very rapidly and only when *satipatthana* is developed the difference between such moments can be discerned. Through the nose odour appears, through the tongue flavour appears, there is only one reality at a time appearing through one of the six doors. Because of our accumulated ignorance we join different realities together into a "whole" of a person or a thing, instead of being aware of realities as they appear one at a time. The remembrance of a "whole" hides the characteristic of *anatta*. We do not see that what we take for a person consists of different elements which arise and fall away and are not self.

When a *rupa* such as colour appears there is also *nama* which experiences colour, otherwise colour could not appear. It is the same in the case of the other sense objects. If there were no cittas arising in the different processes nothing could appear. The characteristics of *nama* and *rupa* are different: *rupa* does not know anything and *nama* experiences an object. Visible object appears, but the *nama* which experiences it seems to be hidden. It is difficult to distinguish between the characteristics of *nama* and *rupa*, they seem to be together. When visible object appears there is also the *nama* which experiences it, but when *sati* arises it is aware of only one characteristic at a time. It depends on conditions of which object *sati* is aware, be it *nama* or *rupa*, nobody can direct *sati*. So long as *nama* and *rupa* are not clearly distinguished from each other there is still "personality belief", *sakkaya ditthi* [wrong view arising with the body].

There are paramattha dhammas all the time, but we do not know that they are paramattha dhammas, Acharn Somphon reminded us several times. He stressed that our clinging to a self is deeply rooted: we cling to "our eyes, our ears, our body". We heard these words before, but when we have investigated realities more thoroughly, the same words become more meaningful. They can be the condition for the

development of more understanding of realities. That is why listening to the Dhamma was stressed so often. Listening is most valuable for those who have not heard the Dhamma before, as well as for those who have already studied the teachings. Listening is a true treasure. In the "Gradual Sayings" (IV, Book of the Sevens, Ch I, 6) we read about the seven treasures of faith, virtue, conscientiousness, fear of blame, listening, bounty and wisdom. We read about the treasure of listening:

...Consider the ariyan disciple who listens much; there is a retaining, a storing of things heard; and those things, lovely in the beginning, lovely in the middle, lovely in the end, which set forth in meaning and in detail the divine life, wholly fulfilled, perfectly pure; all those are heard much by him, retained in mind, familiarized by talk, pored over, well penetrated by right view. This is called the treasure of listening...

When we see the benefit of listening we gain more confidence in the Dhamma. We can never listen enough. Ariyans, those who have attained enlightenment, are called "those who have heard much"; listening was for them the condition to develop understanding and even attain enlightenment. When we listen and consider the Dhamma samma sati, right mindfulness of the eightfold Path, will arise when there are the right conditions for its arising. Acharn Sujin repeated time and again that we cannot do anything to have more sati because there is no self who "has" sati. Moreover, the goal should not be to have many moments of sati, but the elimination of ignorance by the development of understanding, panna. By listening we gain more understanding of realities. Sanna, remembrance, is the proximate cause of sati. We remember what we heard and we ponder over it. The object of theoretical understanding is the same as the object of panna which is developed by direct awareness of realities. The objects, nama and rupa, are the same, but, as understanding develops, their characteristics are more clearly understood. Acharn Sujin reminded us that when we try very hard to have sati life becomes a heavy burden. The development of satipatthana should not make our life heavy but light. If there is clinging to sati it hinders its development.

When we were in the Dong Devi Temple people asked the Abbot how one can know the value of sati. The Abbot did not want to answer this question because when samma-sati, right mindfulness of the eightfold Path, arises one can see for oneself its value. The goal of satipatthana is not to obtain something for oneself but detachment. The Abbot warned us not to be impatient, we should learn the meaning of endurance, patience and perseverance. There may be one moment of sati and then it may not arise for a long time. He repeated: "It does not matter, it does not matter." He said: it is easy to know the terms of the teachings, but that is not enough. Sati should be aware of the characteristics which appear. The development of satipatthana should be the most natural matter, he stressed. It is not natural when we have desire for sati. We know in theory that sati is anatta, non-self, but we may still cling to sati and take it for self.

We may not notice that the belief in a self motivates our deeds, speech, feelings and thoughts. Before we realize it there may be an idea of self who notices

characteristics of realities. We may for example try to find out what seeing is, but we forget that seeing falls away immediately. It arises, appears just for an extremely short moment and then disappears, it cannot be found again. When we try to be aware of seeing we may be only thinking of an idea we conceive of seeing. Attachment lures us all the time, but also attachment should be the object of understanding, otherwise it can never be eradicated.

The whole day we touch things such as a plate, a cup, a table. Body-consciousness experiences hardness. Usually we are absorbed in the objects we handle and we do not pay attention to the characteristic of hardness. But sometimes there are conditions for considering the characteristic of hardness. This is conditioned by listening to the Dhamma. When sati arises one may begin to see the difference between the moments we are absorbed in concepts and the moments that there is awareness and a beginning of understanding of a reality which appears. However, we should not expect to have clear understanding of realities immediately. One may have doubt whether there was sati or only thinking of realities. When thinking arises it does so because of conditions and it should be known as a type of nama, not self. This is the way to continue developing satipatthana. There should be no worry, because whatever happens is conditioned.

When panna has been developed to the degree that the first stage of insight is reached, the characteristic of nama is clearly distinguished from the characteristic of rupa. However, sati can arise even when this stage is not realized yet. There has to be a beginning, sati has to be aware over and over again of whatever reality appears, this is the only way that panna can develop. When sati is attentive, aware of a characteristic, panna can investigate that reality.

Before we listened to the Dhamma there was complete ignorance of realities, we did not know the difference between concepts and paramattha dhammas. Through satipatthana we can verify that what the Buddha taught is true. The theory of the teachings is in agreement with what is realized through the practice, the development of panna.

As understanding develops confidence in the teachings will grow. The ariyan, the person who has attained enlightenment, has strong confidence, saddha, he has confidence to the degree of "power". We read in the "Gradual Sayings" (III, Book of the Fives, Ch I, 2, The Powers in detail) about the power of faith:

And what monks, is the power of faith?

Herein, monks, the ariyan disciple has faith and believes in the enlightenment of the Tathagata: Of a truth he is the Exalted One, arahat, fully enlightened, abounding in wisdom and right, the well-gone, the world-knower, the incomparable tamer of tamable men, the teacher of devas and men, the Buddha, the Exalted One. This, monks, is called the power of faith....

Chapter 4 — The Stages of Insight

Vipassana or insight is panna which sees the characteristics of realities as they are. Vipassana nana is panna which has become accomplished in the development of the understanding of realities. There are several stages of vipassana nana, beginning with

clearly distinguishing the difference between the characteristics of nama and rupa, and continuing on with higher stages until the attainment of enlightenment.

We should know what the realities are which panna should penetrate. They are not different from visible object, sound and the other objects as they appear at this moment through the six doors. They have been classified as the four "Applications of Mindfulness": Mindfulness of the body, including rupas, of feelings, of cittas and of dhammas which includes all objects not classified under the first three Applications of Mindfulness. There is no rule of which object sati is aware, it depends on conditions. Sati is not self, nobody can direct sati. At one moment sati may be aware of rupa, at another moment of feeling, of citta or of dhamma. Panna which arises together with samma-sati, right mindfulness, gradually begins to notice and to investigate the characteristics of nama and rupa which appear. Panna has to consider these very often, over and over again, until it clearly distinguishes between the characteristics of nama and rupa, and that is the first stage of vipassana nana, which is only a beginning stage.

When we were in the Dong Devi Temple we discussed the stages of insight in general. The Abbot warned us not to wait for the arising of the stages of insight. That is attachment, lobha, and if we do not realize this panna cannot develop. We should not be impatient because the development of panna takes a long time, even many lives. When we consider the amount of ignorance we have accumulated during countless lives we understand that panna cannot develop rapidly. We have to scrutinize ourselves in order to find out whether there is an idea of self who develops understanding. Acharn Sujin said that even when we think that we do not have expectations there may still be an idea of "self who does not expect anything". We were very grateful for all the reminders concerning impatience or clinging to the self, because these are helpful for the continuation of the development of understanding. When we listen and consider the Dhamma, when we read and study, there are conditions for awareness, but we cannot predict when it will arise. When we think in the right way of nama and rupa, there is sati of the level of thinking, and when there is direct awareness of one reality at a time right understanding of the eightfold Path can begin to develop. It is difficult to know the difference between nama and rupa. Knowing this in theory is not enough. Visible object which is rupa appears through the eyes. Seeing does not appear through the eyes. Sound which is rupa appears through the ears. Hearing does not appear through the ears. Nama appears only through the mind-door, but we are ignorant of the mind-door. Visible object which is rupa appears through the eyes. Seeing does not appear through the eyes. Sound which is rupa appears through the ears. Hearing does not appear through the ears.

Nama appears only through the mind-door, but we are ignorant of the mind-door. At the first stage of insight panna realizes the difference between the characteristics of nama and rupa through the mind-door and then there is no doubt about what the mind-door is. When that stage has not yet been reached there are moments of doubt about realities, but in spite of this, the development of understanding can continue little by little. When sati can be aware of rupa but not of nama, we should not worry about this. Later on there can be conditions for awareness of more kinds of objects, also of nama. We should not expect clear understanding in the beginning.

The first stage of insight is nama-rupa-pariccheda-nana, "defining" [complete separation] of nama and rupa. It is the direct realization of the different characteristics of nama and rupa through the mind-door. The objects which usually appear as the world, appear as devoid of self, as anatta. The insight knowledge, vipassana nana, arising at that moment is not taken for self either. In this way the wrong view of self can eventually be eradicated. When someone believes that he knows the difference between nama and rupa he may know this with an idea of self who understands and that means that he has not attained any stage of insight. Or someone may believe that when the first stage of insight arises, the difference between seeing and visible object, hearing and sound should be known. However, there cannot be any selection of objects of sati, it entirely depends on the sati of which object there is awareness and understanding. The objects may be hardness and feeling for example, but there is no rule. There is no rule that realities must be known in pairs, such as seeing and visible object, hearing and sound. Vipassana nana distinguishes the characteristics of the different objects from each other and it realizes one object at a time as devoid of self. The moments of vipassana nana occur in mind-door processes of cittas, and when they have fallen away the world appears as it used to appear, as a whole, as different persons and things. Panna has to continue developing understanding of all realities which appear so that there can be conditions for the following stage of insight, the second stage.

The second stage of insight is paccaya-parigghaha-nana, discerning the conditions of nama and rupa [the realization of the arising of the specific reality at the moment of its occurrence according to its paccaya]. This is panna which realizes the dependency on conditions of nama and rupa when they are arising. This stage of insight cannot arise before the first stage of insight. If nama is not known as nama and rupa as rupa, how could there be clear understanding of their different conditions? Seeing is dependent on the eye and on visible object, without the rupas which are eyesense and visible object there could not be seeing. The conditionality of nama and rupa pertains to our daily life. When we speak the citta produces speech sound, so that words can be uttered. In reality there is no self who thinks of words, there are only nama and rupa depending on conditions which arise and fall away within split seconds. When we study the ayatanas we can ponder over the conditions for nama and rupa, but at such moments there is still the deeply rooted idea of "I" who thinks about conditions. This is different from the panna which directly realizes through the mind-door the conditionality of nama and rupa. At the moments of vipassana nana there is no idea of self who understands.

The third stage of vipassana nana is sammasana nana, comprehension by groups [the realization of the rapidity with which the sequence of realities arise and fall away]. This is panna which clearly realizes the succession of nama and rupa as they arise and fall away very rapidly. Someone who has not reached even the first stage of insight may erroneously think that he can experience the arising and falling away of cittas. However, this is impossible. First the difference between nama and rupa must be realized, otherwise one does not clearly know what is nama, entirely different from rupa. The order of the stages of insight cannot be altered, each stage is a condition for the following stage, provided panna has been developed to the degree that a following stage can be reached. The first three stages of insight are still beginning stages, "tender insight", "taruna vipassana" [beginner level]. The following stages are maha-vipassana.

The first stage of maha-vipassana is udayabbhaya nana, [extremely clear realization and] knowledge of the arising and falling away of nama and rupa. This stage is different from the third stage, because panna considers more clearly the arising and falling away of each kind of nama and of rupa separately, as they appear. It sees more clearly the danger and disadvantage of the arising and falling away of nama and rupa, and this leads to more detachment from them. This stage of insight and the eight following stages are balava vipassana, insight as power. Insight has become a power, it can arise in any circumstance.

Summarizing the stages of maha-vipassana, they are:

- udayabbhaya nana, knowledge of arising and falling away
- bhanga nana, knowledge of dissolution [realization of meaninglessness or disillusionment with the arisings and fallings away].
- bhaya nana, knowledge of terror [realization of the danger of the reality at the moment there is realization of its arising and falling away].
- adinava nana, knowledge of danger [realization of the harm of the reality at the moment there is realization of its arising and falling away].
- nibbida nana, knowledge of dispassion [realization of boredom with or disillusionment with the reality appearing]
- muccitukamyata nana, knowledge of desire for deliverance [from the reality appearing].
- patisankha nana, knowledge of reflection [realization of the anicca-, dukkha-, and anatta-lakkhana of the reality appearing].
- sankharupekkha nana, knowledge of equanimity [indifference] about sankhara dhammas, conditioned realities [the realization of which leads to the transcension of the status of the ordinary person when the magga-vithi arises].
- anuloma nana, adaptation knowledge [nana in the magga-vithi that is favourable to the abandonment of aramanas that are sankhara-dhamma].

If insight is not developed this list of terms seems to be theoretical, but these terms indicate stages of panna which becomes keener and keener and which leads to detachment. The knowledge of dissolution turns more towards the falling away of

nama and rupa and sees that these cannot be any refuge. At the subsequent stages panna sees more and more the danger and disadvantages of nama and rupa. The knowledge of reflection penetrates more the three general characteristics of impermanence, dukkha and anatta, and the adaptation knowledge arises during the process when enlightenment is attained. This nana is followed by the gotrabhu nana, change of lineage knowledge, maha-kusala citta which has nibbana as object, and by magga nana, path knowledge which is lokuttara panna experiencing nibbana. The path knowledge is followed by phala nana, fruition knowledge arising with the phala-cittas, lokuttara vipakacittas, and this is followed by paccavekkhana nana, reviewing knowledge. The reviewing knowledge arises with the cittas which consider what has just been attained, the magga-cittas, the phala-cittas, the defilements which have been eradicated, and in the case of non-arahats, the defilements which are still remaining and nibbana. Vipassana nanas are classified in different ways, and sometimes the four last nanas I just mentioned are added after anuloma nana, adaptation knowledge.

The summing up of all these stages of vipassana nana can remind us that the development of panna is very, very gradual. When the first stage of "tender insight" is reached there is at those moments no self, no world; panna realizes the difference between the characteristics of nama and rupa as they appear one at a time. When those moments have fallen away the usual world appears again. This means that the knowledge gained at that stage of insight has to be applied to all kinds of realities which appear so that there will be conditions for the next stage of insight. Thus, in between the stages of insight panna must continue to investigate nama and rupa. This kind of panna is called parinna, or full understanding.

There are three degrees of parinna:

- nata parinna or full understanding of the known [as non-self].
- tirana parinna or full understanding as investigation [universal, impartial study of realities].
- pahana parinna or full understanding as abandoning [the abandonment of pleasure in and attachment to realities, having realized their harmfulness].

The full understanding as the known considers the characteristics of nama and rupa, applying the knowledge gained at the first stage of insight, which is then a foundation for the further development of panna. Panna should penetrate the characteristics of other realities, besides those which were realized at the moments of vipassana nana. The full understanding as investigating, tirana parinna, considers the characteristics of all namas and rupas which appear without selecting any specific ones. It sees them as equal, that means: it sees them as only realities which are conditioned. Then panna becomes more accomplished so that it can realize the arising and falling away of nama and rupa at the first stage of maha-vipassana, udayabbhaya-nana. As panna develops it penetrates more and more the three general characteristics of the dhammas which appear, of their nature of impermanence, dukkha and anatta. The third parinna, full understanding as abandoning, extends from the knowledge of dissolution onwards, until enlightenment is attained, because

from then on there can be more detachment from nama and rupa. Panna sees more and more the danger and disadvantage of conditioned realities.

In the development of satipatthana we should not make any selection of realities, we should not have expectations with regard to the arising of specific realities. Panna should also know akusala which arises as it is, as only a conditioned reality. Acharn Somphon reminded us that people dislike dosa, aversion or hate, but that they forget that all akusala is conditioned by ignorance; and thus, ignorance should be eliminated by panna. The goal of the development of panna is to have less ignorance of realities. Do we see dhammas already as "equal", as just dhammas? We do not like to have unwholesome thoughts, but they arise because of conditions, akusala has been accumulated also in countless former lives. We dislike akusala and think that there should be only kusala, but nobody is the owner of the realities which arise. Acharn Sujin reminded us that akusala citta falls away in split seconds, "It is gone", she said. But we forget that it is gone and keep on thinking about our akusala which has fallen away already. We are clinging to the self and have aversion about "our akusala". Lobha is very deceitful and lures us all the time. We may try to select objects of awareness, but that is wrong practice. Only the sotapanna (streamwinner), the person who has attained the first stage of enlightenment, has eradicated wrong practice. Panna must become very keen, very refined, so that it understands any reality which appears. In this way panna can realize that what arises because of conditions is non-self.

We may know in theory what kusala is and its benefit, what akusala is and its disadvantage. However, if the difference between nama and rupa has not been penetrated by panna at the first stage of vipassana, the characteristics of kusala and of akusala cannot be clearly understood, and therefore the knowledge of the benefit of kusala and of the disadvantage of akusala can only be superficial. We do not clearly know yet the nature of nama. This should not discourage us, because even when panna is not accomplished to the degree of vipassana nana, there can be a beginning of investigation of kusala citta and of akusala citta when they appear. The teaching of the parinnas shows us that the development of panna is very intricate and that panna has to become keener and keener so that it can penetrate more and more the true nature of nama and rupa and realize the four noble Truths at the attainment of enlightenment.

Acharn Sujin explained that it takes courage to face the truth. In theory we know that there is in the ultimate sense no self, no dear persons, no husband, wife or children, but theoretical understanding is different from panna which directly realizes the truth of non-self. In the ultimate sense there are no people around us, we are alone with nama and rupa. The self we love above all is only nama and rupa. Without panna one has aversion about being alone with nama and rupa. Acharn Sujin exhorted us to have courage and gladness about the truth. In the suttas, for example in the "Ratthapala Sutta" (Middle Length Sayings II, no. 82) we read that when brahmans and householders came to see the Buddha, "the Lord gladdened, roused, incited and delighted them with a talk on dhamma."

Even at the stage of the first vipassana nana one must be brave, because at those moments there is no self, no world, there are no persons, there are only nama and rupa appearing one at a time. In order to attain the first stage of enlightenment, the stage of the sotapanna, we should have courage and perseverance to develop panna so that all stages of vipassana nana can be reached. But all those who attained enlightenment had to begin with listening to the Dhamma, in order to have right understanding of satipatthana. We read in the following sutta about three characteristics of a "believer", someone who has great confidence in the teachings, and these are actually the characteristics of a sotapanna who has eradicated stinginess and who has the "power" of confidence, saddha, that is, unshakeable confidence in the teachings. We read in the "Gradual Sayings" (Book of the Threes, Ch V, 42, Characteristics) that the Buddha said:

Monks, a believer is to be recognized by three characteristics. What three?

He desires to see the virtuous; he desires to hear Saddhamma; with heart free from the taint of stinginess he dwells at home, a generous giver, clean handed, delighting in giving up, one to ask a favour of, one who delights to share gifts with others. By these three characteristics a believer is to be recognized as such....

The Commentary to this sutta, the "Manorathapurani" relates a story of a woman with strong confidence who wanted to listen to the Dhamma. She put her small child under a tree and stood listening to the preaching of the Dhamma during the night. She saw that a snake bit her child, but she thought that if she would speak about this it would disturb the listening to the Dhamma. She thought about the fact that her child was going around in the cycle of birth and death and that in former lives he was many times her child. She wanted to practise the Dhamma, and she stood listening the whole night, developing understanding so that she became a sotapanna. At daybreak the poison was withdrawn from the child's body because of her realization of the truth and her strong confidence in the truth. She took up her child and went away. The commentary adds that people who are like that are persons who have the wish to listen to the Dhamma.

Some people may misunderstand this story and believe that the mother neglected her child. However, we should grasp the point brought forward by this story. When vipassana has been developed panna clearly sees the conditions for all that happens, it directly understands that vipaka is produced by kamma. When it is the right time for akusala vipaka nobody can prevent it. She saw the disadvantages of being in the cycle of birth and death, of being born again and again. In the course of the development of vipassana, panna sees more and more the disadvantages of the arising of nama and rupa. What arises has to fall away, it is dukkha. She had clearly understood that in the ultimate sense there is no mother, no child, only conditioned nama and rupa. She had the courage to face the truth and because of her confidence in the truth the poison in her child's body was removed.

Chapter 5 — The Objects of Insight

During our sessions we went into the details of the Abhidhamma. Without knowledge of the Abhidhamma we cannot understand the different cittas which arise, we cannot understand that our life is nama and rupa.

Nama and rupa are paramattha dhammas, they are real in the ultimate sense. We cannot be reminded often enough that the objects of sati and panna are paramattha dhammas which appear now through the six doors. We should not believe too soon that we have understood this already. We may have only theoretical knowledge of paramattha dhammas. Acharn Somphon reminded us: "What appears through the eyes cannot be anything else but visible object, it is not a concept." We keep on forgetting this, we often forget that concepts of persons and things are not real in the ultimate sense. So long as concepts hide paramattha dhammas, realities cannot be known as non-self. We still believe that it is I who is seeing, instead of dhamma which sees. We think of a thing which is hard instead of knowing that hardness is dhamma.

During the sessions we were reminded time and again that listening and considering are conditions for the arising of awareness of nama and rupa. Listening is never lost because during these moments understanding is accumulated. Before we listened to the Dhamma we did not pay attention to the characteristics of realities. We touched many things which were hard but we did not pay attention to the reality of hardness. We were absorbed in conventional truth, in the things we touched. After having listened to the Dhamma we begin to realize that hardness is a rupa appearing through the bodysense. When sati arises we come to understand the difference between the moments we are absorbed in concepts and the moments paramattha dhammas appear one at a time through one of the six doors. Sati can be aware of the characteristic of hardness without thinking of names. At the moment we think of words or names the reality of hardness has vanished already. When panna knows this reality as nama and that reality as rupa, it means that realities are seen as non-self.

The benefit of satipatthana is having less ignorance of paramattha dhammas. When there is a moment of sati its benefit can be understood; during that moment one begins to understand what dhamma is: a reality which does not last and which is non-self. Seeing the benefit of satipatthana is a condition for its arising.

Some people think that they should be in quiet surroundings in order to concentrate on the arising and falling away of nama and rupa. However, they merely think of the arising and falling away of nama and rupa and there is no panna which knows one characteristic of nama and of rupa at a time as impermanent and non-self. The goal of the development of satipatthana is the eradication of the wrong view of self and later on of all other defilements. The different stages of vipassana nana arise in a specific order; the first stage of maha-vipassana, knowledge of the arising and falling away of nama and rupa, cannot arise before the preceding three stages which are "tender insight", taruna vipassana. If panna does not distinguish between the characteristic of nama and of rupa and if it does not know all kinds of realities as they

appear one at a time through the six doors, how could the arising and falling away of one nama and of one rupa at a time be experienced? We may find it complicated to study the different stages of vipassana, but ignorance of these stages may lead to wrong practice.

We read in the "Gradual Sayings" (II, Book of the Fours, Ch V, 1, Concentration) that the Buddha explained about four ways of developing concentration. The first kind, concentration in samatha leading to jhana, is the concentration which leads to "happy living in this very life". The second kind, concentration on "light", is also developed in samatha. When it is more developed it leads to "nana dassana", "knowledge and vision". The Commentary, the "Manorathapurani" explains that this is the "divine eye" or clairvoyance, a power acquired in samatha. The third kind of concentration leads to "mindfulness and well-awareness". We read:

Herein, monks, the feelings which arise in a monk are evident to him, the feelings which abide with him are evident to him, the feelings which come to an end in him are evident to him. The perceptions (sanna) which arise in him... the trains of thought (vitakka) which arise in him, which abide with him, which come to an end in him are evident to him. This, monks, is called "the making-concentration-to-become which conduces to mindfulness and well-awareness."

As to the fourth kind of concentration, this leads, when it is developed, to the destruction of the asavas. We read:

Herein a monk dwells observing the rise and fall in the five khandhas of grasping, thus: Such is rupa, such is the arising of rupa, such its vanishing. Such is feeling... such is perception... such are the activities, such the arising of the activities, such their vanishing. Such is consciousness... such the arising of consciousness, such its vanishing. This, monks, is called "the making-concentration-to-become which conduces to the destruction of the asavas"....

When right understanding of nama and rupa is developed in vipassana, there is also concentration, samadhi cetasika, which accompanies panna, but one does not have to think of concentration. If one tries to concentrate, there may be lobha, attachment, accompanied by wrong view.

The Commentary to the above quoted text gives a clear explanation about awareness of only one object at a time, in the context of the knowledge of the arising and falling away of nama and rupa. The objects of panna are the same, no matter one begins to develop satipatthana or later on when panna becomes more accomplished as the stages of vipassana nana arise. The objects are all conditioned nama and rupa which are here classified as the five khandhas. We read that the monk who realizes "udayabbhaya nana" sees the arising and falling away of realities. He knows that this is rupa, that only this rupa appears and that apart from this rupa no other rupa appears. He realizes that this is the origination of rupa, the arising of this rupa, and he realizes its extinction. And it is the same for feeling and the other khandhas.

In the case of right mindfulness of the feeling which appears there is only that object, no other object appears at that moment. It is the same for sanna, remembrance or perception, for the other cetasikas apart from feeling and perception (sankharakkhandha, the khandha of formations), and for citta. At this moment it seems that seeing and hearing appear at the same time, but there is only one citta experiencing one object at a time. When seeing is the object of mindfulness, just that reality appears, and no other reality appears at that moment. When seeing appears there cannot be thinking at the same time. When we hear the sound of a fan we may think of the concept "fan", but we do not think all the time of concepts, also hearing arises in between. Sati can begin to notice one characteristic at a time, such as hearing or sound. If that is the case we should remember that sati is conditioned by listening, that it is not self who notices different characteristics. If we forget this there is clinging to the self. So long as the difference between nama and rupa is not known doubt will arise about their characteristics, but doubts disappear by the development of satipatthana, Acharn Santi reminded us.

The objects of panna are all the objects appearing at this moment in our daily life: they may be pleasant or unpleasant, kusala or akusala. We read about the objects of vipassana in the "Path of Discrimination", the "Patisambhidamagga". We read in the First or Great Division, I, Treatise on Knowledge, Ch XV, Defining Internally, that one "defines" or develops understanding of the internal realities and these are the internal ayatanas. We read:

How is it that understanding of defining internally is knowledge of difference in the physical bases?

How does he define dhammas internally?

He defines the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue, the body and the mind internally.

When panna is developed in vipassana one does not confuse the different doorways with each other, there is only one reality appearing at a time through one doorway.

We read that he considers the conditions for the arising of the bases, namely ignorance and craving. He considers the characteristics of impermanence, dukkha and anatta. In the course of the development of panna clinging to the bases is abandoned.

The Commentary, the Saddhammappakasini, states that the eye does not exist before its arising, that it is there after its arising, that after its falling away it will not return. The commentary states that it is not stable, that it cannot last, that it is unsure and insignificant (viparinama). It is subject to change because of decay and death.

When we consider the impermanence of realities we think of different terms which describe impermanence, but when panna of vipassana arises it can penetrate immediately the nature of impermanence.

In Ch XVI of the "Patisambiddha Magga" we read about "Defining Externally". The understanding of the "defining" of the external realities is knowledge of the difference in the objects experienced through the different doorways and these are the external ayatanas. Someone who develops understanding of the objects

experienced through the six doors does not confuse these objects with one another as they appear through the different doorways. He realizes that these objects are different, arising because of different conditions. Panna realizes that visible object is different from sound, panna does not join different realities together as a whole, as the world of persons and things. We read:

How does he define dhammas externally?

He defines visible objects externally, he defines sounds... odours... flavours... tangible objects... he defines dhammas externally.

We read that he considers the conditions for the arising of external realities, namely ignorance and craving. He considers the characteristics of impermanence, dukkha and anatta and in the course of the development of panna clinging to the external objects is abandoned.

In Chapter XVI, we read about the understanding of "defining behaviour", cariya. Cariya, behaviour or conduct is, according to the Commentary, conduct of citta towards the object it experiences. There are three kinds of behaviour: behaviour of consciousness, behaviour of unknowing, and behaviour of knowledge. This is not theory, but it concerns our life all day long. Behaviour of consciousness, citta, includes the cittas which arise in processes and which experience objects through the six doors, except the mind-door adverting-consciousness preceding the javana cittas which can be kusala or akusala, and the javana cittas themselves, since these are classified in the following sections.

In the following section in the "Patisambiddha Magga" we read about the "behaviour of unknowing", which includes the mind-door adverting-consciousness (mano-dvaravajjana-citta), a kiriyacitta, neither kusala nor akusala, and the akusala javana cittas which follow. This reminds us that ignorance is the root of everything which is akusala. We read about cittas with greed for agreeable visible objects, sounds, and the other sense objects, cittas with hate for disagreeable objects. We read about cittas with delusion, with conceit, wrong view, agitation and doubt. All day long there are cittas arising in processes and when they appear they can be objects of right understanding.

The Commentary explains that the "behaviour of unknowing" is conduct with ignorance, conduct because of ignorance, conduct with regard to the object which is not known or conduct which is ignorance.

In the following section we read about the "behaviour of knowledge". This includes the mind-door adverting-consciousness, which is neither kusala nor akusala, and the kusala javana-cittas which contemplate the three characteristics of impermanence, dukkha and anatta, and which go on developing insight until enlightenment is attained, even to the degree of the phala-cittas (lokuttara vipaka which is fruition-consciousness) of the arahat.

The Commentary explains that the "behaviour of knowledge" is conduct with knowledge, conduct because of knowledge, conduct towards the object which has been understood or conduct which is knowledge. "Knowledge" stands for the Pali

term nana, which is panna cetasika.

We read further on in the "Path of Discrimination" (395):

The behaviour of consciousness is one, the behaviour of unknowing is another, the behaviour of knowledge is another.

Knowledge is in the sense of that being known and understanding is in the sense of the act of understanding that. Hence it was said: "Understanding of defining behaviour is knowledge of difference in behaviour."

Thus we see that all the different cittas which appear can be object of understanding, nothing is excluded, not even akusala cittas. Also the cittas with panna which develop vipassana are objects of understanding, otherwise panna will be taken for self and there cannot be any progress.

Lokuttara panna, supramundane panna, which accompanies the magga-citta, path-consciousness, arising when enlightenment is attained, eradicates defilements and experiences nibbana. Defilements are eradicated at the different stages of enlightenment until they are all eradicated at the attainment of the fourth stage of enlightenment, the stage of the arahat. So long as there are defilements there are conditions for rebirth, we continue to be in the cycle of samsara, the cycle of birth and death. At this moment we do not see the danger of being in the cycle of birth and death. By the development of vipassana the danger of rebirth will be seen more and more. Birth as a human being is the result of kusala kamma, but, so long as one has not become a sotapanna, akusala kamma may produce an unhappy rebirth in the future.

The Buddha compared the accumulation of conditions for rebirth with the building of a house, and the freedom from samsara with the destruction of this house. We read in the Commentary to the "Chronicle of Buddhas" (Buddhavamsa), the "Clarifier of the Sweet Meaning" (Madhuratthavilasini), in the section on the "Jewel Walk", that the Buddha, after his enlightenment said:

Seeking but not finding the house-builder, I travelled through countless births in samsara. Dukkha is birth again and again. House-builder, you have been seen now; you shall not build the house again. All your rafters are broken down, your ridge-pole demolished too. Now my mind has attained what is without constructions, and reached the destruction of cravings....

Chapter 6 — The Eradication of Defilements

During our sessions in Thaton, coffee, tea and lychee juice was passed around. The lychee juice was made from fruits of the orchard belonging to the owner of the hotel. We cannot help having attachment as soon as we taste a delicious flavour. However, we cannot force ourselves not to have lobha, it arises when there are conditions for it but it can be object of right understanding. The different degrees of defilements were another topic of our discussions. Akusala citta arises more often than we realize. Many times we do not recognize akusala as akusala because we have accumulated ignorance from life to life. Through the development of vipassana we learn that akusala is a conditioned reality, non-self. Only right understanding developed in vipassana can eventually eradicate akusala. So long as we take it for self it cannot be eradicated. When we listen to the Dhamma and study what the Buddha taught about akusala cittas we shall have less ignorance about them. It is most beneficial to learn the details of the different types of cittas and the conditions through which they arise, otherwise we take akusala for kusala, and we do not notice that there is akusala citta when it is more subtle. By the study of the Dhamma we begin to think in the right way about realities and this can be a condition later on for the arising of samma-sati, right mindfulness.

Akusala cittas can be coarse, medium or subtle. The coarse defilements, vitikkama kilesa, are the unwholesome actions through body, speech or mind, such as killing, stealing or lying. The medium defilements, pariyutthana kilesa, are the akusala cetasikas which arise with the citta but which do not have the intensity to motivate unwholesome deeds at that moment. Akusala cittas can be classified according to their roots, hetu, in three groups: lobha-mula-cittas, which are rooted in moha, ignorance, and in attachment, lobha; dosa-mula-cittas, which are rooted in moha and dosa, aversion; moha-mula-cittas which have moha as their only root. Besides the roots there are other akusala cetasikas which arise with these akusala cittas.

The subtle defilements, anusaya, do not arise with akusala citta, but they are latent tendencies; they lie dormant, they are like microbes investing the body. We do not notice them, but they are there, accumulated in the citta; they are pertinacious and they condition the arising of defilements again and again. The inherent or latent tendencies have been accumulated from life to life. The first javana cittas of every living being who is born are lobha-mulacittas, cittas rooted in attachment. These are conditioned by the latent tendencies accumulated in the past.

After many happy hours of listening to the Dhamma in the Dong Devi Temple we took a walk in the dusk, enjoying the view of the mountains. A beautiful meal was served to us outside and then we travelled to Chiang Dao where we arrived towards the evening. Here, in the hall of the Hotel where we stayed, Acharn Sujin arranged another Dhamma discussion. One of the topics was the latent tendencies. There are seven latent tendencies:

- the latent tendency of desire for sense pleasure (kamaraganusaya)

- the latent tendency of aversion (patighanusaya)
- the latent tendency of conceit (mananusaya)
- the latent tendency of wrong view (ditthanusaya)
- the latent tendency of doubt (vicikicchanusaya)
- the latent tendency of desire for becoming (bhava-raganusaya)
- the latent tendency of ignorance (avijjanusaya)

Acharn Sujin pointed out that we do not have to learn this list by heart, but that we can remember them when we consider the different akusala cittas which are conditioned by them. When lobha-mula-citta arises which likes pleasant objects it is clear that there is the latent tendency of desire for sense pleasure which is unabandoned; it does not arise with the citta but it conditions the arising of lobha. So long as this latent tendency has not been eradicated it conditions attachment to sense objects again and again. Even when we walk or move our hand there is likely to be attachment. After seeing or hearing there is attachment very often, but we do not notice it. Cittas arise and fall away extremely rapidly. The lobha-mula-citta falls away again, it is gone, but there is a new accumulation of the tendency to lobha added to what was there already. Unwholesome tendencies are carried on from one moment of citta to the next one since each citta is succeeded by the next citta. If we consider this it helps us to see the danger of akusala dhammas. The study of each detail of the Dhamma is beneficial, it can be a condition to be less neglectful with regard to the development of kusala. When our objective is not dana, generosity, sila, which includes not only abstaining from ill deeds but also helping others and paying respect, or mental development, which includes study of the Dhamma, the development of calm and of vipassana, we act, speak and think with akusala citta. Conceit and wrong view can accompany lobha-mula-citta, but they do not accompany every lobha-mula-citta and they do not arise at the same time. When conceit or wrong view arises they are conditioned by the latent tendencies of conceit and wrong view. Clinging to rebirth accompanies lobha-mula-citta, and when it arises it is clear that the latent tendency of desire for becoming is still unabandoned. Thus, when we consider lobha-mula-citta, we can remember four latent tendencies which condition its accompanying akusala cetasikas: attachment to sense pleasures, wrong view, conceit and attachment to rebirth.

When an unpleasant object is experienced, dosa-mula-citta is likely to arise. So long as the latent tendency of patigha, which is aversion, is unabandoned it conditions the arising of dosa-mula-citta.

Ignorance arises with each type of akusala citta. So long as the latent tendency of ignorance has not been abandoned there will be akusala citta. There are two types of moha-mula-citta which have moha as their only root: one type is accompanied by doubt and one is called "accompanied by restlessness". When one has doubt about the Buddhas teaching, about enlightenment, about nama and rupa, it is evident that the latent tendency of doubt is still unabandoned. When we consider the two types of moha-mula-citta which are bound to arise in our life, we can remember that the two latent tendencies of ignorance and doubt are unabandoned. Thus, the akusala cittas

which are classified according to their roots and the akusala dhammas which can accompany them can remind us of the latent tendencies which are still there, unabandoned, like the germs of the disease of defilements.

The latent tendencies are eradicated at different stages of enlightenment: wrong view and doubt are eradicated by the sotapanna; desire for sense-pleasures and aversion are not eradicated by the sakadagami (the once-returner, who has attained the second stage of enlightenment) but they have become attenuated; these tendencies are eradicated by the anagami (the non-returner who has attained the third stage of enlightenment); clinging to rebirth and ignorance are eradicated by the arahat. The latent tendencies are deeply rooted and hard to eradicate. By the development of samatha to the degree of jhana, absorption, defilements can be temporarily subdued, but the latent tendencies cannot be eradicated. Only by the development of vipassana all latent tendencies can be completely eradicated so that there are no conditions for the arising of akusala dhammas.

We read in the "Kindred Sayings" (IV, Salayatana Vagga, Fourth Fifty, Ch 3, 190, The Sap-tree) that the Buddha said to the monks:

"If in any monk or nun, monks, that lust, that malice, that ignorance which is in objects cognizable by the eye exists, be not abandoned, then, when even trifling objects, not to speak of considerable objects, cognizable by the eye, come into the range of the eye, they overspread the heart. Why so? Because, monks, that lust, that malice, that ignorance exists, is not yet abandoned."

If any monk or nun, monks, that lust... that is in mental objects cognizable by the mind exists, be not abandoned... they overspread the heart. Why so? Because of that lust... that is not yet abandoned.

Suppose, monks, a sap-tree, either a bo-tree or a banyan or fig-tree or bunched fig-tree or any tender young tree. Then if a man cuts into it with a sharp axe, whenever he does so the sap flows out, does it not?"

"Yes, lord."

"Why so?"

"Because sap is in it, lord."

"Just so, monks, if in any monk or nun that lust, that malice, that ignorance which is in objects cognizable by the eye... in the tongue... in mental objects cognizable by the mind exists, be not abandoned, then, when even trifling objects, not to speak of considerable objects, cognizable by the eye come into the range of the eye, they overspread the heart. Why so? Because that lust... is not yet abandoned. But if they be abandoned they do not overspread the heart."

Suppose, monks, a sap-tree, either a bo-tree or banyan or fig-tree or bunched fig-tree that is dried up, sapless, past its season, and a man with a sharp axe cut into it. Would sap come out?"

"Surely not, lord."

"Why not?"

"Because no sap is in it, lord."

"Just so, monks, as I have said... if in any monk or nun that lust, that malice, that ignorance which is in objects cognizable by the eye exist not, if they be abandoned,- then, when even trifling objects, not to speak of considerable objects, come into the range of the eye, they do not overspread the heart. Why so? Because that lust, that malice, that ignorance exist not, because they are abandoned."

So also of the tongue and mental objects cognizable by the eye... they do not overspread the heart because they exist not, because they are abandoned."

Learning about the latent tendencies which condition defilements teaches us that defilements are non-self, anatta. Time and again akusala cittas arise, but often we do not notice them. Medium defilement, pariyutthana kilesa, which arises with akusala citta may be, for example, lobha which arises after seeing or hearing, a slight attachment to visible object or sound which we do not notice. There are different degrees of medium defilements, they can be very slight or more intense. We discussed defilements which are classified in different groups, such as the "fetters" (samyojana) which fetter us to rebirth again and again, or the "intoxicants" or "cankers" (asavas), which are fermenting and keep on flowing from birth to death.

Acharn Sujin reminded us that even a slight attachment is a canker. The asavas are:

- the canker of sensuous desire
- the canker of becoming (birth)
- the canker of wrong view
- the canker of ignorance.

They are not theory, they pertain to our daily life. The canker of ignorance keeps on flowing, we are ignorant of what occurs innumerable times in daily life, of seeing or hearing. Acharn Sujin spoke many times about seeing which sees visible object. Some people may not find it interesting to hear so often about seeing, but it is most beneficial to be reminded of seeing which sees visible object. We can realize our ignorance at such moments. We forget that seeing only sees what impinges on the eyesense: colour or visible object. It is at another moment that we think of the person or thing we perceive. Cittas arise and fall away extremely rapidly, but we do not realize that cittas arise and fall away, succeeding one another. When we read the scriptures we can notice that the Buddha repeated time and again that pleasant or unpleasant objects are experienced through the eyes, the ears and the other doorways, and that on account of the objects defilements arise. We cannot be reminded of the truth often enough.

We read in the "Kindred Sayings" (IV, Salayatana Vagga, Kindred Sayings on Sense, Second Fifty, Ch 5, 94, Including (the sixfold sense-sphere) that the Buddha said:

There are these six spheres of contact, monks, which are untamed, unguarded, unwatched, unrestrained, bringers of Ill. What six? The eye, monks... the tongue... the mind,... are untamed... bringers of Ill There are these six spheres of contact, monks, which are well tamed, well guarded, well watched, well restrained, bringers of happiness. What six? The eye... the tongue... the mind... Thus spoke the Exalted One... Then the Master added this further:- He meets with Ill, monks, who has not tamed The sixfold impact of the sphere of sense. They who have learned the mastery of these, With faith as companion,- they dwell free from lust. Beholding with the eye delightful things Or things unlovely, let him restrain his bent To lust for loveliness, and let him not Corrupt his heart with thoughts of "O, it is dear". And when, again, sounds sweet or harsh he hears, Not led astray by sweetness, let him check The error of his senses. Let him not Corrupt his heart with thoughts of "O, it is sweet." If some delightful fragrance meet the nose, And then again some foul malodorous stench, Let him restrain repugnance for that stench, Nor yet be led by lust for what is sweet. Should he taste savours that are sweet and choice, And then again what is bitter to the tongue, He should not greedily devour the sweet, Nor yet show loathing for the bitter taste. By pleasures impact not inebriate, Nor yet distracted by the touch of pain, To pain and pleasure both indifferent Let him be free from likings and dislikes. Obsessed (by lusts) are others: so obsessed They know and so they fare. But he dispels All the worlds vulgar fashionings of mind, And treads the path renunciation-bound. By contact of these six, if mind be trained, The heart is never shaken any more. Overcome these two, O monks,- lust and hate. Pass you beyond the bounds of birth and death.

The arahat has eradicated all defilements and he is freed from the cycle of birth and death. We cannot force ourselves not to have defilements, but they can be objects of awareness so that they can be seen as they are, as impermanent and anatta. Through the development of satipatthana we shall come to know our defilements. We should understand our defilements, not avoid being aware of them; that is wrong practice which is a form of ditthi, wrong view. Only the sotapanna has eradicated wrong practice. If we try to induce sati, there is wrong practice; we are already on the wrong Path, and if this is not known, right understanding cannot develop. We may mislead ourselves taking akusala for kusala. We may believe that there is confidence, saddha, when we listen to the Dhamma, but there may be moments of clinging to calm or to pleasant feeling while we listen. Or there may be conceit with regard to kusala, we find "our kusala" very important. When we find ourselves important there is conceit. Khun Tongchai reminded us of the passage about the objects of conceit in the "Book of Analysis" (Vibhanga, Ch 17, Analysis of Small Items):

Pride of birth; pride of clan; pride of health; pride of youth; pride of life; pride of gain; pride of being honoured; pride of being respected; pride of prominence; pride of having adherents; pride of wealth; pride of appearance; pride of erudition; pride of intelligence; pride of being a knowledgeable authority....

Khun Tongchai Sangrat had collected several texts which he read from a notebook. He is called the "Diamond", he is the "Diamond of the North", because he lives in Chiangmai. He organizes Dhamma discussions and supports the Dong Devi Temple. Some years ago he showed great hospitality to the people of the Dhamma Study and

Propagation Foundation in his Lana Resort. He promotes Acharn Sujin's radio programs in many radio stations all over Thailand. Thanks to his efforts many people can listen to her talks and learn about the development of satipatthana.

Conceit is so deeply rooted and it takes many lives before also the more subtle forms of conceit are eradicated; only the arahat eradicates conceit completely. The sotapanna has eradicated wrong view, and although he does not take any reality for self, he may still cling to his abilities and his wisdom with conceit.

Acharn Sujin reminded us that there are many moments of conceit we do not notice. For example when someone's dress is red we may think: "O, look at that red dress", and then there may be some contempt; we may think with conceit that we would not dress in that way. We are so used to finding ourselves important that we overlook such moments. Conceit may arise when we speak, when we stress what we say with gestures; we find our words very important. We may have conceit because of honour or possessions, but the citta which thinks of the importance of honour and possessions falls away immediately. Through the development of satipatthana one will acquire more understanding of citta which falls away immediately, more understanding that life is only one moment of citta. We do not own honour and possessions.

Chapter 7 — The Perfections

Panna which eradicates all defilements has to be developed gradually, during countless lives. There is no way to realize its development more rapidly. We have to listen to the Dhamma and carefully consider what we hear. We cannot do anything else, Acharn Sujin said. When panna has grown it will realize the true nature of nama and rupa. The fact that we cannot do anything to hasten the development of panna does not mean that we should be idle, doing nothing. All kinds of kusala for which there is an opportunity can be developed together with satipatthana. The Buddha, when he was a Bodhisatta, developed during countless lives the "perfections", paramis, wholesome qualities which he accumulated, so that in his last life he could attain Buddhahood. These perfections are: dana or generosity, sila or wholesome conduct, nekkhamma or renunciation, panna, viriya or energy [effort, perseverance], khanti or patience, sacca or truthfulness, aditthana or determination, metta or loving kindness, upekkha or equanimity. We too need to develop the perfections together with satipatthana, so that there will once in the future be the right conditions for the attainment of enlightenment.

During our last evening in Thaton we discussed some aspects of the perfections. They had been a topic of Dhamma discussions many times before, also in India, but there are always new aspects when we consider their practice in the situation of daily life. Acharn Sujin had warned us not to cling to an idea of self who wants to "have" the perfections, because that is not the way to accumulate them. There may be clinging to kusala or there may be conceit with regard to kusala, and therefore we need the perfection of truthfulness or sincerity to detect these defilements. We should have the sincere inclination to develop the perfections with the aim to have less defilements.

We may wonder to what extent generosity and metta should be developed towards a person who asks too much from us. Acharn Santi reminded me that we develop metta in order to have less defilements. It is of no use to think for a long time about the other person, about situations, or to wonder to what extent we should develop metta. We should consider the citta which develops the perfection of metta. There is no specific order in which the perfections should be developed; they can all be developed together. Acharn Sujin stressed once that none of the perfections should be neglected, that we need the support of all of them so that we can reach the goal. When we listen to the Dhamma there should be patience, we should not wish for a quick result of the development of right understanding. We should listen without wishing to acquire something for ourselves, such as honour or esteem. When our goal is the development of understanding there is renunciation or detachment, nekkhamma. All ways of wholesomeness are nekkhamma, because during such moments one renounces akusala, one does not cling and there is no selfishness. When we feel tired we need viriya, energy, so that we make an effort to listen to the Dhamma; we also need determination to continue to listen, to consider the Dhamma and to develop satipatthana.

Sila should be developed together with satipatthana. Some people believe that they have purity of sila when they do not transgress the five precepts. However, without satipatthana one takes sila for self, there is no purity of sila (sila visuddhi). The sotapanna will never transgress the five precepts and he does not take sila for self. The person who has not attained enlightenment may observe the precepts for a long time, but when for example his life is in danger he may transgress them. Moreover, he has not eradicated the wrong view of self. There are many kinds of sila; it can, for example, be classified as avoidance (virati) and performance (caritta). Avoidance is abstaining from akusala. Performance includes wholesome actions through body and speech such as helping, paying respect and politeness. We read in the Commentary to the "Basket of Conduct" (Cariyapitaka), the "Paramatthadipani" about the sila of the Bodhisatta:

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

The vicissitudes of the world are gain and loss, honour and lack of honour, praise and blame, wellbeing and pain. We only desire pleasant worldly conditions, but we do not see them as enemies in the guise of friends. We cling to them and we do not see that they are subject to change, and we may even commit akusala kamma such as lying or stealing in order to obtain them.

With regard to virtue as performance, we read about the courteous conduct of the Bodhisatta towards those who deserved respect. He was assisting others, he was fulfilling his duties, he helped people in explaining Dhamma. He was contented with little and saw danger in the slightest faults. We may forget that sila has many more aspects apart from observing the five precepts. Sila leads to tranquillity, happiness and absence of remorse.

Sila also includes guarding the six doors with sati (indriya samvara sila). When we experience a pleasant object through one of the senses attachment is likely to arise, and when we experience an unpleasant object, aversion is likely to arise. When there is awareness of nama and rupa, no matter whether we experience a pleasant object or an unpleasant object, the doorways are guarded, there is no akusala citta on account of the object which is experienced.

The last day of our sessions, at the airport of Chiangmai, I remarked to Acharn Sujin that it is very difficult to practise patience and kindness towards a person who behaves to us in a disagreeable way. Acharn Sujin answered that one needs unpleasant situations to practise the perfections. If there is no unpleasant situation how can one develop them? We read in the Commentary, the "Paramatthadipani" about the Bodhisattas practice of patience when he considered the following:

"If there were no wrong-doers, how could I accomplish the perfection of patience?" And: "Although he is a wrong-doer now, in the past he was my benefactor." And: "A wrong-doer is also a benefactor, for he is the basis for the developing of patience."

In the ultimate sense there is no "other person" who is disagreeable and no self to whom he is disagreeable. The Bodhisatta considered about this:

"All those dhammas by which wrong was done, and those to whom it was done-- all those, at this very moment, have ceased. With whom, then, should you now be angry, and by whom should anger be aroused? When all dhammas are not-self, who can do wrong to whom?"

We read in the same Commentary that wisdom is the chief cause for the practice of the other perfections. We read:

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

When we hear unpleasant words we can remember that hearing is only vipaka, the result of kamma, a deed performed in the past. Instead of being upset there can be equanimity, upekkha, and also metta, benevolence. We can be intent on the welfare of any person, even if he is not agreeable, that is true metta. Metta is different from liking a particular person, metta is impartial. When we do not retort disagreeable speech with angry words we practise the perfection of sila. Thus, in difficult situations the perfections can be practised together with satipatthana. We should remember that all the perfections pertain to our daily life.

Situations are difficult very often, and then we should ask ourselves: "Where are the perfections of patience, metta, upekkha and energy, where is the determination to practise kusala?" The situation is a test for the practice of the perfections.

During these days of Dhamma discussions we received many precious reminders from Acharn Sujin, from Acharn Somphon, from Acharn Santi, and from many of our friends. Listening helps to gain more confidence in the Buddhas teaching. We can verify the truth of what he taught about nama and rupa: seeing is conditioned by eyesense and visible object; hearing is conditioned by earsense and sound, and it is the same for the other doorways. We cannot control seeing or hearing, these experiences are vipaka, conditioned by kamma. On account of what we experience through the senses attachment or aversion are bound to arise. These accompany akusala citta. The Buddha explained in detail what kusala is and what akusala, and he taught the development of satipatthana which eventually leads to freedom from defilements. When we develop satipatthana we actually take our refuge in the Buddha. To what extent we take refuge in him depends on the development of understanding. People have fear of accidents, sickness, death and rebirth, but the recollection of the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha can banish all fear.

We read in the "Kindred Sayings" (I, Sagatha-Vagga, Ch XI, Sakka, 3, The Top of the Banner) that the Buddha explained to the monks that when they dwell in the forest or

empty places and fear would arise, they should recollect the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha. We can apply his advice in our own situation, when we have an occasion to be fearful. The Buddha spoke in the following verse:

*Whenever in forest or in leafy shade
Or lonely empty places you abide,
Call to your mind, bhikkhus, the Enlightened One;
No fear, no sense of peril will you know.
Or if you cannot on the Buddha think-
The chief, the senior of the world, the Bull of men-
Then call to mind the Dhamma, the well-taught guide.
Or if you cannot think of the Dhamma-
The well-taught doctrine wherein guidance lies-
Then turn your thoughts to the Community,
Unrivalled field where men may sow good deeds.
If you in Buddha, Dhamma, Community thus refuge take,
Fear, panic, creeping of the flesh will never arise.*