Pahankanuwa Sermon #144

English Translation

Translated from Sinhala

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(Pahankaṇuwa Sinhala Audio Dhamma Sermon No.96)

Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa

(Homage to the Blessed One, the Worthy One, the Fully Self-Enlightened One)

Pali Stanza:

"Bahuṃ pi ce saṃhita bhāsamāno,

Na takkaro hoti naro pamatto;

Gopa'va gāvo gaṇayaṃ paresaṃ,

Na bhāgavā sāmaññassa hoti.

Appam pi ce saṃhita bhāsamāno,

Dhammassa hoti anudhammacārī;

Rāgañca dosañca mohaṃ pahāya,

Sammāppajāno suvimuttacitto;

Anupādiyāno idha vā huraṃ vā,

Sa bhāgavā sāmaññassa hoti."

From:

Dhammapada Verses 19 and 20 (Yamaka Vagga)

Dear Listeners,

The Buddha-word of the Buddha has been preached for the sole purpose of achieving liberation from Saṃsāra. Disregarding that purpose and merely studying, learning, and memorizing that teaching was often criticized by the Buddha. The Buddha constantly reminded us that rather than the broad knowledge gathered through learning, memorizing, and so on, it is the deep knowledge of the Dhamma, obtained by putting that Dhamma into practice, that is supreme.

It was on such an occasion that these two verses we have taken as our theme came to be preached. In the city of Sāvatthi, two young men who were friends ordained in the Dispensation. One of them thought: "Since I have ordained in old age, instead of the duty of study (*gantha-dhura*), I must fulfill the duty of insight (*vipassanā-dhura*)." Turning his mind towards insight, he obtained meditation subjects from the Buddha, went into retirement, meditated diligently, and soon attained Arahantship with the four analytical knowledges.

The other monk, with the hope of fulfilling the duty of study, learned the Buddha-word in detail and taught the Dhamma to a group of about five hundred disciples, living as the teacher of a large following.

The monks practicing insight, having obtained meditation subjects from the Buddha, went to the place of retirement where the first-mentioned monk resided. Having received advice from him and through his association, they attained Arahantship. Later, when they asked for permission to go and pay respects to the Buddha, that monk said: "Very well, Venerable Sirs, go and pay respects in my name to the Buddha and also to the eighty chief disciples, saying that I pay my respects. Likewise, convey my respects to my dear friend, such-and-such a monk."

Those monks also journeyed to Sāvatthi, paid respects to the Buddha and the other eighty chief disciples, and then went to the aforementioned monk, saying: "Our teacher pays his respects to you."

"Who is your teacher?" he asked. "So-and-so monk," they replied. When groups of disciples came and paid respects in this manner again and again, a kind of jealousy arose in that monk. "He went to the forest wearing rag-robes right at the time of ordination. He does not even know a single four-line verse. Yet, having gathered a group of disciples, he sends them to pay respects in this way." In this manner, a certain jealous feeling arose in the monk who fulfilled the duty of study. "Very well, when that monk comes one day, I must question him," he thought to himself.

Meanwhile, on one occasion, that Arahant monk also came to Sāvatthi to see the Buddha, and paid respects to the Buddha and the eighty chief disciples. Before doing so, he left his bowl, robes, and other requisites in the hut of his friend. Having paid respects to the Buddha and the monks, when he returned, the studying monk, after completing his duties, prepared to sit on a seat of equal height and question the elderly monk on the Dhamma. The Buddha saw this. Seeing this, He thought: "If this monk questions my son, the Arahant, and harasses him, he might fall into hell." Thus, the Buddha went to that hut as if walking on a tour of the monastery. In those days, a seat was prepared for the Buddha in every hut, and the monks lived there accordingly. The Buddha sat on that Buddha-seat. The two monks stood on either side.

The Buddha asked the monk who fulfilled the duty of study a question regarding the first absorption (*jhāna*). He answered that question. Then He questioned him on the

second absorption, third absorption, fourth absorption, and so on, regarding all the fine-material and immaterial absorptions. The monk answered them all. Next, the Buddha asked a question about the path of Stream-entry. To that question, the studying monk had no answer. Then, the Buddha asked that question of the Arahant Elder. He answered it. Likewise, the Arahant monk was able to answer the questions asked about the paths of Once-returning and Non-returning. The monk who fulfilled the duty of study was unable to answer them.

The Buddha uttered "Sādhu" (well done) to all four answers given regarding those paths. It is said there that the sound of "Sādhu" vibrated all the way up to the Brahma world. Now, when this "Sādhu" was uttered, the disciples of the monk who fulfilled the duty of study were disturbed. "Look at that, the Teacher uttered 'Sādhu' so much to that old monk. He did not praise our teacher at all, who is the teacher of such a large crowd." Thus a murmur arose.

The Buddha asked, "Monks, what are you talking about?" and when the matter was explained, He declared on that occasion: "Your teacher is like a cowherd who merely counts others' cows. My son, the Arahant, is like the owner of the cows who enjoys the five products of the cow." With this theme, He uttered the two verses we took as our title.

"Though he recites much of the Buddha-word, the heedless person who does not act accordingly is like a cowherd counting others' cows; he is not a partaker of the monkhood." That is the meaning of the first verse. In the second verse, He speaks of the state of the Arahant monk:

"Though he recites but little of the Buddha-word, the monk who practices according to the Dhamma, having abandoned lust, hatred, and delusion, living with right wisdom and a well-released mind, clinging to nothing here or hereafter—he is indeed a partaker of the monkhood."

There is a deep meaning in the two words "clinging to nothing here or hereafter" (*anupādiyāno idha vā huraṃ vā*). "Here or there," "this world or the next"—these are two words with many broad meanings. It means not holding on with grasping (*upādāna*), either here or there. It is the nature of the Arahant that is expressed there. Such a monk is indeed a partaker of the monkhood, of the fruits of monkhood. This is the matter that the Buddha highlighted through this.

We can see from this story that the monk who fulfilled the duty of study developed a certain jealousy due to conceit. He had memorized the scriptures, the Buddha-word, very well. He knew a great deal. He had a large crowd of disciples. Due to the arrogance arising from that, he looked down upon the inner, spiritual accumulation of virtues of the forest-dwelling monk without knowing it. He prepared to question him in a degrading manner. The Buddha intervened on that occasion out of compassion for that monk, to prevent him from falling into hell. He came there, intervened, and questioned them in that manner. The monk who fulfilled the duty of

study did indeed answer the questions regarding the absorptions well. But regarding the paths and fruits (*magga-phala*), there was no answer. He was speechless. Therefore, we see that the Buddha pointed to the supramundane as the true fruit of monkhood. Absorptions and so on were also present among those of other religions. They also have an important place in the Dispensation. However, using them as an aid to attain the supramundane which transcends grasping (*upādāna*)—the state of being without grasping—is the primary purpose of the Buddha's Dispensation. Since he had fulfilled that purpose, the Buddha praised the elderly forest-dwelling monk and uttered "Sādhu."

We can learn many things from this. Even in this day and age, according to the intellectual attitude, this Dhamma is often made into an intellectual subject. There is an attitude of analyzing and living within various analyses and critiques of this Dhamma. Indeed, the danger of limiting the Dhamma—which was declared by the Buddha for a practical purpose—merely to learning and study (*pariyatti*) in an indirect way, is shown through this story.

In two suttas, this Dhamma is compared to a raft. This is a very deep and meaningful simile. "Monks, I have compared this Dhamma of mine to a raft. It is for the purpose of crossing over, not for the purpose of grasping." Not for holding on with grasping (*upādāna*) in that manner. It is for crossing over. We must say a little about how this simile is presented to bring out the points revealed in this story. A certain man sets out on a long journey. On the way, he comes to a great stretch of water. The near shore is full of fear and doubt. The far shore is free of doubt and safe. Then, there is a need to go from the near shore to the far shore. But there is neither a ship nor a bridge. So, what does this man do? Collecting grass, twigs, branches, and creepers, he binds a raft, and making an effort with his hands and feet, and with the aid of the raft, he crosses over to the far shore. After reaching the far shore, he does not carry the raft on his shoulders. That is the basic idea there.

Another sutta discourse sheds light on the ideas in this story of the raft. The Buddha himself mentions on a later occasion that the stretch of water refers to the four floods of sensual desire, becoming (*bhava*), views, and ignorance. These are the four floods flowing in this Saṃsāra. This is the body of water. The near shore, which is full of doubt and fear, is the dogma of self-illusion (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*). The dogma of self-illusion (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*) means taking this five-aggregate bundle of form (*rūpa*), feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), Preparations (*saṅkhāra*), and consciousness (*viññāṇa*) as "me" and "mine."

That is the weakness in the samsaric individual. It is because of this that all fear and doubt arise. The far shore is Nibbāna, the place of freedom from these. Next, this raft is compared to the Noble Eightfold Path. The effort made by using the raft and using hands and feet represents the initiation of effort. One who travels on this path has to apply effort. The Buddha states that he went putting forth effort with hands and feet with the aid of the raft, to show the idea of applying effort and initiating effort. Then

we see that if the raft is the Noble Eightfold Path, the Noble Eightfold Path is not something to be carried on one's shoulders. That is where the main meaning lies. This path is solely for crossing over. After crossing over, what remains is the Fruit of the Path.

There is a very valuable sutta discourse on this called the *Alagaddūpama Sutta*. Corresponding to the name of that sutta discourse, the Buddha shows another simile. *Alagadda* means a snake. We can get a certain idea about the monk who held the duty of study, especially from the second simile. Suppose a person who is skilled in catching snakes, or is looking for a snake, sees a large snake. Due to haste, if he mistakenly catches the snake by its coils or its tail, the snake will turn back and bite him. According to that simile, the Buddha preaches: "Similarly, in my Dispensation, some foolish men learn the Dhamma which was preached for crossing over, but do not examine its meaning with wisdom. If they had examined it with wisdom, they would see that this is something to be put into practice; without understanding it as such, they use it to raise various theories, arguments, and disputations, leaning towards them to look down on others."

Now, the monk who carried the duty of study hoped to defeat the other monk by questioning him. The consequence of that is like the snake turning back and biting. In this way, the Buddha highlights the practical value of the Dhamma. There are several other discourses regarding the place given to learning during the Buddha's time. On one occasion, a monk came and asked the Buddha: "Venerable Sir, 'one who dwells in the Dhamma' (*dhammavihārī*), 'one who dwells in the Dhamma' is said. To what extent, Venerable Sir, does one become a dweller in the Dhamma?" The meaning of the word *dhammavihārī* is one who lives according to the Dhamma. So this monk is asking: "To what extent does one become a dweller in the Dhamma?"

Then the Buddha preaches: "Here, monks, a certain monk learns the Dhamma in detail." What is mentioned here is not the term "Piṭaka." In the past, the Triple Piṭaka (Tipiṭaka) Buddha-word was known as the nine-fold Dispensation of the Teacher (*navaṅga-satthu-sāsana*). According to the prominent features of those Buddha discourses, the nine-fold Dispensation of the Teacher is divided and shown as: *sutta* (discourses), *geyya* (mixed prose and verse), *veyyākaraṇa* (expositions), *gāthā* (verses), *udāna* (inspired utterances), *itivuttaka* (as-it-was-said), *jātaka* (birth stories), *abbhutadhamma* (marvels), and *vedalla* (catechisms). Nowadays, the term Triple Piṭaka is used.

In the past, someone would learn this nine-fold Dispensation of the Teacher—comprising *sutta, geyya, veyyākaraṇa, gāthā, udāna, itivuttaka, jātaka, abbhutadhamma, vedalla*—in detail. Having learned it, he spends the whole day on those activities of learning. He does not think about meditation—that is, secluded dwelling, seclusive living—nor does he think about concentration (*samādhi*). He spends the entire day in learning. Such a monk is designated as "one who is abundant in learning (*pariyatti-bahulo*), not a dweller in the Dhamma (*no*

dhammavihārī)." That is, a monk who devotes most of his time to learning, to scripture, and is not a dweller in the Dhamma. That was one category mentioned.

Next, in the same way, four others are described. A certain monk learns the Dhamma in detail and preaches that Dhamma to others, teaches it to others. Such a monk spends the entire day teaching others. The Buddha describes such a monk as "one who is abundant in teaching, not a dweller in the Dhamma." Except for teaching the Dhamma to others, he does not live according to the Dhamma.

There is a third monk who, having learned the Dhamma well, spends the whole day reciting it. Such a monk is called "one who is abundant in recitation, not a dweller in the Dhamma." He spends his time in reciting, but does not live according to the Dhamma.

Then, a fourth monk, having learned the Dhamma in that way, spends his time thinking and pondering over the Dhamma, reflecting and reasoning, without meditation. Such a monk is called "one who is abundant in thinking, not a dweller in the Dhamma." Many of today's educated people might fall into this category. They are abundant in thinking, but they do not live according to the Dhamma. They do not try to put the Dhamma into practice and realize it.

Next, the fifth monk is the one who learned the Dhamma, but devotes a considerable part of the day to meditation and concentration, realizing the Dhamma. It is that monk who is called a "dweller in the Dhamma" (*dhammavihārī*) in the true sense. Having declared this, the Buddha utters a very powerful passage at the end, which is frequently mentioned in the sutta discourses.

He made this statement even when His Parinibbāna (final extinction) was approaching: "Whatever should be done for his disciples by a teacher who seeks their welfare and is compassionate, all that has been done by me for you. Here, monks, are the roots of trees; here are empty huts. Practice meditation! Monks, do not be negligent! Do not be remorseful later!" With this passage, the discourse ends. What this shows is that the Buddha's teaching is something that must be realized through meditation.

From this too, we see the place the Buddha gave to the knowledge that must be realized. He considered realized knowledge itself as supreme. We can see this even more deeply from the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*. Throughout His entire Buddha-career of forty-five years, the Dhamma that the Buddha preached was summarized by Him at the final moment as a series of practical groups of Dhamma. "Whatever Dhamma I have preached having directly known..." and then He says, what are those Dhammas? The four foundations of mindfulness (*cattāro satipaṭṭhāna*), the four right efforts (*cattāro sammappadhāna*), the four bases of spiritual power (*cattāro iddhipāda*), the five faculties, the five powers, the seven factors of enlightenment, and the Noble Eightfold Path—these are the thirty-seven aids to enlightenment

(*sattatisa bodhipakkhiya dhammā*) that the Buddha identifies as the Dhamma He preached.

One can also go on counting these. For those who go on counting, there are many conveniences nowadays. There are computers. Therefore, those who count cows now have great conveniences. They even have computers. Like the cowherd counting cows, one can go on counting in this way. However, it is regarding the enjoyment of the five products of the cow that there is the greatest rarity nowadays. Those who enjoy the five products of the cow are very few. The majority are cowherds. At the final moment, the Buddha identified the four foundations of mindfulness and so on—things to be put into practice—as the groups of Dhamma. Let us think a little about this idea in the Buddha's teaching. Indeed, gathering knowledge merely as knowledge is a burden to the mind. It is only something gathered. But wisdom, obtained by following the practice of the Dhamma and its sub-laws (*dhammānudhamma-paṭipatti*) consisting of virtue, concentration, and wisdom (*sīla, samādhi, paññā*), is a deep understanding, a vision that cuts off thoughts and stills the mind. It is through that alone that the Four Noble Truths can be understood.

On one occasion, a monk named Udāyī came and declared how he attained Arahantship to the Buddha: "The Blessed One preached to me in this way: 'This is form (*rūpa*), this is the arising of form, this is the passing away of form. This is feeling (*vedanā*), this is the arising of feeling, this is the passing away of feeling. This is perception (*saññā*), this is the arising of perception, this is the passing away of perception. These are preparations (*saṅkhāra*), this is the arising of preparations, this is the passing away of preparations. This is consciousness (*viññāṇa*), this is the arising of consciousness, this is the passing away of consciousness.' The Buddha preached such a discourse to me. I went to an empty place, a secluded hut, and looking at these five aggregates of grasping (*pañcupādānakkhandha*), turning them upside down and examining them, I understood the Four Noble Truths."

Therefore, it is not in scientific laboratories that these five aggregates of form (*rūpa*), feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), preparations (*saṅkhāra*), and consciousness (*viññāṇa*) can be understood. It is something to be realized within this very fathom-long body. The laboratory for that is that very place of retirement. That is why the Buddha spoke of empty huts and roots of trees. Having gone to such a place, what is the instrument used there? Radical attention (*yoniso manasikāra*). Reflecting with wisdom. Then, through reflecting with wisdom, with the help of mindfulness and clear comprehension (*sati-sampajañña*), putting into practice the foundations of mindfulness, right efforts, and so on, the monk Udāyī understood the three characteristics of impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and not-self (*anattā*) of the five aggregates of grasping, thoroughly understood the Four Noble Truths, and attained Arahantship.

Thus, it is revealed through this too that the purpose of the Dhamma can be approached through that practical path. That is why in this verse it is said, "with clear comprehension and a well-released mind" (*sammapajāno suvimuttacitto*). "He is a practitioner according to the Dhamma" (*dhammassa hoti anudhammacārī*). If we state this practice according to the Dhamma (*dhammānudhamma-paṭipatti*) briefly, as we mentioned earlier, it is virtue, concentration, and wisdom (*sīla, samādhi, paññā*). Especially, it is to a concentrated mind that this deep Dhamma is understood. Secular, physical things may perhaps be understood even by a mind that does not have much concentration. All those scientists do not have a pure mind freed from defilements. They also perform various feats. But to understand this Dhamma preached by the Tathāgata, a concentrated mind is necessary. We get a good evidence for this from a Dhamma story.

A brahmin named Saṅgārava came and asked a question of the Buddha. "Master Gotama," he asks about a problem he has, "on certain occasions, even the mantras that have been well practiced and recited are not understood. Needless to say, the things that have not been recited are not understood at all. On other occasions, even the things that have not been practiced through recitation are understood. Needless to say, the things that have been recited are easily understood." You merit-seekers might understand this. That is, "This is a problem that came to me. Sometimes, even things I have not memorized suddenly become clear. Sometimes, even the things I have memorized do not come to mind. What is the reason for this?" he asks. The Buddha declares: "Brahmin, on any occasion when the mind is overcome by arisen sensual lust (*kāmarāga*), if one does not know the escape from that arisen sensual lust, on such an occasion, that person does not see his own good, nor does he see the good of others. Even the Dhamma that has been well recited, memorized, and retained does not come to mind. Needless to say, the things that have not been memorized do not come to mind." Then, to make it easy to remember, He shows a simile. The similes given by the Buddha are very wonderful.

Suppose there is a bowl of water. Dyes of red, yellow, blue, and crimson are mixed in it. In those days, there were no mirrors like today to look at one's face. Most people looked at their faces in a bowl of water. But if a person with eyes tries to look at his face in a bowl of water mixed with dyes in that manner, he does not see it properly. It is not clearly visible because of the mixed dyes. Just so, when the mind is disturbed by lust, one does not see one's own good, nor does he see the good of others. Likewise, the learned Dhamma is also forgotten. What is mentioned in this first simile is the hindrance of sensual desire (*kāmacchanda-nīvaraṇa*), which is an obstacle to concentration, as you merit-seekers have heard. What the Buddha points out through this simile is the state of being overcome by sensual desire.

Next, as the second point, He points to ill-will (*byāpāda*). If a person is in a state of strong anger, and is unable to free the mind from it, on that occasion, he does not see his own good, nor does he see the good of others, and the Dhamma he has learned is not understood. The simile given next for that is: if a bowl of water is heated by fire,

boiling and bubbling, and emitting steam, in such a bowl of water, one's face is not visible in that manner. It is not clearly visible. That is, it is not seen. Thus, that second simile is ill-will (*byāpāda*).

Next, we come to the third simile: sloth and torpor (*thīna-middha*), which is the shrinking state of the mind, the inactive nature. Sleepiness and laziness, as we normally call it. On the occasion when the mind is overcome by that too, one does not see his own good, nor does he see the good of others. Even the learned Dhamma is not understood. The simile given for that is: a bowl of water covered and enveloped with water-moss. The growth of water-moss represents that laziness. In all these similes, there is a very deep meaning and a fitting nature. Thus, trying to look at one's face in a bowl of water covered with water-moss is a useless task; that is the state of being overcome by sloth and torpor (*thīna-middha*).

Next, the fourth point is shown: the hindrance of restlessness and worry (*uddhacca-kukkucca*). Restlessness (*uddhacca*) does not mean the same meaning as used nowadays. Restlessness (*uddhacca*) means agitation, especially the agitation regarding the future. Worry (*kukkucca*)—scrutiny, in the past it was called remorse. Regret, remorse over things done and undone, as well as worry over bad things done. Thus, when the mind is in the state of restlessness and worry (*uddhacca-kukkucca*), it does not see. The simile shown for that is: a bowl of water, and that water is shaking and rippling when there is wind. Then too, the face is not seen properly. Just so is the state of restlessness and worry (*uddhacca-kukkucca*), the agitated state of a mind.

The fifth state is doubt (*vicikicchā*), which is hesitation, skepticism. The simile given for that is: a bowl of water kept in the dark, and that water is muddy and turbid. One does not see the face by looking into a bowl of muddy, disturbed water kept in the dark. Just so is that doubt (*vicikicchā*), the state of hesitation. Thus, the reason why the brahmin does not understand the mantras is due to these hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*). If even the brahmins' mantras are not understood when overcome by these hindrances, then how can someone understand the Buddha-mantra while remaining within a hindrance? That is what we have to think of next.

The Buddha did not stop the discourse there. Next, He declared to that Brahmin Saṅgārava: "Brahmin, to eliminate these hindrances, the seven factors of enlightenment (*bojjhaṅga*) must be developed." The factors of enlightenment (*bojjhaṅga*). Now, for many Buddhists, these are mere words. They are hardly ever put into practice. But the factors of enlightenment are called so because they lead to enlightenment (*bodhāya saṃvattanti*). *Bodhi* means realization. In the sense of aiding realization, they are called *bojjhaṅga*. Thus, these valuable Dhammas that every Buddha brings to light are called the seven Dhammas. They are: mindfulness (*sati*), investigation of states (*dhamma-vicaya*), energy (*viriya*), rapture (*pīti*), tranquility (*passaddhi*), concentration (*samādhi*), and equanimity (*upekkhā*).

Mindfulness (*sati*) means attentiveness. There too, mindfulness means developing mindfulness based on the foundations of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*). Next, investigation of states (*dhamma-vicaya*) means obtaining understanding of wholesome and unwholesome states through that developed mindfulness. That is, at the moment when mindfulness is well established in the mind, one sees: "these things are obstacles to my mind's concentration; these things are helpful to it." Then, a certain understanding can be gained through that. Investigation of states (*dhamma-vicaya*) means the capacity to know things as they truly are in their respective places.

Next, after knowing, one applies energy accordingly—to abandon those unwholesome states and to develop wholesome states. That is the next: mindfulness (*sati*), investigation of states (*dhamma-vicaya*), energy (*viriya*). When proceeding with energy in that manner, a unique kind of rapture (*pīti*) arises in oneself. When it becomes successful, a great joy arises in the mind. Next, it is through that rapture (*pīti*) that the calmness, both physically and mentally, called tranquility (*passaddhi*) arises. Through that internally generated rapture, a quietness called tranquility (*passaddhi*), a quietness of the mind, arises. From that alone, concentration (*samādhi*) comes. So, it is not a matter of just saying "I want concentration, I want concentration." When the hindrances are naturally removed and at some point internal rapture and quietness arrive, the mind settles. That is like something coming and settling right beside oneself—that is tranquility (*passaddhi*). Next is concentration (*samādhi*). Thus, concentration follows tranquility (*passaddhi*). After obtaining that concentration, to protect it, there is equanimity (*upekkhā*). Equanimity (*upekkhā*) means a neutral looking-on. The simile shown for that is: if the horses are running restlessly, one has to pull the reins. But if they are running properly, they are allowed to trot. Just so is equanimity (*upekkhā*). One watches with equanimity, with neutrality, to protect concentration.

Those are shown as the factors of enlightenment (*bojjhaṅga*). Indeed, it is when these factors of enlightenment are developed that the Noble Eightfold Path arises. You merit-seekers also must have heard that it is the Noble Eightfold Path that is most famously spoken of in usage. The fundamental alignment for that Noble Eightfold Path comes from this very Dhamma, because it aids awakening. Here itself, the Buddha declares: "To develop the factors of enlightenment, the foundations of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*) are necessary." It is through developing the foundations of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*) that one can go up to those factors of enlightenment. In the end, the Brahmin Saṅgārava took refuge in the Buddha and became a disciple. From these facts, we see that to understand the Dhamma properly, to realize it, what is needed is not arguments and disputations, but that very unification of mind, making the mind concentrated. Concentration (*samādhi*) means the state where hindrances are removed.

For some who have developed their minds over a long period in Saṃsāra, freeing the mind from those hindrances is possible even while listening to the Dhamma. It is not

impossible even while listening to the Dhamma. This is something that happens rarely. It is not appropriate for everyone to expect it to happen that way. Nowadays, there is an opinion among some educated people that all this occurs merely by listening to the Dhamma. That is a rare occurrence. Even while listening to the Dhamma, if one focuses the entire mind on it and listens properly, it is not impossible for the mind to become concentrated, for the hindrances to be removed, and to gain direct realization. Likewise, when even a person preaching the Dhamma preaches with his mind properly applied, like eating the food prepared for others himself, there are instances mentioned in the Dhamma where direct realization was obtained through that. Sometimes, when reflecting on the Dhamma or reciting it, some people realize the Dhamma. Finally, it is shown that when one constantly reflects on a certain meditation subject (*kammaṭṭhāna*), a theme of meditation, and systematically develops it through meditation, that realization comes. Even so, it is not proper to assume "I belong to that category."

As the Buddha generally pointed out, one has to proceed from the foundations of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*) itself. In the four foundations of mindfulness (*cattāro satipaṭṭhāna*), which you merit-seekers have heard of so often, what is shown is: contemplation of the body, contemplation of feelings, contemplation of the mind, and contemplation of mind-objects. Contemplating in that manner means, separating from the feeling of "me" and "mine," to understand with wisdom according to radical attention (*yoniso manasikāra*) as it becomes manifest. What aids that is mindfulness and clear comprehension (*sati-sampajañña*). Mindfulness (*sati*) means attentiveness. Within the foundations of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*), its objects are the body, feeling, the mind, and thoughts that come to the mind. These are things present within oneself. Making these the object and applying mindfulness to them.

Next, clear comprehension (*sampajañña*) means that which must go together with that mindfulness. In the section on the postures in the foundations of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*), this is shown. In ordinary daily life, a person does not even realize that he is breathing in and breathing out. But mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpānasati*) means establishing mindfulness on that inhalation and exhalation. This is understood as an extremely difficult thing by the ordinary world, because the world lives a life abundant in thoughts (*vitakka-bahula*). When entangled in other activities with abundant thoughts, one does not even know that he is breathing. But the Buddha points out that by establishing mindfulness on this inhalation and exhalation, one can go all the way to the unconditioned (*asaṅkhata*). Why? Because within this inhalation and exhalation, the three characteristics are present. The three characteristics of impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and not-self (*anattā*) are present within this very inhalation and exhalation. An inhalation taken ends with an exhalation. Thus, each of them is like two halves of a circle. There is only a process of emptying and filling here. Saying "I am breathing" here is due to thinking of it as an imputation of "me" and "mine," thinking of it in terms of self and what belongs to self. But at some point, this is understood with wisdom by one who has applied

mindfulness to this inhalation and exhalation. That is why this mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpānasati*) is shown as a meditation. The same principle applies to the others too. In the foundations of mindfulness, these are given systematically; you merit-seekers may have heard or read about them sometimes.

Next, the maintenance of postures—going, coming, standing, sitting, lying down—these four postures are like four wheels. Our life is spent within these four wheels, turning in this circle. Standing, then sitting. Next, lying down. Next, getting up. Next, walking. Within this too, there is a cycle just like that. There is also a moment when this is understood. If mindfulness is properly applied to these, it is understood: "There is no one here who goes; there is only this process. This is like a puppet being moved this way and that." Thus, a certain direct realization comes.

What goes even deeper is called the section on clear comprehension (*sampajañña*). That very maintenance of postures is shown in a more subtle manner. That is, how subtle it is: looking forward, looking at something, and looking away. This is something that happens extremely rapidly. One looks at something, then looks away. In ordinary life, one does not even know that he is doing it. But one practices doing even that with mindfulness. Looking at something, looking away. Likewise, going forward, returning. Looking at something, looking away. Extending the arm, bending it—this very process. These subtle movements of the limbs of this body, regarding the functioning of the body. That is developed. Awareness is indeed living. When proceeding in such a subtle manner, one recognizes the moment of looking at something. He knows it with mindfulness. Likewise, he knows the moment of looking away. That is like living. Then, there is no time to jump into the past or the future. It is when going in such a subtle manner that gradually this impermanent (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and not-self (*anattā*) nature is understood. In that way, clear comprehension has been declared.

Next, there are other sections that aid the very same thing. You merit-seekers have heard about the thirty-two impure parts of the body. The Buddha compared it to a bag open at both ends, filled with various grains like hill-paddy, rice, kidney-beans, green gram, and so on. If a bag is open at both ends, indeed, it is not even a bag. Thus, what we call "my body" was compared by the Buddha to a bag open at both ends. One must maintain this mind in such a way that the understanding regarding the parts of this body arises at some point. In the same way, alongside that, the nature of loathsomeness is also understood. Next, the four elements in this—earth, water, fire, wind (*paṭhavi, āpo, tejo, vāyo*)—their characteristics of hardness, fluidity, heat, and so on; it is in oneself that the understanding lies.

By reflecting on the parts of the body related to the four elements, one comes to the understanding that "this is merely a collection of the four elements." There, the Buddha shows the simile of a butcher; after slaughtering a cow and dividing it into parts, the perception (*saññā*) of "cow" disappears. One should not take this simile as an encouragement for cow-slaughter. Some might take it that way. What the Buddha points out here is that even to the person who slaughters cows, after dividing the cow

into parts and piling them up, the feeling of "cow" is not there. Similarly, when the mind is maintained regarding these four elements, at some point it is understood: "this is only a piling up of the four elements; there is no 'me' there." It is to lead to this understanding that the simile was shown.

Next, it goes even beyond that. The dead body of a person is shown there, not as a simile, but as an illustration. Either one imagines it in the mind, or if one actually has an opportunity to see them, he uses it as an aid. A person who has died, and after several days have passed, the body is bloated, blue, and infested with worms. Next, in that way, gradually, a body being eaten by various animals. A heap of bones held together by tendons. Finally, going on and on in that way, a heap of bones reduced to dust, the Buddha has allowed the mind to be directed up to that.

What is shown through that is the fate of this body-cage, which is fed and looked after so much. We bring that to mind. We bring it to mind through a simile or through something we have seen, and apply it to ourselves: "Just as this body is, so is that body; just as that body is, so is this body" (*yathā idaṃ tathā etaṃ, yathā etaṃ tathā iḍaṃ - ca bahiddhā ca kāye chandaṃ virājaye*, as it is stated).

Thus, what is contained in this *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* is, by using one's own body, others' bodies, one's own feelings, others' feelings, and all of them as an aid, to understand the three characteristics of impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and not-self (*anattā*) within this body as a universally valid law. One must look at it as internal, external, and as internal-and-external (*ajjhatta, bahiddhā, ajjhatta-bahiddhā*). In the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, the Buddha preaches to develop this foundation of mindfulness in three ways: internal, external, and combining both internal and external. "Internal" and "external" refers to what we normally call "self" and "others." That idea is more clearly stated as internal and external. We understand certain things as things inside us; others are external things. By using external things, we can apply them and understand that our body is also like this. That is why it is said, *yathā iḍaṃ tathā etaṃ, yathā etaṃ tathā iḍaṃ*. Just as this body is, so is that body; just as that body is, so is this body. The purpose there is to remove attachment to both bodies. Some might think: "Although this body is like this, that other body is not so." You merit-seekers can understand this through your own minds. Although one's own body is subject to such illnesses and so on, the body of the person one likes is not such a thing. The feeling one generally gets through perception is that "this is like a statue cast in one piece; this will never be destroyed." Just as mentioned about the Nun Khemā, a person who has a greater attachment to her own beauty can start Vipassanā (insight) from another's body.

The Buddha has allowed one to complete Vipassanā by starting from one's own body and ending with another's body, or starting from another's body and applying it to one's own body. Whichever way one goes, what is done is understanding the three characteristics of impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and not-self (*anattā*) as a universally valid, all-applicable law. That is what was meant by "clinging to

nothing here or hereafter" (*anupādiyāno idha vā huraṃ vā*). One does not grasp (*upādāna*) here, nor does he grasp there. That "not grasping here, not grasping there" is explained in some places as "this world and the next world." Now, the person who is grasping here is the one who grasps there at the moment of death. It is the very momentum of grasping here that makes one go and grasp there when one has to let go of this place.

That very thing operates in daily life through these six sense-bases (*saḷāyatana*). When this eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind are taken together with their respective objects, they are called sense-bases (*āyatana*). A process of work is carried out there, because a sense-base (*āyatana*) is a place where a certain process of work is done. Based on the eye and form (*rūpa*), a certain process of work is done; based on the ear and sound, a certain process of work is done—that is the ear-base (*sotāyatana*). Going on in that way, finally it comes up to the mind-base (*manāyatana*). Eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind. For the mind-base (*manāyatana*), there is the mind and the thoughts. Between the mind and thoughts, there is an extremely subtle connection. One has to remove the attachment to both ends, called "here" and "there," which are taken as external (*bahiddhā*) in those sense-bases.

On one occasion, the Venerable Mahākoṭṭhita came to the Venerable Sāriputta and asked a question: "Is the eye a fetter (*saṃyojana*) to forms? Is the fetter bound from forms to the eye? Is the tongue a fetter to tastes? Is the fetter bound from tastes to the tongue? Is the mind a fetter to thoughts? Is the fetter bound from thoughts to the mind?" Then Venerable Sāriputta answers with a simile: "Now, suppose a black ox and a white ox are bound together by a single rope. When a black ox and a white ox are bound together by a single rope, if someone says that the white ox is a fetter to the black ox, or that the black ox is a fetter to the white ox, would that be a correct statement?" Then that Venerable monk says: "No." What is it indeed? The white ox is not a fetter to the black ox, nor is the black ox a fetter to the white ox. The fetter there is the single rope by which both are bound. To that rope, Venerable Sāriputta compares desire-and-lust (*chanda-rāga*).

Desire-and-lust (*chanda-rāga*) means wishing, attachment, craving (*taṇhā*), lust. Thus, form (*rūpa*) is not a fetter to the eye, nor is the eye a fetter to forms. The fetter is the attachment, the desire-and-lust (*chanda-rāga*) that is created between the two. The secret lies there. It is within that that Saṃsāra exists. Therefore, what the Buddha says is not to make oneself blind, nor to go on destroying the beautiful forms in the world. Liberation lies in eliminating the attachment that arises within oneself regarding these two. Therefore, the path to eliminate that attachment is what the Buddha shows. That is why this is called a path of dispassion (*virāga*). It is stated as "leading to absolute disenchantment, to dispassion, to cessation" (*ekānta-nibbidāya virāgāya nirodhāya*), and so on. In this Buddha's Dispensation, it is entirely for the purpose of generating this disenchantment. The word "samsaric disenchantment" (*nibbidā*) may not be a very pleasing word in this day and age, but in short, that is

the practice carried out through the three characteristics of impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and not-self (*anattā*). This eye is impermanent (*anicca*), forms are also impermanent (*anicca*). The eye is also suffering (*dukkha*). It is not only when an eye-disease comes that this is understood. Forms are also suffering (*dukkha*). The eye is also not-self (*anattā*). One cannot say "me" or "mine." The reason we are given a pair of spectacles is because of poor vision. If our eyes saw properly, would we add another thing called spectacles? It is a great hassle. Thus, even within those, we see this not-self (*anattā*) nature.

So, in that way, the eye is impermanent (*anicca*), the eye is suffering (*dukkha*), the eye is not-self (*anattā*). Forms are also like that. So, when understood in that way, that middle fetter is loosened little by little. Desire-and-lust (*chanda-rāga*) is loosened. What is the attachment in this? How long can one keep this? In the very same way, you merit-seekers can think of the tongue and taste, and the others too. The deepest part is the mind and the thought. The thought is also something created by the mind itself. That is where the deepest matter lies. That is indeed what can be realized only through meditation.

Now, in this day and age, we hear many people saying that consciousness (*viññāṇa*) too can be understood through physics and research. The laboratory of Venerable Udāyī was the empty place (*suññāgāra*). But now, many people try to understand even consciousness (*viññāṇa*) in a physical way. Without understanding form (*rūpa*), without understanding feeling (*vedanā*), without understanding perception (*saññā*), without understanding preparations (*saṅkhāra*), how can one understand consciousness (*viññāṇa*)? Consciousness (*viññāṇa*) is the illusion, the deepest one. But the clue to understanding it is right there. At the moment when it is understood that the mind, the thought that comes to the mind, and this thought itself is something created by ourselves, this final link is unfastened.

That is why the Buddha said "Mind precedes all mental states" (*manopubbaṅgamā dhammā*). The mind is at the forefront. The mind is at the forefront and creates the thought according to our likes and dislikes. We are engrossed, immersed in some thought. What are we thinking about? Thinking day and night? Then, sometimes we can say with great difficulty: "I am thinking about so-and-so, I am thinking about such-and-such a thing." So we might say, "Is that even something to think about?" Although it is nothing to us, to him it is everything because of that desire-and-lust (*chanda-rāga*).

So, we must understand in that way that these things are created from within our own mind. That is a very subtle matter. It is something to be understood at some point through meditation. In the deepest state of Vipassanā (insight), when that is understood, this fetter is completely broken. There is no need to blame this mind. It is neither the mind nor the thought that is the problem. At the moment when the attachment, the desire-and-lust (*chanda-rāga*) within those two is eliminated, this is understood as "here." From that is liberation. That is what was meant by "clinging to

nothing here or hereafter" (*anupādiyāno idha vā huraṃ vā*). One does not grasp (*upādāna*) here, nor does he grasp there. One does not grasp this world, nor does he grasp the next world. One does not grasp this five-aggregate bundle, nor does he grasp that five-aggregate bundle. One does not grasp this internal sense-base, nor does he grasp the external sense-base. He who has gone in that manner is the one who is freed from all samsaric bonds, from those floods (*ogha*), and attains the supreme, deathless Nibbāna.

Therefore, as shown in those two verses uttered by the Buddha, we must abandon the practice of a cowherd and consider as supreme, as noble, the owner who enjoys the five products of the cows. You merit-seekers also spent this day with the effort to develop virtue, concentration, and wisdom (*sīla, samādhi, paññā*), even in a small measure. The Buddha has declared that one must proceed right from the beginning, starting even with the five precepts or the practice of virtue (*sīla*) that must be observed. Next, concentration (*samādhi*), wisdom (*paññā*). In this way, systematically, in the manner of "gradual training, gradual action, gradual practice" (*anupubba-sikkhā, anupubba-kiriyā, anupubba-paṭipadā*), it is through a gradual training, practice, and process that one can approach liberation. One cannot jump into this. One cannot jump there from above. It is a journey that must be traveled systematically.

According to the Buddha-word, by removing those aforementioned hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*), developing those states, practicing the four foundations of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*), may today's hearing of the Dhamma certainly be a strong support (*upanissaya*) to escape from all samsaric suffering—such as birth (*jāti*), decay (*jarā*), disease (*vyādhi*), and death (*maraṇa*)—through the realization of the paths and fruits (*magga-phala*) of Stream-entry (*Sotāpatti*), Once-returning (*Sakadāgāmitā*), Non-returning (*Anāgāmitā*), and Arahantship, and to reach the supreme far shore, the supreme Nibbāna! May all deities and Brahmas from the earth up to the Akanitha world, including our departed relatives and everyone else, rejoice in this store of merit accumulated through this preaching and hearing of the Dhamma, and may they realize the supreme, deathless Nibbāna through whatever Enlightenment (*bodhi*) they wish for! Likewise, by using this hearing of the Dhamma as an aid, walking on the path of meditation, may we also gain the strength and power to realize the paths and fruits (*magga-phala*) as quickly as possible! Make this aspiration and share the merits by reciting these verses.

"*Ettāvatā ca amhehi.....*"