Pahankanuwa Sermon #162

English Translation

Translated from Sinhala

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(Pahankaṇuwa Sinhala Audio Dhamma Sermon No.74)

Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa

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

Pali Stanza:

"Idaṃ pure cittamacāri cārikaṃ,

Yenthacchakaṃ yathākāmaṃ yathāsukhaṃ;

Tadajjahaṃ niggahessāmi yoniso,

Hatthippabhinnaṃ viya aṅkusaggaho."

From:

Dhammapada Verse 326 (Nāga Vagga)

Dear Listeners,

For the driver of any fast-moving vehicle, the ability to control it properly is absolutely essential. If one leaves the vehicle to its own momentum and disregards the steering wheel and the brakes, the vehicle will run off the road and become uncontrollable. If that happens, a great disaster will befall the driver, the passengers in the vehicle, and the pedestrians on the road. It will become clear from today's thematic stanza and its corresponding background story that this same natural law applies to the mind, which runs faster than any vehicle.

A certain faithful lay woman in Sāvatthi ordained her only son when he was at a very tender age. That young novice monk engaged in his duties very obediently, learning the Vinaya in a very endearing manner, performing his duties and rituals correctly, and pleasing the minds of his teachers and preceptors. Since the senior monks realized that he was not only skilled in preaching the Dhamma but could also preach in a sweet and pleasant voice, they gave permission to this young monk to preach as well.

So, every day after finishing the sermon, this young monk would share the merits, saying, "May this merit, this wholesome deed of preaching the Dhamma, belong to

my parents." His human parents did not even know that the sermon was taking place, nor that merit was being shared. Human parents cannot rejoice in merits under such circumstances. However, a certain female *yakkha* (spirit), who had been the mother of this young monk in a past life, would come with *devas* to listen to the Dhamma and rejoice in those merits. Because of this, she received a special status among those *devas* and the *yakkha* community. They began to treat her with great respect, recognizing her as "the mother of Ven. Sānu."

As time went on, as the young monk gradually reached youth, he was overcome by the impulses of defilements and thought of returning to lay life. Dissatisfied with the monkhood, with overgrown hair and nails, and wearing soiled robes, he returned to his home one day without informing anyone. His mother asked, "Why is this? Usually, you arrive either with the senior monks or with the other young monks. Why are you alone today?" Then, Ven. Sānu said, "I have become dissatisfied with the monkhood in this manner. I have developed an attachment to the lay life. I have come to return to lay life."

This lay mother pleaded with him not to abandon the monkhood, pointing out the disadvantages (*ādīnava*) of lay life in various ways. Yet, she could not change the monk's mind. At her wits' end, the lay woman thought, "Very well, let him contemplate and make a decision himself. Please wait, and I will prepare some almsfood for you." She quickly prepared some rice gruel first, and then got ready to wash the rice to cook the almsfood, sitting nearby.

At that moment, the *yakkhi* who had been his mother in a past life directed her mind to see whether the young monk was receiving almsfood and *pindapātha*. Upon looking, she saw that he had gone home and was attempting to disrobe. She thought, "If this young monk disrobes, I too will lose the respect and honor I receive in the assembly of *devas* and the *yakkha* community. I will face great disgrace and shame. I must obstruct his disrobing." Thinking thus, she possessed Ven. Sānu, causing his neck to twist, saliva to drool, and causing him to fall to the ground.

Hearing the young monk fall from his chair, his mother came running, placed his head on her lap, and began to tend to him while crying in fear. The neighbors also arrived and, realizing it was a spirit possession, prepared to perform various sacrificial rituals (*bali*). At the same time, the mother said in great sorrow, "As far as I have heard, virtuous people do not suffer from this kind of demonic affliction. But it seems these *yakkhas* are playing with my son." When she said this, the mother in the *yakkha* form spoke through the possession: "Do not reject Sānu, the disciple of the Buddha. This is the request of the *yakkhas*. If evil deeds are committed, whether unconsciously, openly, or in secret, one will have to suffer their consequences." Having given this advice, she withdrew the possession.

When the young monk opened his eyes, he saw that while he was sitting in the chair earlier, now he was lying on the ground, his mother was crying, and people had gathered around. He did not understand that this was a *yakkha* possession. He asked

his mother, "Why are you crying? Why are you crying as if I am dead? Am I not alive?" Then, the lay mother said, "It is not that you are alive. Now you are as good as dead. Leaving the monastic life and living in the household life again is just like being dead; it is with that feeling that I am crying." The mother advised him further: "Just as one would rescue a valuable item from a burning house, I took my child and ordained him in the Dispensation. To abandon monkhood and become a lay person is like jumping back into a pit of burning embers after being pulled out of a fire." In this way, she explained the disadvantages (*ādīnava*) of the household life in various ways. When the mother advised him repeatedly in this manner, Ven. Sānu decided, "Then, I will not disrobe."

The lay mother was overjoyed and prepared his almsfood. Since the time for his higher ordination (*upasampadā*) had also arrived, she prepared the robes and requisites for him. Ven. Sānu was thus eventually ordained. After his higher ordination, the Supreme Buddha preached a stanza as advice to Ven. Sānu, which we presented as our theme:

Idaṃ pure cittamacāri cārikaṃ,

Yenacchakaṃ yathāsukhaṃ;

Tadajjahaṃ niggahessāmi yoniso,

Hatthippabhinnaṃ viya aṅkusaggaho.

"In the past, this mind went wandering through various objects as it pleased, according to its liking and sweet will. Today, I shall thoroughly restrain it with wise attention (*yoniso manasikāra*), just as a mahout holding a goad tames an elephant in rut."

That is the meaning of the stanza. Thus, by acting in accordance with that stanza, the young monk not only attained Arahantship but also, utilizing his past talent for Dhamma preaching, remained in the monkhood for one hundred and twenty years, performing a great service to Ancient India (*Jambudīpa*) through Dhamma sermons, as mentioned in the texts.

There are many lessons we can draw from this story. Even this young monk, who had been practicing monastic life well and had shown great promise in the Sasana, thought of returning to lay life due to certain impulses that arose with youth. The way those two mothers acted on that occasion is a great example for mothers of today. Normally, if someone returns after leaving the monkhood, some who possess selfish, worldly feelings might say, "Oh, that's very good. Now you can find a job with what you have learned and live a lay life," thus encouraging them to stay in the household life. However, these mothers acted with great faith.

In fact, even though he was her only son, she ordained him in the Sasana with a profound understanding, having realized the disadvantages (*ādīnava*) of the

household life. That is a wonderful example. Furthermore, even the mother in her *yakkha* birth—normally, in Buddhist stories, spirit possessions and the like are depicted as obstacles to practicing monastic virtues. However, here, through the *yakkha* possession by his past mother, the "demonic possession" (the impulse of Māra) of Ven. Sānu was expelled. In that respect, another valuable monk was preserved for the Sasana.

Generally, when speaking of the war between *devas* and *asuras*, the *devas* are considered to be on the side of the Dhamma, and the *asuras* on the side of non-Dhamma. However, you, devout lay people, may have heard that *yakkhas* like Āḷavaka, Hemavata, and Sātāgira developed faith in the Supreme Buddha, and some even attained the stage of Stream-entry (*Sotāpanna*). Not all *yakkhas* are inclined towards unrighteousness in that way. Occasionally, there are those with right view (*sammā-diṭṭhi*). Even here, this female *yakkha*, by rejoicing in the merits of Dhamma sermons, acted with great faith. On this occasion, by employing a certain skillful means (*sammā-prayoga*), she prevented this young monk from disrobing. Thus, this too is a good example for us regarding these Sasana values. The view held in the past regarding renunciation (*nekkhamma*) is clearly expressed here. Its value is such that after abandoning all luxuries and ordaining, returning to lay life is like death. The Supreme Buddha has stated that to disrobe after ordaining is like death. The Supreme Buddha attributed such a deep value to renunciation.

Next, let us look at the stanza uttered by the Supreme Buddha. This is like a certain meditation subject (*kammaṭṭhāna*). Why? Because here it is presented not as a piece of advice given by the Supreme Buddha, but as self-advice, a command given to the mind by Ven. Sānu himself to discipline his own mind. That is to say, "My mind wandered around as it pleased for so long. Now I will not allow you to wander." That taming is then compared to a mahout with a goad in hand taming an elephant in rut.

A very valuable method is shown there by the Supreme Buddha. We know that even a four-line stanza uttered by the Supreme Buddha is deeply profound in meaning and flavor. Here too, when we contemplate, the fundamental idea is a command given by oneself to oneself, and also a highly valuable concept is expressed through this simile. The mind subjugated by the impulses of defilements is compared to an elephant in rut. There is a period when elephants go into rut. During that period, if the mahout is not exceptionally careful, the elephant will break even iron chains and run wild. Therefore, at that moment, the mahout must be extremely vigilant.

In this Dispensation, three kinds of intoxication (*mada*) inherent in sentient beings are pointed out: intoxication with youth (*yobbana-mada*), intoxication with health (*ārogya-mada*), and intoxication with life (*jīvita-mada*). Intoxication with youth, the intoxication that arises due to being healthy, and then the intoxication based on the conceit of being alive. Out of these, what arose in this young monk was the intoxication with youth. It was something like the intoxication that occurs in early youth. He thought of returning to lay life because of the impulses of defilements. The

simile of the elephant in rut fits this perfectly. From that simile of the elephant in rut, one can understand the nature of the mind—how powerful a mind subjected to defilements is.

Taming an elephant in rut is no easy task; it is that powerful. What helps in this is the goad. "*Tadajjahaṃ niggahessāmi yoniso*"—I shall tame this mind with wisdom, just as a mahout with a goad in hand tames an elephant in rut. There, through the word "*yoniso*," we can understand that what is taken as the goad is wise attention (*yoniso manasikāra*). In this Dhamma, wise attention (*yoniso manasikāra*) is explained as wise reflection. Unwise attention (*ayoniso manasikāra*) means reflecting incorrectly in a way that gives rise to defilements—reflecting ignorantly and inappropriately.

Now, what is compared to the goad here is reflecting wisely. In wise reflection, what exists is looking directly at the behavior of one's own mind, turning completely towards oneself. In ordinary unwise attention (*ayoniso manasikāra*), what happens is being enslaved by the object, captivated by the object, and allowing thoughts to persist by giving way to the object. Like running after a mirage, one can never stop it, but finally, with wise reflection, one looks at one's own mind, at the change that has occurred in the mind. Then defilements like greed, hatred, and delusion are caught. It is because of these that the object received such qualities. Just as to a person wearing red-colored glasses everything in the world appears red, and if blue is worn, blue. There is a saying, isn't there, that to a jaundice patient everything appears yellow. In the same way, the manner in which one looks at the world changes due to the impulses of defilements. That is exactly what happened to Ven. Sānu. What helps to pacify that is wise attention (*yoniso manasikāra*)—reflecting wisely. One directs one's mind properly to see, "What has happened to my mind?" Accordingly, this stanza and these similes taught by the Supreme Buddha must be examined very carefully.

The Supreme Buddha has stated certain principles regarding the taming of the mind in various discourse (*Sutta*) teachings. Among them, there is a highly important discourse in the Middle Length Discourses (*Majjhima Nikāya*) called the *Vitakkasaṇṭhāna Sutta*. The Supreme Buddha has amazingly shown a five-step method to control thoughts when they crash in. Especially for a person trying to calm the mind, a certain thought arises. That thought is an unwholesome thought. When it comes repeatedly, the first method shown by the Supreme Buddha to drive it away is to introduce a wholesome object in place of that unwholesome thought and its object. When one reflects on a wholesome object instead, that unwholesome object fades away. For example, if a certain beautiful sign (*subha-nimitta*) related to lust (*rāga*) comes to mind, one introduces an opposite unattractive sign (*asubha-nimitta*), a meditation sign of unattractiveness.

Or else, if thoughts of hatred (*dosa*) arise, at that moment one introduces loving-kindness meditation (*mettā bhāvanā*). The sign of loving-kindness is introduced instead. Otherwise, it is sometimes pointed out that those with intense hatred even clash with posts, thorns, etc., in the environment. In such instances, it is suitable to

direct the mind to the attention to elements (*dhātu manasikāra*). "What is this? What am I clashing with?" one contemplates. In this way, driving away an unwholesome thought with a wholesome thought. The simile given by the Supreme Buddha for this is sufficient for anyone to remember this matter. Just like a skilled carpenter, when a peg in a piece of wood becomes bent, uses a finer peg than the one pulled out, driving it in with the finer peg to push the other out and uproot it. In that manner, to drive away the unwholesome thought with a wholesome thought, the Supreme Buddha has presented the first principle there through the simile of the carpenter.

There, the Supreme Buddha states that the nature of this mind is so fickle that sometimes this method may not succeed. It might fail. If it is not strong enough, then the second method is shown. What is that second method? Contemplating the disadvantages (*ādīnava*) of the thought that has arisen. Disadvantage (*ādīnava*) means its fault. "These thoughts have such and such consequences. If I sustain them for long, I will have to suffer those consequences"—thus one contemplates them. When reflecting on them, the power of that thought is broken. One becomes disgusted with the thought and feels like abandoning it.

The Supreme Buddha gives a wonderful simile for this as well: just like a young woman or man who likes to look beautiful, if someone throws a carcass of a snake, a dog, or a human around their neck, they would immediately feel disgusted and try to get rid of it. According to this simile, one is told to look at the defiled thought that has arisen. In that way, one should develop a dislike, a disgust for it—arousing fear, shame, and disgust. Through that, one can then escape from the unwholesome thought. That is the second method. Just as a young woman or man who likes to look beautiful tries to remove a carcass of a human or a dog thrown on their body, one strives to remove that thought. The Supreme Buddha states that even this method may sometimes not succeed.

If that is not strong enough, then the third method is shown. What is that? One tries not to direct mindfulness (*sati*) and reflection towards the thought that repeatedly crashes into the mind. That is to say, normally something comes to mind because mindfulness is applied to it and because it is reflected upon. But here, with effort, one tries not to remember or reflect on it. The simile given there also explains this point: if a person does not wish to see a visual form (*rūpa*) that has appeared before them, they either close their eyes or look away. When a very strong light comes, we suddenly close our eyes, don't we? Or we look to the other side if we dislike it. It is something like that. In that manner, one tries to withdraw one's mind from it—towards another direction, in short, one deliberately redirects one's attention elsewhere. This is explained in further detail as follows.

When such torrents of thoughts crash into the mind, it is explained that a person can do things like this: instead, they perform some simple duty or chore. They direct the mind to a task like sweeping or cleaning up. Gradually, then, the power of those thoughts is suppressed. If one's mind keeps going to that unwholesome object, one

gets up and starts some small, simple work. By directing attention to that, the attention going to the original object is naturally withdrawn. That is the third method.

If that too does not succeed, next is the fourth method. One is told to direct the mind to the structure, the root cause of the thoughts that arise. In a way, one investigates, "What is this thought?" We can understand this too from the simile given by the Supreme Buddha. A person, without being aware of it, is walking very, very fast. While walking fast, he suddenly thinks: "Why am I walking so fast? Is there any benefit in this? Why can't I walk slowly?" Thinking thus, he begins to walk slowly. Next, while walking slowly, he thinks: "Why am I even walking slowly? Wouldn't it be better if I stand?" and so he stands. Next, he thinks: "If there is a seat, I can sit down, so why am I standing?" and so he sits down. After sitting down, after a little while, he thinks: "Why am I sitting? I can also lie down. That is an even lighter posture," and so he lies down. This is only a simile. How do we understand this matter through this? It is by analyzing the thought that arose, looking at it analytically according to its root cause, and gradually suppressing it. Here, as in the simile of abandoning a gross, coarse posture to adopt a subtle posture, one gradually pacifies that thought. One pacifies it gradually. Contemplating "Is this thought really worth thinking about?" one step-by-step reduces its momentum. That is the fourth method.

If even the fourth method does not succeed, and if the thought (*vitakka*) is that powerful, it is then that the Supreme Buddha provides a very powerful step suited for it: the fifth step. There, it is shown as follows: if so, trouble that unwholesome thought with a wholesome thought, push it away, and drive it out. From the simile shown there, one can understand: just as a strong man, catching a weak man by the neck or head, shakes him and completely subdues him, one should seize the unwholesome thought with the wholesome thought, challenge it, suppress it, and defeat it. That is the fifth one. In this manner, the Supreme Buddha has shown five methods of taming the mind in that *Sutta* discourse. Even if one simply remembers these similes, one can understand what should be done in such situations. If one gives way to the very nature of those thoughts and *vitakkas* that crash into the mind, they will become stronger and stronger.

The Supreme Buddha Himself, in another discourse, has revealed a principle He discovered during His days as a Bodhisatta when battling with His mind. There, it is stated in terms of a monk: if a monk repeatedly gives rise to a certain thought, the mind develops a bent, a leaning, a flexibility towards that side. It is said that a flexibility (*namyatāvak*) is created. This is shown for both sides. If one repeatedly thinks of thoughts of sensual desire (*kāma-vitakka*), the mind bends towards sensual thoughts. Thoughts of ill-will (*vyāpāda-vitakka*) mean thoughts of hatred. If one repeatedly thinks thoughts of hatred, a bent is created towards that side. Next, thoughts of cruelty (*vihiṃsā-vitakka*) mean thoughts of harming; if one thinks them repeatedly, a bent is created towards that side. On the other hand, if one thinks thoughts of renunciation (*nekkhamma-vitakka*), the mind bends towards that side.

If one thinks thoughts of non-cruelty (*avihiṃsā*), non-ill-will (*avyāpāda*), or thoughts of loving-kindness, the mind bends towards that side.

However, when thoughts flow continuously without interruption, a certain momentum gathers within them. It is to break this that the Supreme Buddha has shown these five methods. Here, the Supreme Buddha has shown five valuable steps that are important even to modern-day psychologists. As the first effort, the second effort, and so on. Only at the very end must one adopt that most extreme measure. At first, one attempts to expel it, to drive it away, just as the carpenter expels the bent peg using a finer peg.

If that does not succeed, the second step is taken. What is it? One tries to make the mind dislike it. One disgusts it. By creating disgust, fear, and shame, one tries to make the unwholesome sign repulsive. That is what is shown in the simile of the young woman or man. Developing disgust, fear, shame, moral dread (*hiri-otappa*), etc., to drive away that defiled thought. When even that does not succeed, next is what is like boycotting (shunning). As if boycotting that thought, as if saying "I do not want you," one looks to the other side, or closes both eyes. One closes both eyes to the thought. Like looking away, one directs the mind to another task, thereby breaking its momentum.

When even that does not succeed, next, looking directly at the thought, one investigates its propriety: "What is this thought? Is it something worth thinking about to this extent?" and thus gradually, as in the simile. "Why am I walking fast? Is walking slowly not better?" and so on. Next, if it reaches a state where none of these succeed, it is then that one is told to take that most powerful step. Just as a strong man, catching a weak man by the neck, shakes him and subdues him, the Supreme Buddha has stated that one should challenge the unwholesome thought with the wholesome thought in the same attitude, catching it, shaking it, and suppressing it. That is the idea of restraining (*niggaha*) the mind there. Restraining the mind in that stanza was meant in that sense.

Indeed, the Supreme Buddha has stated that regarding the mind, one must support and exert (*paggaha*) it when necessary. *Paggaha* means supporting and exerting. One must restrain or censure it (*niggaha*) when necessary. *Niggaha* means restraining and censuring. Both are necessary. In times when the mind is down, when sleepiness and such arise, one must encourage it. But if the momentum of thoughts (*vitakka*) is crashing beyond limit, at that time, one must suppress it, one must restrain (*niggaha*) it. Otherwise, if one simply watches where this mind is going, just as was said about the vehicle, if one allows the momentum of the vehicle and leaves it alone, it will eventually end up in a ditch and fall to the very bottom. It is such a situation.

Then, if the mind is something that runs faster than all vehicles, there must be a control over it—a control through some method like virtue (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*), and wisdom (*paññā*). If you simply let the mind go as it pleases and just

watch, you can imagine what would happen. Some people in this country express such views as well. Thinking it is an easy method, and thinking that is the Buddha's teaching, many are drawn to it. The Supreme Buddha declared: "*Ahaṃ hi kammavādo kiriyavādo viriyavādo*"—"I am a proponent of action, a proponent of activity, and a proponent of energy." I say to be active. I say to exert energy.

There are various other *Sutta* discourse teachings in the Dhamma related to these thoughts and reflections. Let us bring out another one. Now, you, devout lay people, may have heard of the *Girimānanda Sutta*. Indeed, it is also used as a protective chant (*paritta*) during times of illness. In truth, the *Girimānanda Sutta* is not merely a protective discourse. It is a highly valuable *Sutta* that compiles ten meditations in their entirety. Ten meditation subjects (*kammaṭṭhāna*) are introduced there under the name of "perceptions" (*saññā*). Among them, one meditation subject is introduced by the name of the "perception of abandoning" (*pahāna-saññā*).

This *pahāna* (abandoning) means casting away. There, it is shown as follows: a certain monk—one should understand that although "monk" is mentioned, it refers to any practitioner (*yogāvacara*), whether lay or ordained, who strives to tame the mind—the course of action to be taken by that practitioner, and this perception of abandoning (*pahāna-saññā*) itself is shown as sufficient to lead to Nibbāna. Here, the steps to be taken regarding an arisen thought of sensual desire (*kāma-vitakka*) are shown in a few words. They are highly meaningful: "*nādhivāseti, pajahati, vinodeti, byantīkaroti, anabhāvaṅgameti*." "*Nādhivāseti*" means: if a thought of sensual desire or some defiled thought arises, what is the first step to be taken? "*Nādhivāseti*"—he does not tolerate it. "*Nādhivāseti*" means he does not tolerate. Next, "*pajahati*"—he abandons it, or discards it. Next, "*vinodeti*"—he dispels it. "*Byantīkaroti*" means he puts an end to it. "*Anabhāvaṅgameti*" means he annihilates it, brings it to complete non-existence.

Let us think of this through a small simile, even if it is not a simile found in the books. An unwanted person has come to where we are. First, we think, "He is not needed here, it's better if he leaves," and we do not tolerate him. We say, "There is no room for you here." But he stays. Then, we firmly tell him to leave, making him go. Yet, if he still remains, we have someone push him far away, sending him all the way to the gate—"*vinodeti*," we dispel him. Next, "*byantīkaroti*"—if necessary, we close the gate so he cannot return. In that manner, the Supreme Buddha has shown here how to systematically discard that thought. This is the practice to be adopted regarding an unwholesome thought. First, one does not tolerate it. One does not give room to it. Even if one does so, if it crashes in, one pushes it away in that manner, or drives it far away, and finally brings it to non-existence. That is how the perception of abandoning (*pahāna-saññā*) is shown. It includes thoughts of sensual desire (*kāma-vitakka*), thoughts of ill-will (*vyāpāda-vitakka*), thoughts of cruelty (*vihiṃsā-vitakka*), and all other unwholesome states. That is to say, if thoughts of sensual desire, thoughts of hatred, thoughts of harming, or various other unwholesome

thoughts arise in the mind, the Supreme Buddha has shown under the meditation topic of "perception of abandoning" (*pahāna-saññā*) to adopt that very practice.

Furthermore, when explaining the Supreme Buddha's teachings, that which is known as the Four Right Endeavors (*sammappadhāna*) is the very same thing called Right Effort (*sammā-vāyāma*) in the Noble Eightfold Path. A certain energy of the mind, effort, always exists within a human being. Ordinary worldly people apply this mental factor of energy (*viriya-cetasika*), this energy, for their daily activities, such as satisfying worldly needs, studying, and doing jobs. But the Right Effort (*sammā-vāyāma*) shown by the Supreme Buddha is one concerning the mind. To eliminate the obstacles that come to the mind, He shows a fourfold energy. We have recalled this on many occasions. The fourfold effort to be applied for: preventing the arising of unarisen unwholesome states, abandoning arisen unwholesome states, producing unarisen wholesome states, and maintaining and establishing arisen wholesome states—this is known as the Four Right Endeavors (*sammappadhāna*) and as Right Effort (*sammā-vāyāma*).

Next, if we take this second point: "*uppannānaṃ pāpakānaṃ akusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ pahānāya*"—for the abandoning of arisen evil, unwholesome states, for their removal. Next, a set of words is shown: "*chandaṃ janeti, vāyamati, viriyaṃ ārabhati, cittaṃ paggaṇhāti, padahati*." "*Chandaṃ janeti*" means one generates a desire, a keen interest, regarding that. To expel those unwholesome states, one first generates an interest, a desire. Accordingly, one makes a certain attempt (*vāyamati*). Next, one arouses energy (*viriyaṃ ārabhati*). That energy is even more powerful than mere attempt. When saying "*ārabhati*," one arouses energy. Next, although energy is aroused, because there are obstacles that come with it, to remove those obstacles, "*cittaṃ paggaṇhāti*" means one firmly establishes the power of determination in the mind. One determines: "I will not submit to this, I will conquer this somehow." Next, "*padahati*" means the most sublime energy, the supreme endeavor denoted by the word "*padhāna*."

In some places, this is shown as the "four-factored energy" (*caturaṅga-samannāgata-viriya*). The Bodhisatta sat on His final seat for Buddhahood with that kind of determination. Regarding this, it is stated: "*Kāmaṃ taco ca nahāru ca aṭṭhi ca avasissatu, upasussatu sarīre maṃsalohitaṃ*"—"Let only skin, sinews, and bones remain, let the flesh and blood in my body dry up. What can be achieved by human strength, by human energy, by human effort—without attaining that, I shall not relax my energy, I shall not cast it aside." With such firm determination, the Bodhisatta attained Self-Awakening (*Sambodhi*). That is the very method the Supreme Buddha repeatedly recalls to the community of monks, advising them to apply this supreme energy when other methods fail. That is why the Supreme Buddha called Himself a proponent of action (*kammavāda*) and a proponent of energy (*viriyavāda*). To direct that power of energy within a human being along the right path, systematically, orderly, and in a manner suited to the occasion.

Even psychologists have much to learn from this. Furthermore, what is required for all of this is meditation (*bhāvanā*). What is meditation? Meditation is the systematic development of the mind. It is not only the intellectual aspect, but the emotional and affective aspect is also important in meditation. If our intellect is the brain, developing the brain alone is not enough; the heart must also be developed, along with the emotional side. Meditation connects both of these. Thus, developing the body begins with practicing virtues like morality (*sīla*). There, we make a determination to tame body and speech as a practice. For that too, a considerable amount of energy of the kind described earlier is needed—an energy of the mind, not an energy of the body, but an energy of the mind. There, in most instances, it is not about "doing" something, but about abstaining. In that case, to abstain, it is the mind that must be guarded there. If one is told to "do" something, then bodily energy is involved. If we are told to kill an animal, how much effort must we exert? If we are told to steal, how much effort must we exert? Then, the physical energy that ordinary worldly people think of is applied there.

But here, to abstain from it, one must apply a great mental energy (*cetasika viriya*). The mind says, "Do this." Abstaining from it is what is difficult. It is right there that the value of this energy truly emerges. Thus, starting in that manner, going towards concentration (*samādhi*) becomes even more demanding. In that too, it is the endeavor of unifying the mind. Now, these five points we discussed here concern particularly the practitioner (*yogāvacara*) who concentrates the mind. In daily life, wise Buddhist devotees, whether lay or ordained, reflecting on the distress, the distraction, the loss, and the dangers caused to their own lives and to the world by their scattered minds, turn towards meditation because they want to calm this mind, to unify the mind, to keep the mind on one object. But that is not something easily done. It is not something that can be done while nodding off to sleep. It is not something that can be done through laziness. The Supreme Buddha has stated that a special effort, endeavor, exertion, and dedication (*padhāna*) must be applied for it. What is the reason for this?

For a long time, like water flowing downwards, we have lived in this long Saṃsāra, taking birth (*jāti*) in various hells and places, taking birth in animal realms, *yakkha* realms, and ghost realms (*peta-loka*), taking birth among those with wrong views, subjugated by and obedient to unrighteous impulses and defiled impulses. Then, like flowing water, there are several such flows towards the wrong direction within our mental continuum. In the Dhamma, the Supreme Buddha introduces these with terms such as underlying tendencies (*anusaya*), taints (*āsava*), and floods (*ogha*). These underlying tendencies (*anusaya*) are like what flows underneath. Taints (*āsava*) are what leak out from them; the taints also flow. Next, the floods (*ogha*) are what crash like overflowing water. Like great rivers flowing, you can experience this nature of the mind at times; certain things hidden deep within the mind tell you to do this and that. Some things draw you in so much that you feel you cannot help but do them. At other times, destroying both oneself and others, thinking "it doesn't matter what happens," one gets swept away, subjugated by that great flood

(*mahogha*). Being swept away by the great flood means being caught in a great torrent where one does not know where one is going; one simply lets the mind go in that direction. So, if we take that concept of freedom, freedom of thought, and various such ideas, and let the mind go as it pleases, then that is where things go wrong.

In that story about the driver, the driver has a side on the road where he must travel. Next, once he climbs into the vehicle and sits in that seat, there are several controls he must manage. There is a huge responsibility—the lives of those inside the vehicle, and then the lives of those on the road. Disregarding all of that, if the driver drives while drunk? It is just like being drunk if ordinary worldly people get intoxicated. If they think, "There is no use in meditation, there is nothing to tame in the mind, just watching the mind is enough," that is exactly like the driver getting into the seat and letting the vehicle go as it pleases, leaving it to its own momentum.

But the Supreme Buddha shows the gravity of this. This mind, which has run towards the evil, bad side for such a long time, cannot be tamed easily. It is precisely because of its gravity that the Supreme Buddha provides five steps. Otherwise, He could have said it in one step, couldn't He? Through that, we can see to what extent the Supreme Buddha saw reality as it truly is (*yathābhūta*). Because the human mind's inclination towards defilements is so strong, the Supreme Buddha showed it step-by-step. It was at the final stage that He showed the most extreme step. Showing it like catching by the neck and shaking is because of that; it is because it cannot be avoided.

Another point we mentioned here is the word wise attention (*yoniso manasikāra*). One thing we frequently recall is that the Supreme Buddha compared the aggregate of perception (*saññā-kkhandha*), perception (*saññā*), to a mirage. So here too, when a defiled object is presented—that is, an object of lust or an object of hatred—that object appears to us just as a mirage appears to a deer. One grasps (*upādāna*) it. Next, submitting to it, one cultivates various types of thoughts according to it. This state of being subjugated by those thoughts is also known as conceptual proliferation (*papañca*). But instead of that, the Supreme Buddha tells us to look backward at that thought, to see: "What are the root causes that gave rise to this thought?" When looking at the end, it is a greed, or a lust, hatred, or delusion that arose in one's own mind. Once that is seen, the attractive nature of the object that caught the mind earlier disappears. That is why the Supreme Buddha has shown wise attention (*yoniso manasikāra*) there.

Furthermore, there is another matter related to meditation shown by the Supreme Buddha. You all know about mindfulness and clear comprehension (*sati-sampajañña*). Mindfulness (*sati*) means attention and awareness. Mindfulness and clear understanding—the wisdom that goes along with mindfulness. Now, mindfulness here is shown as Right Mindfulness (*sammā-sati*). In truth, worldly people apply what they call mindfulness to things that actually destroy their mindfulness. Let us say someone applies mindfulness to using weapons—if they are

skilled at aiming and shooting accurately, those do not belong to Right Mindfulness (*sammā-sati*). Those are things that cultivate defilements.

But the Supreme Buddha tells us to direct the mind to this body of ours. Think about this body. Think about the nature of this body. "What kind of thing is this? Is it permanent? Is it beautiful? Is it something that lasts forever? Is it something I can call mine?"—thus contemplating according to the body, which is contemplation of the body (*kāyānupassanā*). Next, consider feelings and sensations (*vedanā*) in the same way. These come and go. Things that arise and cease. Not a single one of them is something to be taken as "I" or as a self (*attā*).

Next, look at this mind as well. The mind too, just like the colored advertising signs on a street, displays various kinds of lights—in red, in blue. In that manner, those colors appear. If, deceived by those colors, we look at them, grasp them, and act accordingly, then we get into trouble. Just like advertising boards, at different times, according to greed, hatred, and delusion, our mind gives certain signals. We are told not to go along with those signals.

Next is the contemplation of mind-objects (*dhammānupassanā*). One looks closely at how these perceptions and thoughts arise. One looks at what lies underneath them. Sometimes, these arise due to hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*). One can understand: "This happened due to the arising of these mind-blocking things called hindrances—thoughts of sensual desire, thoughts of ill-will, sloth and torpor, doubt and wavering, and the like." In moments when the mind is illuminated, behold, these factors of mindfulness, investigation of states (*dhamma-vicaya*), and so on exist in my mind.

In that way, for one to properly understand the nature of those thoughts arising in one's mind, whether good or bad, is what is called contemplation of mind-objects (*dhammānupassanā*). Thus, in wise attention (*yoniso manasikāra*), when going according to mindfulness and clear comprehension (*sati-sampajañña*)—if mindfulness (*sati*) is wisdom, then at the same time, clear comprehension (*sampajañña*) is mindfulness established in the present moment; that is *sati-sampajañña*. It is being properly aware of everything. What is important is not making others aware, but being aware oneself. At each moment as it comes, one understands: "This is such and such a thing." Through that, delusion is removed. Moreover, because of that very fact, it also becomes apparent that not a single one of these things that arise is permanent (*anicca*).

The Supreme Buddha has given various kinds of instructions to develop that mindfulness and clear comprehension (*sati-sampajañña*). One is shown as a good exercise for someone—especially a meditation practitioner who hopes to tame the mind—to watch feelings and sensations (*vedanā*) as they arise. "This feeling (*vedanā*) arose. Lo, it remained. Lo, it passed away." Feeling and sensation does not exist all the time. Feeling and sensation arises, remains, and passes away. Likewise with perceptions (*saññā*). Various perceptions (*saññā*) arise. When saying perceptions, they can be visual perceptions (*rūpa-saññā*), auditory perceptions

(*sadda-saññā*), olfactory perceptions, and so on, referring to the perceptions coming from the six sense bases (*āyatana*). Or else, they are perceptions coming from the body regarding external bases of forms, sounds, smells, tastes, and there are also various perceptions arising from the mind itself. Regarding every such perception, one thinks: "Lo, a perception has arisen. It remained. It was removed. It arose, remained, passed away." Through that, one sees impermanence (*aniccatā*).

Likewise regarding thoughts (*vitakka*). One turns to look at the thought. "Here is a thought, a thought that was not there before. Lo, it has newly arrived. How did this arrive?" That thought too remains and passes away. In that manner, one remains aware of the comings and goings of one's feelings and sensations (*vedanā*), perceptions (*saññā*), and thoughts (*vitakka*). This is just like sitting by the roadside on a dark night and watching passing vehicles. Let us say, in the dark night, the headlight of a vehicle is seen. Next, making a sound, it rapidly drives past. After that, the tail light is seen. That is all. There is nothing to be grasped from it.

In this very manner, this feeling and sensation (*vedanā*) arises, remains, and passes away. Perceptions (*saññā*) arise, remain, and pass away. Thoughts (*vitakka*) arise, remain, and pass away. To a practitioner (*yogāvacara*) who trains to look at those incoming experiences in such a detached way, it is possible to very quickly develop even those insight knowledges (*vipassanā-ñāṇa*). It is said that this especially helps mindfulness and clear comprehension (*sati-sampajañña*), to develop mindfulness and wisdom. Because, being deluded by that object, one turns away from it. In this way, the Supreme Buddha has shown it in various ways. We can then understand: what is this meditation? What is expected from this?

Ordinary worldly people use only an extremely microscopic, a very tiny portion of the powers existing in this mind. Sometimes, one might think that the minds of those who invent amazing new things are highly developed. That is a one-sided development. It has been developed on the intellectual side. Through the medium of various machines and equipment, utilizing them, they go on developing something called science. But beneath it lies ignorance (*avijjā*). Why? Because not a single one of them has brought about internal development. They are subjugated by greed, hatred, and delusion. That is precisely why they produce those dangerous weapons and the like.

Next, producing various other things related to the fivefold sensual pleasures on a massive scale, subjecting the entire world to commercial concepts, and dragging the entire world down to hell (*apāya*)—all this is done in the name of science. We cannot stop those by merely speaking. They flow as if swept away by a great flood (*mahogha*). But at least two or three people must reflect on this. What goes in the name of science is mostly ignorance (*avijjā*). Various kinds of equipment have been invented to satisfy our needs. We must not become enslaved to that science merely because of that.

That is to say, many are directing themselves towards that side in various ways. This is clearly visible regarding those weapons. Not only that, but to entice and delude humans in relation to the fivefold sensual pleasures, for the purpose of securing their own economic progress, they have used science as a decoy. What is the reason for this? Because those aforementioned virtues do not exist within human hearts. There is no effort to develop those virtues shown by the Supreme Buddha. They do not try to move away from greed towards non-greed (*alobha*). They do not try to move away from hatred towards non-hatred (*adosa*), towards loving-kindness (*mettā*). They do not try to move away from delusion (*moha*) towards wisdom (*paññā*). Until then, only ignorance (*avijjā*) exists within that development. Therefore, only one aspect of the mind is involved; there is only a one-sided development there. We must not be deceived by that. We must not think of everything according to that logic.

Due to the development of science and technology, great conveniences have been provided in our daily lives. We consider this an era where things once done with great difficulty are done very easily. But the mind is not that kind of thing. Having been subjected to the power of defilements for an extremely long time, passing through various dangerous states in Saṃsāra, such as those *yakkha* births, there are habits of Saṃsāra brought along.

This mind travels along those very habits. When one action is performed repeatedly, it becomes a habit. Through that habit, one's character is also built. It is exactly the same with this thought. That is why the Supreme Buddha told us to break this thought as quickly as possible. If it is an unwholesome thought, as soon as it is recognized, one tries to drive it away.

If it does not succeed in the first attempt, then there is the second method. When even that fails, the third method. Now, whether it is a carpenter or a mechanical worker, if the work cannot be done using one tool, they take the next tool. The Supreme Buddha also shows us the taming of the mind in that manner. Then, the other method we can use to assist this in our daily lives is meditation (*bhāvanā*). Each person must practice a certain meditation subject (*kammaṭṭhāna*), even a simple one. This is a long journey, but we begin it with a single step.

Likewise, if we practice a certain meditation subject (*kammaṭṭhāna*) in our daily lives—let us say it could be loving-kindness meditation (*mettā bhāvanā*), or recollection of the Buddha (*buddhānussati*). A single word. The very word spoken is enough. If it is the recollection of the Buddha, a single word like "*Bhagavā*" or "*Buddho*" is enough. But because it is a wholesome thought, what do we do through reflecting on it repeatedly? During the seconds one applies the thought "May they be well and happy!" in loving-kindness meditation, a thought of hatred cannot arise. Therefore, we have that advantage, if we engage in it continuously.

The Supreme Buddha says that this meditation is also something to be done continuously. Why? Because the principles regarding meditation are shown as: repetition (*āsevanā*), development (*bhāvanā*), and much practice (*bahulīkamma*).

One must frequently associate with one's meditation subject (*kammaṭṭhāna*), like a good, close friend. Likewise, one must develop it. It must be brought to systematic growth. Without staying in the same place, one must develop it step-by-step, tomorrow being more developed than today—*bhāvanā, bahulīkamma*. Also, one must make an effort to do it throughout the day. As much time as possible must be devoted to it. The more frequently it is done, the more strength that thought receives, and those unwholesome thoughts are suppressed. The value of a meditation subject (*kammaṭṭhāna*) exists precisely according to these stated principles. The Supreme Buddha has made the world understand this natural law of the mind. There is a certain depth in this.

This mind is not the thought that is seen from the outside. It should not be limited to what the ordinary world calls a civilized city, or to the customs and manners we see externally. Only when one falls into a certain society or joins an institution and begins to associate, does the weakness of those individuals become visible. Although those people have not developed their minds, they wear fine clothes, clothes considered to be the highest fashion in the world; yet what of it? In the end, they appear as puppets. It is a state where one cannot decide whether beasts, *yakkhas*, or ghosts (*petas*) are dwelling inside them. What is the reason for this? Because the world measures by external standards—either by education, or else by degrees, or by external pomp. But the human mind is not something that can be recognized in that way. That is why, even if those who had developed their minds in past Saṃsāra were beggars in this life, living at the very lowest level, if the Supreme Buddha saw that potential, He ordained them, brought them into the Sasana, and led them to Arahantship.

Just like that, we too must contemplate that there is a good side and a bad side to our mind. No one can say, "We have never gone to hell," or "We have never gone to animal births," merely because we are in this human birth now. Therefore, those animal qualities, *yakkha* qualities, and ghost (*peta*) qualities can exist. They can emerge at any moment. If one gives support to them, if one associates with bad friends (*pāpa-mitta*) who encourage them, one too can fall to that level. One can become like an Angulimala. There is nothing preventing our mind from sinking to the level of the highly dangerous individuals well-known in this era, if we receive the association of bad friends (*pāpa-mitta-sevana*).

But the Supreme Buddha shows that likewise, a good side also exists within a human being. One must support that. One must apply great effort for that too. Without that, it cannot be brought out. Flowing downwards is easy. Swimming upstream is difficult. But the Supreme Buddha has shown that a Buddha appears precisely to lead towards a goal that this world deems impossible, a target generally thought to be impossible.

Even before a Buddha appears, why did all the past practitioners (*yogis*) go to the Himalayas to practice meditation? It was to escape from this extremely long

Saṃsāra, from this highly dangerous suffering (*dukkha*) of birth (*jāti*), decay and death (*jarāmaraṇa*), and disease, from which no one can escape. The Supreme Buddha has declared that this goal can be fulfilled, this target can be reached, by developing this wisdom (*paññā*) within our very minds. This meditation is the very endeavor of developing that wisdom.

The Supreme Buddha shows that because of ignorance (*avijjā*) and delusion (*moha*), because of not knowing the true nature of the world, the world wanders in Saṃsāra for such a long time. In the entire Saṃsāra, there is no wrong in thinking that one's father and mother are ignorance (*avijjā*) and craving (*taṇhā*). The father is ignorance, and the mother is craving. It is from these two that we have taken birth for a long, infinite time. The Supreme Buddha shows the way to escape from this ignorance and craving. Now, ignorance refers to the intellectual side. Craving refers to the emotional, affective side. That is what we meant by the brain and the heart. Thus, it is according to ignorance, and under the support of ignorance, that craving (*taṇhā*) finds room. Therefore, to eliminate these two, we must make a systematic effort, such as by controlling our feelings and emotions.

It is for that purpose that the Supreme Buddha has brought out such amazing methods. Accordingly, you too must contemplate not letting this life of ours simply slip away; it is only during this rare opportunity, the period of a Buddha's appearance, that we can escape from this Saṃsāra. It is to fulfill the virtues required for that, that you have spent this day today. A large number of you observed the precepts (*sīla*) today. Virtue (*sīla*) is not merely wearing a white dress externally. Within it, there is a certain dedication. Having undertaken several precepts to tame body and speech oneself, one engages in practice as self-discipline. Just like the stanza given by the Buddha to Ven. Sānu, it is a command given to one's own mind. Observing "*Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi*"—"I undertake the precept to abstain from taking life"—one guards it.

In that manner, what is done voluntarily by oneself is the powerful effort, the true effort. No one else can do this through external controls. The Supreme Buddha saw that. That is precisely why the Supreme Buddha said:

> *Tumhehi kiccaṃ ātappaṃ, akkhātāro tathāgatā;*
>
> *Paṭipannā pamokkhanti, jhāyino mārabandhanā.*

"The effort must be made by you yourselves; the Tathāgatas are only teachers. Those who enter upon this practice, and practice absorption (*jhāna*), will escape the bonds of Māra."

Only those who go along practicing absorption will escape this bond of Māra. From this, we see that this work belongs to us.

No matter how many Bodhi Pujas we perform for the Supreme Buddha, or offer prayers, or do other things, He cannot lead us to Nibbāna. Having aroused faith,

adding energy to that faith, arousing mindfulness through energy, building concentration through mindfulness, it is only with a concentrated mind that one can see the Three Characteristics of impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and non-self (*anattā*). A mother cannot lead her son to Nibbāna. A son cannot lead his mother to Nibbāna. Each and every person must make the effort themselves. Therefore, without waiting at the final moment until children sit around the bed crying, "Oh, please don't die! Wait until the doctor arrives," wise parents should encourage their children, and just as Ven. Sānu's mother rescued an item from a burning house, everyone must contemplate discarding worldly aims and acting. No matter how much we protect ourselves as families, even a Buddha's power cannot be given to others. Therefore, we must develop this power within ourselves. It is for that purpose that today was spent in virtue (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*), and wisdom (*paññā*).

Therefore, one must contemplate wisely. One should be happy and be encouraged to go further forward. Walking on this path of practice and virtues like morality (*sīla*) which you have commenced, practicing concentration meditation through some meditation subject (*kammaṭṭhāna*) as much as possible even in daily life, gradually securing the association of admirable friends (*kalyāṇa-mitta*), and developing insight (*vipassanā*) with instructions through them. Today, through fulfilling these practices, guarding virtue, and practicing meditation—through the accumulation of merit gathered through all of this—let us strive to bring an end to this suffering (*dukkha*) of Saṃsāra. Likewise, if there are any sentient beings from the Avīci hell up to the Akanīṭha heaven who are waiting for Nibbāna by rejoicing in this merit of preaching and listening to the Dhamma, may all of them, by rejoicing thus, be comforted by the supreme, deathless, great Nibbāna through a Bodhi of their aspiration! Reflecting thus, recite these verses.

"*Ettāvatā ca amhehi.....*"