Pahankanuwa Sermon #160

English Translation

Translated from Sinhala

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(Pahankaṇuwa Sinhala Audio Dhamma Sermon No.165)

Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa

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

Pali Stanza:

"Udakamāhariṃ sīte, sadā udakamotariṃ;

Ayyānaṃ daṇḍabhayabhītā, vācādosabhayaṭṭitā.

Kassa brāhmaṇa tvaṃ bhīto, sadā udakamotari;

Vedhamānehi gattehi, sītaṃ vedayase bhusaṃ?

Jānanti vata maṃ hoti, puṇṇike karontaṃ kusalaṃ kammaṃ;

Parivajjantañca pāpakaṃ.

Yo ca vuḍḍho daharo vā, pāpakammaṃ pakubbati;

Dakābhisecanā sopi, pāpakammā pamuccati."

From:

Therīgāthā (verses 236–239), Puṇṇikātherīgāthā

Dear Listeners,

The view that one can escape the consequences of evil deeds by washing away sins in water was prevalent among the Brahmins during the time of the Buddha. According to this rite known as "purification by water" (*udaka-suddhi*), the Brahmins followed the practice of plunging into water two or three times a day. According to the Noble Eightfold Path declared by the Buddha, this false rite is rejected. Ridiculing this practice of washing away sins, we have chosen as our theme today several verses from a Dhamma narrative, which clearly express how a female disciple of the Buddha guided a Brahmin to the path of Dhamma. These are several verses mentioned in the Therīgāthā of Puṇṇā Therī.

In fact, these verses were spoken by a servant maid named Puṇṇā. If we are to recount the background story, this maid Puṇṇā originally lived in the house of Anāthapiṇḍika the Treasurer. There are many past stories about her. According to them, she appears to have practiced the spiritual path in previous dispensations of Buddhas. It is said that due to extreme pride, she was born in a state of servitude. Now, this servant maid who lived in the house of Anāthapiṇḍika the Treasurer went to the river regularly to fetch water. One day, when she went to the bathing ford, she saw the Brahmin named Sotthiya immersed in the river for the sake of "purification by water," and it was then that she uttered these four verses first. Puṇṇā says:

"Udakamāhariṃ sīte sadā udakamotariṃ ayyānaṃ upajjhayabhītā vācādosabhayaṭṭitā"

— "I, carrying water in the cold season, always plunged into the water, fearing the punishment of my mistresses, tormented by the fear of their verbal abuse."

"Kassa brāhmaṇa tvaṃ bhīto sadā udakamotari vedhamānehi gattehi sītaṃ vedayase bhusaṃ"

— "But Brahmin, of whom are you afraid that you always come and plunge into the water? With trembling limbs, you are seen enduring extreme cold."

Addressing Puṇṇā, the Brahmin says:

"Jānanti vata maṃ hoti puṇṇike"

— "Puṇṇikā, you indeed know this as you ask me,"

"karontaṃ kusalaṃ kammaṃ kata pāpakaṃ..."

— "I am performing wholesome actions while warding off evil deeds. Knowing this well, you ask this question."

Then, to explain further, the Brahmin says:

"Yo ca vuddho daharo vā pāpakammaṃ pakubbati dakābhisecanā sopi pāpakammā pamuccati"

— "Whether it be an elder or a child, whoever commits an evil deed, by bathing in water, he too is freed from that evil deed."

The basic dialogue in this event is revealed through these few verses. The dialogue between these two goes further. Next, Puṇṇā addresses the Brahmin and says: "If, as you say, evil deeds are washed away by plunging into water, then frogs, tortoises, turtles, and other fish living in the water should go to heaven. Their evil deeds having been washed away, they should go to a happy destination (*sugati*)."

"According to your logic, those who slaughter goats, poultry, and fish, as well as thieves, executioners, and others who perform evil deeds, should also be freed from

those evil deeds." Next, she says, "If your evil deeds are washed away by bathing in the river, your merit must also be washed away! Then you would miss out on that merit and lose it." Next, by way of advice, she says, "Brahmin, if you are afraid of evil, then refrain from doing those evil deeds."

At that moment, the Brahmin understood the facts and said, "Puṇṇā, you have set me on the right path when I was on the wrong path. As a teacher's fee, I offer and present these robes to you." Then the servant maid Puṇṇā says, "Keep those robes for yourself. I have no use for them. If you are afraid of evil deeds, do not commit evil deeds, whether in public or in secret. You cannot escape from them even by running away. Indeed, if you do not like Suffering / Unsatisfactoriness / Stress (*Dukkha*), undertake virtues such as virtue/morality (*sīla*) in this Dispensation. Go for refuge to the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Saṅgha," she advised. Thereafter, the Brahmin accepted this, and as recounted in that Dhamma story, not only did he take refuge in the Triple Gem, but he later went to the Buddha, asked for ordination (*pabbajjā*) and higher ordination (*upasampadā*), and finally became an Arahant.

At the end of those Therīgāthā, the joyful utterance made by that Brahmin after becoming an Arahant is mentioned in this manner:

"Brāhmabandhu pure āsiṃ"

— "In the past, I was merely a relative of Brahma. Today, indeed, I am a true Brahmin (*saccabrāhmaṇo*)." Furthermore, "I have mastered the Threefold Knowledge (*tivijjā*). That does not mean the Vedas of the Brahmins, but those three knowledges, the three main supernormal knowledges (*abhiññā*) declared by the Buddha, which I have realized. Likewise, I have used the word *nahātaka* (one who has bathed) in its true sense: 'I am one who has washed away all sins and become pure,'" he declared after becoming an Arahant. Hearing that the servant maid Puṇṇā had guided a Brahmin to the path of the Dhamma in this manner, Anāthapiṇḍika the Treasurer is said to have freed the maid Puṇṇā from servitude.

Likewise, it is mentioned in the Dhamma books that this servant maid Puṇṇā was a wise person who became a Stream-enterer (*Sotāpanna*) after listening to the *Cūḷasīhanāda Sutta* delivered by the Buddha. Finally, this maid Puṇṇā too, having obtained permission from Anāthapiṇḍika the Treasurer, was ordained in the Bhikkhunī Saṅgha and became an Arahant nun who attained the fourfold analytical knowledges (*paṭisambhidā*). This Dhamma story shows how this female disciple of the Buddha removed from the Brahmin's mind the wrong view that sins can be washed away by bathing, and guided him to the path of Dhamma.

Many such incidents are mentioned in Dhamma literature. Another such incident occurred at one time when the Buddha was residing in Sāvatthī. While Venerable Ānanda was walking for alms, a Brahmin named Saṅgārava was practicing the rite of plunging into water in the same way. Venerable Ānanda requested the Buddha: "Venerable Sir, it would be well if, out of compassion, you would visit the home of

this Brahmin Saṅgārava." The Buddha consented by silence, and the next morning visited the home of this Brahmin Saṅgārava. After sitting on the prepared seat, when the Brahmin approached, the Buddha asked: "Brahmin, is it true that you practice the rite of plunging into water morning and evening?"

When he replied, "Yes, Lord," the Buddha asked, "What benefit do you see in doing so?" Then the Brahmin said, "If I commit any evil deed during the day, it is washed away by going down into the water in the evening, that is, by bathing. The evil deeds committed at night are washed away by going down into the water in the morning." When he said this to the Buddha, the Buddha uttered one deeply meaningful verse:

"Dhammo rahado brāhmaṇa sīlatittho anāvilo

sabbhi sataṃ pasattho yā (yo) have vedaguṇo sināto

anallagattova tarati pāraṃ"

This is a very meaningful short verse. "Brahmin, this Dhamma is a lake, with virtue (*sīla*) as its bathing ford, unpolluted, praised by the virtuous. Those who have bathed in that lake, who are *vedagū*—meaning those who have fully realized the three main supernormal knowledges declared by the Buddha: recollection of past lives, and destruction of cankers, which are known as the Threefold Knowledge (*tivijjā*) in this Dispensation—having bathed in that lake, what happens?" The next line states a valuable idea: *Anallagattova tarati pāraṃ*—they cross over to the other shore with un-moistened limbs. They cross over to the other shore dry. This means that in this Dispensation, the Dhamma is like a lake, or a reservoir, and virtue (*sīla*) is like its bathing ford. When one bathes in this bathing ford of virtue, one can cross over to the other shore of Nibbāna with an un-moistened body." Hearing this verse, that Brahmin gave up his wrong views and became a lay devotee who went for refuge to the Triple Gem, as mentioned in that Dhamma story.

Now, another such valuable instance is mentioned in the *Vatthūpama Sutta* of the Majjhima Nikāya. That sutta was actually delivered by the Buddha to the Saṅgha regarding the purification of the mind. *Vatthūpama*, dear devotees, is a sutta that takes a cloth as a simile. There, the Buddha begins the sutta: "Bhikkhus, if a dyer—in those days, a dyer was one who colors and dyes cloths—if such a person applies red, blue, or yellow dye to a dirty or stained cloth, that cloth will bear a very dirty and soiled appearance. Because that dye is not absorbed well into a pleasing state, the cloth eventually becomes blackish, or discolored. What is the reason for this? Because the cloth is dirty. Even so, bhikkhus, when the mind is defiled, a bad destination (*duggati*) can be expected."

Thus, the defilement of the mind was compared to the dirtiness of the cloth. Just as no matter what color is applied to a dirty cloth, it does not take the color well and the dye does not catch, even so, if the mind is defiled, it leads to a bad destination. Next, the opposite is stated: "If a cloth is clean, free of stains and the like, when a dyer

applies dye to it, the dye catches well. That cloth becomes beautifully colored. Even so, when the mind is pure, a happy destination (*sugati*) can be expected."

Next, the Buddha inquires: "Bhikkhus, what are the mental defilements (*upakkilesa*)?" He presents a list of these defilements: covetousness and unrighteous greed (*abhijjhā-visamalobha*), ill-will (*byāpāda*), anger (*kodha*), enmity, envy, conceit, pride, negligence, and so forth—a list of qualities that defile the mind. Next, the Buddha states that when a noble disciple recognizes those defiling qualities and removes them, they develop concentration (*samādhi*) of the mind by practicing meditations such as the recollection of the Buddha (*buddhānussati*), the recollection of the Dhamma (*dhammānussati*), and the recollection of the Saṅgha (*saṅghānussati*). Next, having developed the mind to higher states through the four sublime abodes (*brahma-vihāra*) of loving-kindness (*mettā*), compassion (*karuṇā*), sympathetic joy (*muditā*), and equanimity (*upekkhā*), they finally develop insight (*vipassanā*) and attain Nibbāna. The Buddha describes the one who has walked that path of Dhamma and become an Arahant with a special term: *snāto antarena snānena*—"bathed with an internal bath." While those Brahmins perform an external bath by plunging into the river, the Buddha points out how one becomes pure through an internal bath, an inner bathing. From this, you can understand that the purity expected in our Dhamma is not like the external rites and practices of the Brahmins. It is something concerning the inner mind. It is a bathing of the inner self.

At the end of that discourse, it is said that when the Buddha finished speaking, a Brahmin named Sundarika Bhāradvāja, who was nearby, listened to this and asked the Buddha: "Master Gotama, do you go to bathe in those rivers whose names you mentioned?" Then the Buddha showed the futility of it. "Brahmin, by that bathing, the evil deeds of one who has committed them do not wash away. Bathe in this very Dhamma! Next, removing defiling qualities such as greed, anger, and enmity from the mind, walk on this path of Dhamma and bathe in this Dhamma internally!"—thus he advised in several verses. Next, it is said that this Brahmin too, having given up his rite, was ordained under the Buddha, and eventually received higher ordination. Many such incidents are mentioned in the Dhamma.

The terms of virtue (*sīla*), rites (*vata*), and so on, that existed in Brahmin society are also used in this Dispensation. However, recognizing the internal difference between them can be of help to you. A good illustration of this is mentioned in another sutta discourse. You have heard that the final meal of the Buddha before his Parinibbāna was given by Cunda the smith's son (*Cunda Kammāraputta*). Cunda Kammāraputta means Cunda the blacksmith; here we can recognize him as a goldsmith. The first occasion when Cunda Kammāraputta took refuge in the Buddha is described as follows. This Cunda Kammāraputta had a mango grove in the town of Pāvā. On one occasion, when the Buddha visited the town of Pāvā and was residing in that mango grove, Cunda came to see the Buddha, sat down to one side, and the Buddha asked him: "Cunda, whose view or doctrine of purification (*soceyya*) do you accept?"

Then Cunda says, addressing him with respect, “Venerable Sir! The Brahmins of the West, who carry water-pitchers, wear garlands of wet plants, and worship the fire-deity, present a certain view of purification. It is that view of purification that I approve of, that I accept.” Then the Buddha asks, “Cunda, in what way do those Brahmins teach purification to their disciples?” Then Cunda Kammāraputta says: “Those Brahmins advise their disciples thus: 'As soon as you get up from bed in the morning, first touch the earth. Touch the ground as a method of purification. If you cannot touch the ground, touch fresh cow dung. If you cannot touch fresh cow dung, touch green grass.' This is a mystical method of purification. 'Touch green grass. If you cannot do that, worship the fire-deity. Serving the fire is also something connected to fire-worship. If you cannot do that, perform the sun-salutation. If you do not perform the sun-salutation, then three times a day—not just twice, but as it is said here, morning, noon, and evening, as if there is no other work—one must go to the river and plunge into the water at those three times to wash away sins and become pure.' Six such methods of washing away sins and purifying are shown there.”

“Getting up in the morning, one touches the ground. If that is not possible, one touches fresh cow dung. If that is not possible, one touches green grass. Or else, one pays homage to fire. Or else, sun-salutation. If even that is not possible, then three times a day in the river. Then the Buddha says, 'Cunda, the Brahmins' idea of purification is one thing, but in this Noble Discipline (*ariya-vinaya*)—the Noble Discipline means this Dispensation—the idea of purification is quite different.' The Buddha made this statement, leaving room for a question.”

Then Cunda, filled with curiosity, asks: “Venerable Sir, please tell me, I wish to know what the idea of purification is in this Noble Discipline.” Thereupon, the Buddha declares: “Cunda, according to this Noble Discipline, according to the meaning in this Dispensation…” — first, the Buddha speaks not about purity, but about impurity. *Asoceyya* means impurity. According to the teachings of this Dispensation, there are three types of bodily impurity, four types of verbal impurity, and three types of mental impurity. You can guess what they are even before I say them. Next, the Buddha explains those matters separately.

What are the three bodily impurities? Killing living beings, taking what is not given, and sexual misconduct. Those are the impurities committed bodily, through the body. The impurities committed verbally are lying, slandering, harsh speech, and frivolous talk or vain babble. What are shown as those committed by the mind? There is a word used, which means covetousness/unrighteous greed (*abhijjhā*). Not ignorance (*avijjā*), but unrighteous greed. Unrighteous greed is something done by the mind. Ill-will (*byāpāda*) means hatred—the thought of harming others, a mind of malice. Next, the third is shown as wrong view (*micchā-diṭṭhi*). Covetousness, ill-will, and wrong view. You may know that these are indeed the ten unwholesome courses of action (*dasa akusala kamma-patha*) heard of in the Dhamma: three done through the body, four through speech, and three through the mind.

Next, the Buddha declares: “Whether a person who is engaged in these ten unwholesome courses of action performs the purification methods taught by the Brahmins or not, their impurity remains just the same. These are not only impure, but they are things that further produce impurity. *Asuciceva* — a deep idea is expressed there. Those ten unwholesome courses of action are themselves impure, and they are also things that produce further impurity. Next, the Buddha declares that it is because of these ten unwholesome courses of action that hell, the animal realm, the ghost realm, and other such bad destinations are to be seen. You can understand then, that the Buddha is showing how beings go to hell, the animal realm, and bad destinations due to those very ten unwholesome courses of action.”

Next, it is said—and this too can be easily understood—“Cunda, in this Dispensation, there are ten purifications.” The word used there is *soceyya* (purification). What are these purifications? Three of the body, four of speech, and three of the mind. The three of the body mean abstaining from killing living beings, etc. It is called *veramaṇī* (abstinence) or *paṭivirata* (abstaining). Abstaining from those three—killing living beings, taking what is not given, and sexual misconduct—is bodily purification. Abstaining from those four verbal misconducts—lying, slandering, harsh speech, and frivolous talk—is verbal purification. Next is *abhijjhā*—which is covetousness or unrighteous greed. You know the word greed (*lobha*), but the Buddha shows a separate word: *abhijjhā*, which means covetousness or intense greed. Greed is present to some extent in everyone, but covetousness means desiring another's property, thinking, “O, may what belongs to another be mine!” (*Ahovata yaṃ parassa taṃ mama assa*). “Oh, how good if what belongs to that other person were mine!” That is unrighteous greed, covetousness. It is an intense greedy mind, unrighteous greed, active inside the mind. Next, everyone knows ill-will (*byāpāda*). Thus, turning the mind away from that greed, and turning the mind away from the hatred of ill-will. Thirdly, whereas previously it was wrong view, here it is right view (*sammā-diṭṭhi*). Under the simile of impurity, what was shown was covetousness, ill-will, and wrong view. Next, under purification, what was shown was turning the mind away from that covetousness, turning the mind away from ill-will, and right view. Here, right view does not refer to the Four Noble Truths, but to what you might have heard of as the right view of ten bases (*dasa-vatthuka sammā-diṭṭhi*). That is, the right view that supports the performance of wholesome actions in a mundane sense—that there is fruit and result of giving, there is mother, there is father, there is this world, there is the next world, and so on, which support wholesome deeds. That is what was taken as purification (*soceyya*).

Next, the Buddha declares: “Cunda, these are the ten wholesome courses of action (*dasa kusala kamma-patha*).” What were mentioned earlier were the unwholesome courses of action. These are the ten wholesome courses of action. Now, these ten wholesome courses of action are pure, and they are of a nature that produces purity. It is because of these ten wholesome courses of action that a heavenly world is seen, a human existence is seen, and likewise, it is because of these ten wholesome courses

of action that one is born in happy states. This discourse brought to light, through Cunda, a matter so important that we must remember it in our daily lives.

The Buddha pointed out in this manner that the rites of the Brahmins—the belief that one can be freed from evil deeds by purifying the body externally—is merely a belief. The Buddha always gave priority to the mind, and to the mental defilements (*cittūpakkilesa*). Unlike the rites of other religions, this Dhamma is not something to be grasped as a view (*diṭṭhi*). According to the law of dependent arising (*paṭiccasamuppāda*), here we have a journey towards Nibbāna, where one stage supports another, one supporting another. Nibbāna means the freeing of the mind from all attachments and bonds—liberation (*vimutti*). For that journey towards liberation, certain things are necessary. One cannot progress by abandoning everything at once; if so, it would not be a Middle Path. According to the teaching of the Buddha in suttas like the *Rathavinīta Sutta*, his disciples show us that purification of virtue (*sīla-visuddhi*) is solely for the sake of purification of mind (*citta-visuddhi*). If we express those few words in a language we can understand, the purpose of purifying virtue is to purify the mind. Next, when asked why we purify the mind, the Buddha says that we purify the mind to obtain right vision. We cannot see correctly with an impure mind. Therefore, to straighten our view (*diṭṭhi*), we need purification of mind. *Sīla-visuddhi yāvadeva citta-visuddhitthāya, citta-visuddhi yāvadeva diṭṭhi-visuddhitthāya*. Why do we purify our view? To know the path to be taken and the path not to be taken—for the purification by knowledge and vision of what is and what is not the path (*maggāmagga-ñāṇadassana-visuddhi*). It is to distinguish the path to be taken from the path not to be taken that we purify our view.

Next, if asked why we clarify the path to be taken and the path not to be taken, it must be said that it is to walk on the practice (*paṭipadā*), the practice to be undertaken, without doubt or hesitation. It is needed for a certain path of practice. In this way, one supports another. Therefore, knowing the path and the non-path is necessary for us to be doubtless about the practice we must employ—the purification by knowledge and vision of the way (*paṭipadā-ñāṇadassana-visuddhi*). Next, the practice must also have an end. Practice is not a journey that goes on forever. Its end is knowledge and vision—it is to bring forth insight knowledges (*vipassanā-ñāṇa*) and the like, which support the attainment of Nibbāna. When those insight knowledges emerge, when the true nature of the world is realized as Impermanent / Inconstant (*Anicca*), Suffering / Unsatisfactoriness / Stress (*Dukkha*), and Not-self / Non-self / Unsubstantial (*Anattā*) according to the Three Characteristics taught by the Buddha, there lies liberation (*vimutti*) and Nibbāna. That realization is called "unclinging liberation" (*anupādā-vimokkha*)—for the sake of liberation without grasping anything.

So, here we have such a deeply profound philosophy. Therefore, this is not a journey where one grasps things as views (*diṭṭhi*) like the Brahmins do. It is a journey where one stage supports another.

Now, we have previously mentioned the simile that explains this Dhamma point. When King Pasenadi of Kosala wanted to go from Sāvatthī to Sāketa, at that time relay chariot stations with swift horses were prepared for urgent journeys. So, having mounted a chariot from Sāvatthī, when those horses got tired, another chariot was kept ready at the second station to proceed from there. Leaving that chariot, he would mount the next one.

Going from one to another in this manner, when he finally reached Sāketa, if his friends and relatives there asked him, “Great King, how did you come here?” the King could not say, “I came by the first chariot,” nor could he say, “I came by the second,” nor “I came by the third.”

He could not say he came by the fourth, fifth, sixth, or seventh chariot. Yet, he could not say he did not come by any of them either. He would have to tell the whole story: “I started in the first chariot, and at a certain point, I mounted the second chariot, and from that, the third chariot…”

That simile explains a certain deep aspect of this Dhamma. Grasping all these as views is called *parāmāsa*—clinging to views (*diṭṭhi-parāmāsa*). Now, the virtue (*sīla*) in this Dispensation is described as that which is not clung to (*aparāmaṭṭha*). It is not firmly grasped by clinging to it as a view. One understands that one stage supports another. Purification of virtue is solely for the sake of purification of mind; purification of mind is for the sake of purification of view. Going on in this manner, the ultimate end is complete liberation (*vimutti*), without grasping anything—for the sake of full liberation. This virtue does not stop at external factors; they only support one another.

On one occasion, when the Brahmin Māgandiya asked, “What is the purification that you declare in this Dispensation?” the Buddha said: *Na diṭṭhiyā na sutiyā na ñāṇena sīlabbatena'pi visuddhimāha, adiṭṭhiyā asutiyā añāṇā asīlatā abbata no'pi hevaṃ*. The Buddha gives an answer that seems like a great puzzle. “I do not say that purification is attained by view, nor by learning (*suti*) or Dhamma knowledge, nor by listening to sermons, nor indeed by knowledge, nor by virtue and vows (*sīlabbata*); nor yet is it without them—not by non-view, non-learning, non-knowledge, non-virtue, or non-vows.” At first glance, it seems like a contradictory statement. From this, we can see that for the path to Nibbāna, these are things we cannot do with, yet cannot do without. One supports another, but we do not grasp any of them firmly. At that point, the Brahmin thought this Dhamma was mere delusion. But the Buddha declared, “We do not grasp any of these firmly; we only make use of them according to their practical value.” From purification of virtue we proceed to purification of mind, and from purification of mind to purification of view—this natural law (*dhammatā*) is present throughout this Dhamma.

Those of you who study the Dhamma deeply have heard of dependent arising (*paṭiccasamuppāda*). Dependent arising means that everything occurs through causes and conditions (*hetu-paccaya*). It does not mean the idea of "I" and "mine". If

we analyze it deeply, it is merely a multitude of causes and conditions. The Buddha brings this point to light on many occasions.

Likewise, the purification of the mind is something that must be done with special effort and exertion. On one occasion, when explaining the Noble Uposatha (*ariya-uposatha*) to Visākhā at the Pubbārāma, the Buddha declared: *upakkameṇa cittassa pariyodapanā*—"the cleansing of the mind is done by effort, by exertion." The Buddha explains this with the simile of cleaning the head. Mentioning the things that existed in those days to clean the head, the Buddha declares that along with the materials that help clean the head, that person's effort, exertion, and endeavor are necessary. It is by this that the head is cleaned. Likewise, the body is cleaned, and cloths are cleaned—and here, it is not like the soap we have today; the Buddha mentions the things that helped clean cloths in those days, and finally says, *purisassa ca tajjā vāyāmaṃ paṭicca*—"dependent on the appropriate effort of a person." It is due to a combination of many such factors that even a cloth can be cleaned.

Likewise, it is mentioned that to clean a mirror, applying the materials alone is not enough; one must also make a special effort. Raw gold must also be purified in the same way. Next, the Buddha declares: *upakkameṇa cittassa pariyodapanā*—"to cleanse the mind too, a certain effort, an exertion is necessary." It is not something that happens on its own. Such is the idea found in the Dhamma regarding purification. We have highlighted the qualities of this virtue (*sīla*) on many occasions. Some might say that what appears at first glance in the precepts is like drawing back one's hands and feet—abstaining, *veramaṇī*, being told to refrain from this.

But this idea of refraining is actually something concerning the mind. In the Dhamma, virtue is described as volition (*cetanā-sīlaṃ*) and mental factors (*cetasika-sīlaṃ*)—it is explained as something concerning the mind. It is called the mental factor of abstinence (*virati-cetasika*). Three words are used: *ārati*, *virati*, and *paṭivirati*. Turning away and refraining from those things considered unwholesome or evil deeds is not an external matter; it is of the mind. Therefore, it is through refraining from them that purity arises. That is why the ten wholesome deeds were described as refraining from the unwholesome. That is why the Buddha first recalled those impure things.

In the questions asked by Cunda, he first showed the impurity. Next, to purify it, one must make a certain effort. That is what is called abstinence, *veramaṇī*, *virati*. Now, practicing virtue seems, at first glance, to be merely refraining from certain things. But to refrain, a certain effort is needed. It is through that very strength applied for abstinence, for refraining, that the mind is purified.

There are examples related to this in various other sutta discourses. Just as among the Brahmins, words like virtue (*sīla*) and vows (*vata*) exist in our Dispensation too. But we must understand that according to the law of dependent arising

(*paṭiccasamuppāda*), these are not things to be grasped by way of clinging (*parāmāsa*), as views (*diṭṭhi*). These are things used to support one another. The journey towards Nibbāna takes place by depending on a causal arising of conditions. In another place, the Buddha spoke about practices (*paṭipadā*). On one occasion, the Buddha spoke to the Saṅgha about three practices in the world: the practice of indulgence (*āgāḷhā paṭipadā*), the practice of self-mortification (*nijjhāmā paṭipadā*), and the Middle Path (*majjhimā paṭipadā*). The practice of indulgence means accepting that there is nothing wrong with sensual pleasures. You have heard of indulgence in sensual pleasures (*kāmasukhallikānuyoga*). It is the grasping of that extreme. Being immersed in the five strands of sensual pleasure is called the practice of indulgence (*āgāḷhā paṭipadā*). Next, in describing the practice of self-mortification (*nijjhāmā paṭipadā*), many rites of other religions, such as those of the Niganṭhas and Brahmins, are mentioned there.

Finally, the story of water-purification by plunging into water is also mentioned there. The practice of self-mortification is explained as expecting purification through severely torturing and heating the body. You have heard of the clearer term for this: *attakilamathānuyoga* (self-mortification). So, one extreme is *kāmasukhallikānuyoga*—in place of which this sutta uses the term *āgāḷhā paṭipadā*. In place of the second, it shows *nijjhāmā paṭipadā*—a practice that burns and scorches. That is the extreme of *attakilamathānuyoga*.

Next, the Buddha points out the Middle Path (*majjhimā paṭipadā*). The Middle Path shown by the Buddha is analyzed here not as the Noble Eightfold Path, but the Four Establishments of Mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*) are shown there by the name of the Middle Path. For convenience, we usually say the Middle Path is the Noble Eightfold Path. But when putting it into practice, everyone must implement it through the Four Establishments of Mindfulness. The definition the Buddha gave for the Middle Path there was "contemplating the body in the body" (*kāye kāyānupassī*), "contemplating Feeling / Sensation in Feeling / Sensation" (*vedanāsu vedanānupassī*), and so on. Contemplating the body is not something that happens on its own. You know that in the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, many words are mentioned, such as overcoming covetousness and grief in the world (*vineyya loke abhijjhā-domanassaṃ*). This is not a simple thing, this contemplating the body. It is not the way ordinary worldlings look at the body.

We must understand something from the description made by this multitude of words. Otherwise, anyone can look at the body; anyone can look at Feeling / Sensation. But here, an effort, a special method, and an exertion are implied in what is done. *Ātāpī* (ardent) does not mean heating the body; it does not mean burning the body, but burning the defilements (*kilesa*). Since ancient times, the word *tapo* has carried the meaning of burning or heating. But the true asceticism (*tapas*) shown by the Buddha is the burning of defilements, not merely burning the body. For among the Niganṭhas, it was believed that happiness can only be obtained through Suffering / Unsatisfactoriness / Stress (*Dukkha*). You know that the Buddha too

practiced self-mortification (*dukarakriyā*) before his Enlightenment. In those days, everyone accepted that happiness can only be obtained by inflicting Suffering / Unsatisfactoriness / Stress (*Dukkha*), and through various methods, they brought Suffering / Unsatisfactoriness / Stress (*Dukkha*) to the body and went to the extreme of *attakilamathānuyoga*. In place of that, the Buddha's choice was the Middle Path.

What is this? One must remember this word well. Now, that *āgāḷhā paṭipadā* is one extreme, and *nijjhāmā paṭipadā* is another extreme. Equal to those two is the practice. In the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*, everyone knows the two words *kāmasukhallikānuyoga* and *attakilamathānuyoga*. Next is the Middle Path (*majjhimā paṭipadā*). But the difference is, it does not end by saying "Noble Eightfold Path" as everyone expects; the Four Establishments of Mindfulness are also shown there. Contemplating the body in the body is not something done merely to recognize oneself or others. Many words are mentioned there: *viharati*—he dwells; *ātāpī sampajāno satimā*. The word *ātāpī* there refers to the energy that burns defilements. Possessing the energy that burns defilements. *Pahitatto* is also a word meaning possessing energy. You have heard of the word *padhāna* (striving). *Padhāna-viriya* means the supreme energy.

There are many words to describe this: *vāyāma* (exertion), *viriya* (energy). The word that describes the supreme energy among them is *padhāna*—the supreme energy. *Pahitatta* means a mind endowed with that supreme energy. *Ātāpī pahitatto*—endowed with the energy that burns defilements, then being supreme, then *satimā*—mindful. Such a multitude of words is used there. *Loke domanassaṃ*—having stilled that unrighteous greed, grief, and other such things in the world, and having suppressed them, one must practice the Four Establishments of Mindfulness.

All of this showed that in the Middle Path, it is not the inflicting of Suffering / Unsatisfactoriness / Stress (*Dukkha*) on the body that is expected, but the mind—the purification of the mind by burning defilements, and so forth. Thus, in various suttas, the Buddha has shown the difference between this Middle Path and the practices carried out by the Brahmins, Nigaṇṭhas, and others. The disciples who confused these—not only the disciples of those times, but sometimes Brahmins, non-Buddhists, raised objections on many occasions, saying, "What Master Gotama says is the same as what we say!" But on those occasions, the Buddha pointed out that dependent arising (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) is something unique to this Dispensation, to this Dhamma. Everything operates within causes and conditions.

Accordingly, we can understand from the simile in the *Rathavinīta Sutta* that everything is not purified by the purification of virtue (*sīla-visuddhi*) alone. You know that purification of virtue means the training of body and speech. To support that training, the word *veramaṇī* (abstinence)—we asked you to emphasize it. Abstinence: it is easy to do, but difficult to refrain from. For that, one must make a certain effort. It must also be done with understanding. Then, how is the mind purified within that abstinence? What is meant by saying that purification of virtue is

for the sake of purification of mind? Purification of mind, dear devotees, is concentration (*samādhi*). In a deeper sense, purification of mind is the state where the hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*) are removed. Generally, our mind is covered by the hindrances: sensual desire (*kāmacchanda*), ill-will (*byāpāda*), sloth and torpor (*thīna-middha*), restlessness and worry (*uddhacca-kukkucca*), and doubt (*vicikicchā*). By these, the mind's power of one-pointedness, of being concentrated, is covered over. Therefore, you have heard this verse which points to the primary support for removing them:

"Sīle patiṭṭhāya naro sapañño, cittaṃ paññañca bhāvayaṃ

ātāpī nipako bhikkhu, so imaṃ vijaṭaye jaṭaṃ"

This is a verse uttered by the Buddha. The practice that helps disentangle this tangle of saṃsāra is shown there. Those who have read books like the *Visuddhimagga* know this verse well. "Established in virtue (*sīla*), the wise man, the person endowed with wisdom, developing the mind and wisdom—ardent and sagacious, he disentangles this tangle." Here, "mind" refers to that concentrated mind (*samādhi-citta*). That is what was called the purification of mind (*citta-pārisuddhi*). Thus, it is only by being established in virtue (*sīla*) that the mind can be concentrated.

Although it is not a simile from the Dhamma, we might have told you on some occasion that if someone expects to attain concentration, the things that obstruct it most are regret and future expectations. These are obstacles to calming the mind and concentrating it. So, on such occasions, one has to calm the mind within a certain boundary. Whether it be the five precepts—let us say someone has broken the training rules of the five precepts throughout their life. But if someone expects to come to the right path, instead of regretting those past actions, the Buddha says to undertake the five precepts.

This is indeed what he said to these Brahmins too. "If you do not like Suffering / Unsatisfactoriness / Stress (*Dukkha*), if you are afraid of those evil deeds, resolve to refrain from them." So, in these virtues and qualities, there are two aspects: resolution (*adhiṭṭhāna*) and reflection (*āvarjana*). Resolution means that through undertaking virtue, one makes a resolution in the mind for this period. Today, there is a difference from when you are at home. You made a resolution. To make it easy to bring this to mind, you have that white robe.

Even if you fall asleep for a little while and wake up again, the mind is reminded: "Ah, I am not like being at home; I am wearing white robes and observing the precepts." That is not an external thing. That too is for the mind itself. Next, one takes a certain boundary that helps purify the mind today; even if past matters are not completely gone, a door is closed there, and a resolution is made that from today, a great change will take place in my life.

Some go for refuge to the Triple Gem saying, "for as long as life lasts." "From today, I will protect these training rules. I will protect these principles of virtue." After

making that resolution, it is very easy; even if thoughts about the past arise, one can think, “That is not me—or that is the past. Today I am a new man.” That is resolution. Next, the fruit of that is reflection (*āvarjana*). Reflection means thinking, “Although such things happened in the past, I do not consume alcohol now.” Saying so, a great joy arises. “Now a great change has taken place in me.” In this way, joy (*pāmojja*) arises. It is when the mind is joyful that it becomes concentrated. That is how it is shown. That is why it was said that purification of virtue is solely for the sake of purification of mind. Now understand: there, *citta*—the true one-pointed state of the mind is concentration (*samādhi*). Then, as said before, you can understand the connection between virtue and concentration. Therefore, when defining virtue, it is not defined as an external thing, but as something connected with volition—a mental factor (*cetasika*). So, resolution is on one side. Next, because of that, the mind is made joyful.

Though not in the Dhamma, we gave a simile: if someone expects to sit for meditation, they build at least a small platform on which they can sit in a mud pit, by erecting five pillars, or eight pillars, or ten pillars. Through such thinking, one can understand: when we observe such a valuable virtue even for one day a month, we have a good foundation to sit for meditation, saying, “these are the Uposatha eight precepts, the ten precepts.” Next, one can calm the mind without trouble; what comes when one looks back by way of reflection is not what agitates the mind, but what makes the mind happy: “Today I protected these, didn't I?”—and the mind rejoices.

In this way, you must understand. We have summarized this deep matter. The Buddha brought to light in this manner the path of liberation for the world. Otherwise, a human being can never wash away sins in water, or by any other method. The Buddha opened a doorway to that through this virtue (*sīla*). Bringing forth concentration (*samādhi*) through that virtue. Through concentration, one can enter into insight (*vipassanā*). Once the mind is concentrated in such a way that concentration can be developed, by applying the Three Characteristics (*ti-lakkhaṇa*) to it, and through that, bringing forth insight knowledges, at a certain point, one obtains the paths and fruits (*magga-phala*) of Stream-entry and so on, and gains the ability to attain Arahantship. Therefore, you can consider in brief: we started with the Brahmins' rite of bathing in water. But leaving that aside, we must try to understand the difference between the Middle Path and that rite, using the points shown here.

So today too, you have given up various activities in your homes and undertaken a virtue such as the Uposatha eight precepts or ten precepts, for the sake of that very purification of mind (*citta-visuddhi*). It is not to have pride or conceit, saying “I observed the Uposatha eight precepts with such a crowd.” It is for your own liberation that you trained your body and speech. Depending on that, if you practiced some meditation, the truths understood by that concentrated mind are what will lead to the paths and fruits at some point.

Thus, we hope that the discourse we presented has been of practical help to you in that regard. Therefore, in this Dispensation of the Buddha, reflecting on the Four Establishments of Mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*) taught by the Buddha, and on the practical values of the Dhamma, you must strive to make the meditations you are practicing successful.

Therefore, may the virtue protected by you today, the meditation practiced, and this discourse listened to, be a cause and support for you to realize those paths and fruits and to attain the supreme, deathless Nibbāna, which is the end of all saṃsāric Suffering / Unsatisfactoriness / Stress (*Dukkha*) such as Birth / Arising (*Jāti*), sickness, and Decay and Death / Aging and Death (*Jarāmaraṇa*)! If there is any being from Avīci hell to the highest heaven (*Akaniṭṭha*) who expects to rejoice in this merit of Dhamma-sharing and Dhamma-listening, may they, through rejoicing, realize the supreme, deathless Nibbāna by way of their aspired Bodhi! Recite these verses making this aspiration:

"*Ettāvatā ca amhehi……*"