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Dhamma in Cambodia.

Dhamma Discussions under the leadership of Acharn Sujin Boriharnwanaket

Preface

This book is the translation from Thai of the recorded Dhamma discussions held in Cambodia December 2000, under the leadership of Acharn Sujin. I wish to express my great appreciation to Acharn Sujin who gave us Dhamma all day during our journey in Cambodia. We were overwhelmed by the confidence in the Dhamma expressed by our Cambodian friends. They came to the temples in great numbers, welcoming Acharn and all of us, and before and after each session they lined up and said in a loud voice, again and again, “Anumodaniya”, which means appreciation.

Our journey was organized in Thailand by Fongchan Nanta (Khun Ell) and in Cambodia by But Sawong who was the interpreter during the sessions which took place almost twice every day in different temples. But Sawong is a great teacher and the driving force to reestablish Buddhism in Cambodia, after the Pol Pot regime. He had learnt Thai in order to follow Acharn Sujin’s radio program on Buddhism and he comes regularly to Thailand in order to listen to Acharn Sujin. He teaches the Cambodians the development of satipaṭṭhāna in daily life and people have great confidence in him.

During the sessions Acharn Sujin spoke about daily life, about dukkha, sorrow, and sukha, happiness, saying that nobody can control the amount of happiness or sorrow he experiences, and that it all depends on conditions. At that moment we thought of the many tribulations our Cambodian friends had experienced during the Pol Pot regime. They had lost husband, wife, family members and friends, they had suffered a great deal. But they understood that it all happened because of conditions. They were keenly interested in satipaṭṭhāna and asked many questions about this subject. We were impressed by their great confidence and interest while they listened to Acharn Sujin’s explanations of the Dhamma.

The first session was held in the main temple, the Unaloam Temple, where the Patriarch, the head monk of Cambodia, was present. He showed his appreciation of Acharn Sujin’s explanations of the Dhamma and he also asked questions on satipaṭṭhāna.

Apart from the sessions in the temples we also had Dhamma discussions in the hotels in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap. In Siem Reap we visited the famous temple complex of Angkor Wat. On the “Terrace of the Elephants” we even had a Dhamma discussion in the open air and, here again, a great crowd of Cambodians came to listen. Acharn said that we should benefit from being in this life where we can hear the Dhamma. We should not neglect the study of the Dhamma because we cannot be sure whether we have in the next life an opportunity again to study it.

At this moment everything is dhamma, reality. We hear about dhammas but we do not know the characteristic of dhammas. Therefore, we should listen again so that there are

conditions for sati to be aware of realities, and in this way there will be more understanding of the characteristics of dhammas. The characteristics of realities should be known, and we do not have to name them. Acharn also stressed that the development of paññā leads to detachment, to the abandoning of ignorance and the wrong view of self. If we have desire for the arising of sati there is lobha, no understanding of the Dhamma. This was a perfect Dhamma lecture in a place where we were surrounded by trees and the remnants of the old monuments.

Acharn Sujin explained to the Cambodians that everything that naturally appears can be the object of satipaṭṭhāna. The study of the scriptures is necessary as a foundation and it should not be neglected, but the purpose of the study should not be forgotten: the understanding of the present moment. She stressed many points we had heard before, but we can never hear enough that nāma and rūpa appear at this moment and that understanding of them can be developed now, not at another time.

I have added footnotes to the text to help the reader who may not be familiar with certain notions and terms.

I am extremely grateful to Acharn Sujin who gave Dhamma to all with great selflessness and tirelessness. I also wish to express my appreciation to But Sawong and all our Cambodian friends whose confidence and interest were an inspiration to all of us.

Nina van Gorkom

Dhamma Conversations in Cambodia.

Chapter I

Discussion in the Unaloam Temple, Phnom Penh.

Sujin: I would like to invite you all to take part in the Dhamma discussion and if you have questions, please ask them because we do not have much time. I know that people in Cambodia take a great interest in satipaṭṭhāna and therefore let us discuss this subject of Buddhism because it is of the highest benefit. If one studies the teachings without developing the understanding which realizes the dhammas one has studied, one merely develops theoretical understanding of realities.

There are realities, dhammas, all the time, also at this moment. When people study dhammas, they usually study concepts denoting realities. Dhammas are reality. However, if the Exalted One, the Sammāsambuddha, had not attained enlightenment, nobody would know that what we take for self, for the world, for different things, are only dhammas, each with their own characteristic.

I do appreciate the kusala all of you have accumulated, and this is the condition for you to come together at this place. If you had not accumulated kusala in the past there would no condition for you to listen to the Dhamma now.

The Dhamma is the truth but it is difficult to comprehend. No matter whether one is born as a human being or as another kind of living being, there are only dhammas, realities, that are born. However, how many people who listen to the Dhamma can really understand that everything is only dhamma, reality?

It seems that the Dhamma which is real is very ordinary. However, it is difficult to really understand it, because it is the true Dhamma of the ariyans, the enlightened ones. When we are sound asleep nothing appears to us, but why is it that as soon as we have opened our eyes there are objects appearing to us? This seems very ordinary to us, but we should really understand the reason why, while we are asleep, nothing appears, and why, when we have opened our eyes, different objects can appear.

If there would not be nāma dhamma (mental reality), there would not be any reality that could appear. If there would not be seeing, different things could not appear at this very moment. If we would not hear, smell, taste, experience things through the bodysense or think, the world could not appear. At this moment we all are seeing and on account of what we see happiness or sorrow arises. When we hear, happiness and sorrow arise on account of what we hear. It is the same in the case of the experiences through the other senses.

This is the ordinary daily life of everybody. Every day we see, we hear, we experience happiness and sorrow, time and again. Everybody is attached to what he sees. Can anyone deny that he clings each time he sees? These are dhammas which arise and take their course, and nobody can prevent them from arising. When life arises it has to take its course each moment, and nobody can exert control over the amount of happiness or sorrow he experiences, this depends on conditions.

Do you think about birth in the same way as the Bodhisatta? You may think that being born is just an ordinary event, common to everybody. Nobody can prevent this and nobody particularly wants to be born, but when there are the right conditions there has to be birth. However, the Bodhisatta reflected on birth as follows: dhammas which have arisen must fall away. When will there be an end to what is susceptible to change, when will it fall away and not arise again?

People who have not realized the noble Truths ¹ and do not take an interest in the Dhamma will have to continue to see, to hear, all the time, in each plane of existence, during each life. This will happen until they begin to see that it is of the greatest benefit to study the Dhamma and to hear the Dhamma from the person who has attained enlightenment and who could reach the end of the arising of dhammas.

People who are not the Sammasambuddha nor a “Solitary Buddha” (Pacceka Buddha) ² should be “listeners”, people who listen attentively and with great care to the Dhamma. We should remember that the Dhamma the Buddha realized through his enlightenment is of a profound nature and that nobody can understand it without study and investigation.

The Buddha realized through his enlightenment the true Dhamma of the ariyans (the enlightened ones). He realized the dhammas which are reality, so that people who had developed paññā to the degree of penetrating the true nature of these dhammas could become ariyans as well.

We may have developed worldly knowledge in many fields, in many branches of science, but we are still susceptible to suffering, dukkha. All of us have to undergo many kinds of dukkha. Let everybody here consider the truth of daily life: we have a body and thus, we are susceptible to sickness, to suffering. We should realize that even a discomfort such as hunger occurring in daily life is dukkha. Is there anybody who never experienced pain or illness? Even while we are sitting now we may feel stiffness.

Apart from bodily pain occurring in daily life, there is also mental pain. When we suffer from bodily pain there is bound to be mental affliction as well. We can discern these two kinds of dukkha; we can see that bodily pain is real and that mental pain, oppression or disturbance, is also dukkha. We can understand that these two kinds of dukkha are truly dukkha; they are called “dukkha dukkha”.

There are three kinds of dukkha: dukkha-dukkha (intrinsic suffering), vipariñña dukkha (suffering in change) and saòkhāra-dukkha (suffering inherent in conditioned realities). As regards dukkha-dukkha, this is bodily pain and mental affliction that everybody experiences. This does not mean that people who know these kinds of dukkha are already ariyans. Everybody knows these kinds of dukkha in daily life. There is another kind of dukkha which is vipariñña dukkha, dukkha because of change. This kind of dukkha occurs when happiness changes, when it does not last. Everybody looks for happiness and wants to experience happiness, but when one has acquired it, it changes again, it does not last. What causes happiness is susceptible to change and then one looks again for something else that can bring happiness. For example, people wish to acquire a particular thing, but when they have acquired it, it can only bring happiness for a moment, and therefore, they wish to acquire something else again that can bring happiness. Thus, happiness which changes and does not last is a kind of dukkha, suffering.

Everybody has to experience dukkha, each day, but one does not feel that there is dukkha because of the fact that everything arises and then falls away, that everything changes very rapidly. One does not realize the dukkha inherent in all conditioned dhammas, saòkhāra dhammas, which are impermanent.

The Buddha explained the characteristics of the three kinds of dukkha by way of feelings. As to dukkha-dukkha, this is bodily pain and unpleasant mental feeling, domanassa vedanā, which is mental pain. Thus, when dukkha-dukkha is classified by way of feelings, it includes the painful feeling which accompanies body-consciousness and the unpleasant mental feeling which accompanies the citta with aversion. Happy feeling, sukha vedanā, is a cause for suffering when it changes, and one looks for another object that can bring happiness; thus, it is suffering in change, vipariñña dukkha. Indifferent feeling, feeling that is neither pleasant nor unpleasant, and also all other dhammas which arise and fall away, which are impermanent, are saòkhāra dukkha. People may well know bodily suffering and mental suffering, and they may well realize that even pleasant feeling is

suffering, since it is susceptible to change, but this does not mean that they are ariyans. They cannot become enlightened until they realize the kind of dukkha which is saòkhàra-dukkha, dukkha inherent in all conditioned realities.

Is there anybody among you while you are sitting here who really knows to what extent there is dukkha? Everything arises and then falls away extremely rapidly. People who have studied the Dhamma know that a moment of seeing is different from a moment of hearing and that therefore seeing has to fall away before the reality of hearing can arise. Everybody can know through the study of Dhamma that the arising and falling away is dukkha, but this is understanding of the level of theoretical knowledge, pariyatti. This is different from the direct realization of the truth that the dhammas which arise and then fall away are dukkha. We read in the “Kindred Sayings” (IV, Saïyātana vagga, Second FiftyCh 3, § 81) that sectarians asked the monks for what reason they were ordained in accordance with the Dhamma and the Vinaya. The monks answered that the reason was practising with the purpose of realizing dukkha. We read that the monks said to the Buddha ³:

“Now here, lord, the wandering sectarians thus question us: ‘What is the object, friend, for which the holy life is lived under the rule of Gotama the recluse?’ Thus questioned, lord, we thus make answer to those wandering sectarians: ‘It is for the full knowledge of dukkha that the holy life is lived under the rule of the Exalted One.’ “

We then read that the monks asked the Buddha whether their answer was in accordance with his teaching. The Buddha stated that it was. He then said:

But if, monks, the wandering sectarians should thus question you: “But what, friend, is that dukkha, for the full knowledge of which the holy life is lived under the rule of Gotama the recluse?”- thus questioned you should answer thus: “The eye, friend is dukkha. For the full knowledge of that the holy life is lived... Objects... mind...that pleasant feeling or unpleasant feeling or indifferent feeling that arises through mind-contact, - that also is dukkha. Fully to know that, the holy life is lived under the rule of the Exalted One.”.....

Thus we see that the understanding of dukkha has several degrees. There is not merely the degree of knowledge stemming from listening.

People who have not developed paññā, right understanding, may understand in theory, because they listened to the Dhamma, that the citta which sees falls away. However, they do not realize that the impermanence of all conditioned realities is dukkha. As soon as one kind of citta falls away it is succeeded by another kind of citta which arises. One kind of dhamma arises and falls away and then another dhamma arises succeeding it, but when paññā is not keen enough, people are not ready to see the continuous arising and falling away of all conditioned dhammas, thus, they do not realize these as dukkha. The arising and falling away of dhammas occurs extremely rapidly and therefore people still tend to believe that these dhammas are a self who is there all the time. They are not immediately affected by the arising and falling away of the dhammas that see or hear. They take dhammas for permanent and self, until they know the true nature of the dhammas and do not take them for self any more.

The understanding which is the study of dhammas should be developed gradually, stage by stage. One cannot forego any stage of development, and therefore, it is not possible to realize immediately the arising and falling away of realities. It is necessary to know first the characteristic of nāma which is non-self, and the characteristic of rúpa which is non-self.

We have discussed this subject here only for a little while and therefore you may not be able to realize already the characteristic of nāma dhamma and of rúpa dhamma. We should continue to discuss this subject for a long time. Buddhism does not teach only about dukkha, it also teaches about the cause of the arising of dukkha, the dhamma which is the cessation of dukkha and the way of the development of paññā that leads to the complete cessation of dukkha, so that it does not arise again.

This is the teaching of the four noble Truths. Paññā that can penetrate the four noble Truths should be developed stage by stage. For example, there is seeing at this moment and this is real, and thus, paññā can only know the characteristic of the dhamma which is seeing. It can realize seeing as the dhamma which knows an object, as an element (dhātu) which knows or experiences. What appears through the eyesense is rúpa dhamma that does not know anything. This is the development of paññā in daily life. Daily life is different for different people; some people may have accumulated skill for jhāna and others not, but realities appear naturally in the life of each individual. So long as lokuttara citta (supramundane citta experiencing nibbāna) has not arisen yet a person cannot consider and investigate lokuttara citta as the noble Truth of dukkha, but he can investigate other cittas that arise and appear at this moment.

Thus, the study of dhammas should be in conformity with a person's real life so that he can understand what has been taught in the Tipiṭaka, also with regard to the four noble Truths. When someone is seeing and satipaṭṭhāna does not arise, paññā cannot clearly realize the difference between nāma dhamma and rúpa dhamma and then the noble Truth of dukkha cannot be penetrated.

At this moment dhammas are arising and falling away, but ignorance (avijjā) cannot penetrate the truth and there is still clinging and desire to realize the truth. All kinds of clinging and desire are obstructions, they prevent a person to become detached and to realize the third noble Truth, the cessation of dukkha, that is, nibbāna.

Paññā is not developed if one merely expects to know what has not arisen yet, what has not appeared yet. However, there is a way to test whether there is the real paññā or not at this moment, when a reality is appearing. We can find out whether or not the characteristic of that reality can be understood as a nāma dhamma or a rúpa dhamma. People should not have false expectations to know a reality other than the dhamma that appears at this very moment.

At this moment a reality is appearing but there is no paññā which knows as it really is the characteristic of that reality. How can paññā then develop? If there is no understanding at this moment, there will not be understanding at the next moment. Only when paññā arises together with sati, when there is awareness and understanding of the characteristic of the reality that appears, can paññā gradually develop. Paññā can grow together with sati

which is aware over and over again of the characteristics of all kinds of dhammas. In this way there can be understanding of all dhammas appearing through the eyes, the ears, the nose, the tongue, the bodysense and the mind-door.

People should understand correctly that the reality appearing at this very moment is the dhamma pañña should know as it really is. If they do not know yet the dhamma which appears now, they should continue to study the Dhamma and continue to listen to the Dhamma. In that way understanding can grow and there will be conditions for the arising of satipaṭṭhāna. There is no other way to know the characteristics of dhammas as they really are.

When you are listening and beginning to have understanding, you are actually beginning to develop the pañña that is able to know the characteristics of realities. This is the very beginning of the development of insight, of vipassanā.

But Sawong: there is a question about a parrot that develops satipaṭṭhāna by reciting, “Atthi, atthi ” (the pāli term for bones)³. I would like to ask how rūpa dhamma or nāma dhamma can be the object of satipaṭṭhāna in this way?

Sujin: A parrot cannot know the four noble Truths and nobody can know the mind of a parrot.

If a parrot says, “bones” and a human being says the word “bones”, is there a difference between the ability of a bird and of a human being to understand the meaning of this word? What is a person thinking who has listened to the Dhamma for a long time and hears the word “bones” ; does he think in a way different from a parrot ?

A parrot and a human being have each a different bodily appearance. Is seeing-consciousness different in the case of a parrot and of a human being, or is it the same? We can see that a parrot is different from a human being because of its bodily appearance. However, nāma dhamma has no outward appearance; there are kusala citta and akusala citta which arise. Birth as a bird is the result of akusala whereas birth as a human is the result of kusala. We should consider the Dhamma in all details. When someone just listens to the words of the Dhamma without considering them he may mistakenly believe that a parrot can develop satipaṭṭhāna. The parrot may have accumulated inclinations which we cannot know; it is true that the Bodhisatta who developed paññā was also born as a bird in his former lives. We do not know about this, we only know with regard to ourselves the realities which arise. We can find out that satipaṭṭhāna is not at all easy. We have to listen to the Dhamma for a long time so that there can be conditions for sati to be aware of a reality even at this very moment.

Nobody here can know the citta of someone else, and who would have the kind of paññā that knows the citta of a parrot? Thus, what we would be able to know is our own citta at this moment and this is what is most beneficial. Then we shall know that even thinking of a parrot is only one moment of citta that thinks. This is different from the citta that sees or hears. This is the way to develop paññā so that we correctly understand the characteristic of nāma dhamma, the element that knows, that can know an object through the eyes, the ears, the nose, the tongue, the bodysense and the mind-door. Everybody here can only

know his own citta and thus he should have more understanding of his own citta.

But Sawong: There are questions concerning the development of satipaṭṭhāna. In the section on “Clear Comprehension” it has been stated that one should be aware while going forward. Should sati be aware now of going forward or of the element of wind produced by citta which conditions the going forward?

Sujin: At this moment nobody is going forward, but sati can arise and be aware of the characteristic of the dhamma that is real at this moment. There is no need yet to think of something. If you can understand the characteristic of sati which is aware of the characteristic of the reality now there will be no doubt about the object of awareness. Sati is anattā, non-self, and when there are the right conditions it can arise and be aware of realities at any moment in daily life, no matter whether one sits, is lying down, stands, walks, speaks, is silent or thinks.

But Sawong: Someone has a question about right understanding, sammā-diṭṭhi. He asks whether sammā-diṭṭhi arises when someone practises satipaṭṭhāna in daily life. Can he at such a moment consider rūpa dhamma and nāma dhamma? Or are there other dhammas arising together with sammā-diṭṭhi that he can consider?

Sujin: There are eight Path factors, but usually we have to do with five factors, because the three factors which are the abstinenes (virati cetasikas) arise, all at the same time, only with the supramundane citta, lokuttara citta⁵. The five Path-factors are: right understanding (sammā-diṭṭhi), right thinking (sammā-sankappa), right effort (sammā-vayāma), right mindfulness (samma-sati) and right concentration (sammā-samādhi).

The characteristic of a particular cetasika can only be known if there is mindfulness of it at that moment. If there is no sati, right thinking, for example, does not appear and thus the characteristic of right thinking cannot be known. The citta which sees is accompanied by seven kinds of cetasikas⁶ but if sati is not mindful of these cetasikas they do not appear and then they cannot be known. When, for example, at the moment of seeing, the cetasika that is life-faculty (jīvitindriya, maintaining the life of the accompanying nāma-dhammas) or the cetasika that is volition (cetanā cetasika) do not appear, they cannot be known.

While we are sitting there is rūpa produced by citta⁷. How can this rūpa be known? When a particular reality is known, it can be known only when it appears through the appropriate doorway. When a blind person, for example, wants to know what the different colours really are, he cannot know this because the eye-door is lacking. Sound does not appear to a deaf person, and thus, paññā could not know the characteristic of sound.

At this moment a reality appears and thus there must be a doorway, the means through which that reality can appear. Without a doorway that reality cannot appear. With regard to the rūpa produced by citta, this arises within oneself, not outside. Therefore, only when it appears through a doorway could it be known.

Can anybody without the rūpa which is bodysense (kāyapasāda rūpa) experience a rūpa appearing on the body? Can rūpas such as softness, hardness, cold, heat, motion or

pressure appear? When someone's bodysense is contacted by cold, heat, softness or hardness, he takes the cold, heat, softness or hardness for his own. The rūpas of cold, heat, softness, hardness, motion and pressure arise and appear on the body, but if a person does not know that they are not self or belonging to a self, how can he know the characteristic of rūpa produced by citta? Cold, heat and the other rūpas appearing through the bodysense are not only rūpas produced by citta; they can also be rūpas produced by the other three factors, namely, kamma, temperature (utu) and nutrition (āhāra).

Thus, the study on the level of theoretical knowledge of the Dhamma (pariyatti) is the study of the names of realities. At that level the characteristics of realities do not appear to paññā. Paññā should be developed stage by stage so that the true nature of realities can be directly known.

But Sawong: The venerable Patriarch has some questions. If it is true that one cannot choose or select any object for the practice of satipaṭṭhāna, how do you explain that, as we read in the commentaries, objects are selected in accordance with a person's temperament or character, such as a greedy temperament (tanhā carita) or a speculative temperament (dīṇhi carita)⁸. Furthermore, some people have samatha as their vehicle, they have developed tranquillity and insight, and some have vipassanā as their vehicle, they have developed only vipassanā. In the Commentary to the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta a city with four gates has been compared to nibbāna, and it has been explained that just as people can enter a city with four gates by anyone of these gates, one can attain enlightenment by means of anyone of the four applications of mindfulness, mindfulness of the body, of feeling, of citta and of dhammas. How do we have to understand this?

Sujin: Usually when people read in the scriptures about these subjects they desire to know more about this, or they desire to act in a particular way. When they hear about different temperaments, such as a person of an intelligent temperament, a ruminating temperament, or a hateful temperament, they think of themselves as having such or such temperament and they choose a particular way of development which suits their character. However, in reality this subject of the Dhamma has been taught so that it is a condition for the arising of paññā that knows the truth. Only when one develops satipaṭṭhāna, paññā can arise and then a person can know what character or temperament he has. Without the development of satipaṭṭhāna he does not know realities and he can only guess what kind of temperament he has. There are qualities such as attachment, aversion, ignorance, and also paññā, understanding of the Dhamma. What temperament do we have? This is only thinking and guessing. Everybody has these dhammas. Only when paññā arises and sati is aware we can know the truth about the different characters of each individual, we can know how our accumulated inclinations are the condition for our own temperament.

Someone may guess about his temperament and he may believe that he should develop a particular object among the four Applications of Mindfulness. He hopes to obtain a result by this way of practice. However, this is not the right condition for knowing the truth of non-self of realities; it is not the way to know all realities thoroughly. Someone may select an object and fix his attention on that object since he believes that he has such or such temperament and that he should therefore develop this particular Application of Mindfulness. At that moment he neglects awareness of all the objects he is used to taking for self. Of what temperament is a person when attachment arises, when aversion arises or

when ignorance arises? All these realities are non-self, anattā. Therefore, the wrong view of self cannot be eradicated by selecting an object someone believes is suitable for his temperament. It is true that in the development of samatha the object of meditation is selected in accordance with someone's character. By the development of samatha defilements are subdued so that calm increases. However, the development of vipassanā is different from the development of samatha and it has a different aim, namely, the eradication of ignorance. Ignorance of realities conditions the wrong view which takes realities for self.

Therefore, in the development of satipaṭṭhāna there should not be any selection of objects of understanding. In the "Path of Discrimination" (Treatise I on Knowledge, Ch 1, Section 1, All), it has been said ⁹:

"Bhikkhus, all is to be directly known. And what is all that is to be directly known? Eye is to be directly known, visible object is to be directly known, eye-consciousness... eye-contact... any feeling that arises with eye-contact as its condition whether pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant is also to be directly known..."

Further on all realities are summed up and it is said that all of them should be known thoroughly, not any reality is excepted.

But Sawong: The venerable Patriarch wishes to express his appreciation, anumodana, to the Thai Buddhists who are a large group brought here by "Mother" Sujin, and who have come to Cambodia to support Buddhism. People here listen to the Dhamma now with great joy and happiness. The Patriarch considers himself as the host receiving his guests who bring along the noble Truths. He wishes to apologize if there is anything lacking or anything which is not as it should be.

Buddhism in this country has only recently be reestablished, since twenty years, because in the time before that it had all disappeared. At the present time the study of the Dhamma has just begun again. Usually people are trying to understand mahā-satipaṭṭhāna and therefore, they have many questions on this subject. Everybody begins to understand the subject of mahā-satipaṭṭhāna. They try to grasp the meaning of satipaṭṭhāna and thus they ask questions all the time about this subject. If there are questions which are not suitable I also wish to apologize to Mother Sujin.

As the host, the Patriarch extends his blessings to everybody of this group and expresses his thankfulness.

Footnotes to Ch 1.

1. The four noble Truths are: dukkha, suffering, the origin of dukkha, the cessation of dukkha which is nibbāna, and the Path leading to the cessation of suffering. At the moment of enlightenment one realizes the four noble Truths, one becomes an ariyan.
2. A Silent Buddha, Pacceka Buddha, is an arahat who has realized the Truth all by himself, but does not have accumulated wisdom to the same degree as the

Sammāsambuddha. The Silent Buddha does not proclaim the Dhamma to the world.

3. I have added the text of this Sutta.

4. Among the four Applications of Mindfulness, in the Application of Mindfulness of the Body, is included a meditation on parts of the body, such as bones.

5. Lokuttara cittas arise at the moment of enlightenment. Only lokuttara cittas are accompanied by all three abstinences, thus by eight Path-factors.

6. The seven cetasikas accompanying each citta are the “Universals” of contact, feeling, remembrance, volition, concentration, life faculty and attention.

7. Rūpas of the body are conditioned by the four factors of kamma, citta, temperature and nutrition.

8. See Visuddhimagga (translated by Ven. Nyanamoli) III, 74 and following. The Visuddhimagga discerns a greedy person, a hateful person, a deluded person, a person of faith, an intelligent person (Buddhi), a ruminating person (with vitakka, thinking, that can be kusala or akusala). Furthermore, there are different combinations of these temperaments.

9. I have inserted the text.

Chapter 2

Discussion in Tuantumpung Temple.

Sujin: Dhamma is reality that can be verified at each moment. The characteristic of hardness or softness that is appearing at the body falls away at the place where it has arisen, and therefore, there is not “I” who is still there. We can only know the truth of realities if we consider, study and investigate the characteristics of the dhammas that are appearing. When we are seeing through the eyesense we should know exactly what characteristic is appearing. It is the same in the case of what appears through the ears, the nose, the tongue, the bodysense and the mind-door. What is appearing at this moment while we are sitting? Paññā is able to know that what appears can appear because it has arisen. If it had not arisen it could not appear.

One should not select any particular object of awareness in the development of paññā. Paññā should be developed for a long time and it should understand all objects so that the wrong view of self can be abandoned. No matter whether we are sitting, lying down, standing or walking, paññā should be developed and it should know all the dhammas appearing through the six doorways.

But Sawong: Ariya Metteyya ¹ is the future Buddha who will attain enlightenment. What is the condition for meeting him?

Sujin: Meeting a Sammāsambuddha is the result of kusala kamma, it is kusala vipāka.

What is the benefit of meeting a Sammāsambuddha, whoever he may be? In the past people met a Sammāsambuddha who had not yet finally passed away, who had not yet attained parinibbāna of the khandhas ². Some people, when they had met him, could attain

enlightenment and thus become ariyans. Other people who met the Sammāsambuddha had wrong view and, thus, for them it was not beneficial to meet him.

Can anybody here say that he in the past had met this Sammāsambuddha? This is not the only life into which we are born. There were also past lives and if we had not listened to the Dhamma in the past we would not have any interest in listening to the Dhamma again.

Be it in the past or at the present time, if people would only see a Buddha but would not listen to the Dhamma, they would not really see him as the Exalted One, the Sammāsambuddha.

Therefore, it is beneficial to see the Sammāsambuddha only when paññā can understand which person is a Sammāsambuddha. It is as the Buddha said: "Whoever sees the Dhamma, sees me". This is true at the time when the Buddha was still alive and also after his final passing away. If someone has not listened to the Dhamma he does not see the excellent qualities of the Buddha that are his wisdom, his compassion and his purity. He does not know the truth the Buddha realized through his paññā when he attained enlightenment. He does not know what the Dhamma is the Buddha explained because of his great compassion. He does not know the purity with which the Buddha explained the Dhamma in order to help beings, without expecting any gain for himself. Therefore, the only way to grasp the Buddha's wisdom at the present time is studying the Dhamma so that one gains understanding of it. When paññā is developed someone can know for himself that only a Sammāsambuddha and nobody else could penetrate through enlightenment the true nature of dhammas and could also explain realities in all details, in all depth, to the people who listened, studied and could have correct understanding of them. Thus, we should understand in conformity with the truth that we can only see the Exalted One, the Sammāsambuddha, if we have understanding of his three excellent qualities, his wisdom, his compassion and his purity.

Buddhists have different inclinations, be they members of our family or friends, or people of different nationalities. Some people take it for granted that, once they are born, they are seeing or hearing, while life takes its course from day to day, and they believe that it is not necessary to have more understanding of life. Some people think that they should not study the Dhamma, since everybody who is born has at times happiness and at times sorrow. For all people life has gone on already for an endlessly long time and will continue like this, without there being an end to it. Is it not true that people never have enough of seeing, hearing, smelling, thinking, dying and being born again? Everybody who is born is subject to old age, pain and death, and he has to be born again, he has to become old again, be sick again, die again, and this has to continue all the time.

People who never have enough of all this will be born again and again. People who suffer may not want to be alive, but so long as there is ignorance of realities, they will be reborn after they part from this world. At this moment many people may not like to be reborn but this is only thinking without paññā. It is paññā that knows the truth that everything which arises must fall away, and it is paññā that knows that there must also be a way leading to the end of the arising and falling away of realities.

Nobody can find by himself the way leading to the end of the cycle of birth and death. If

one would urge others not to be reborn this would be in vain. The paññā of each person should gradually have more understanding of realities, and it is useless to be impatient and follow immediately someone else, without having developed paññā oneself. We have to be reborn again and lead our life in this world, so long as all defilements have not been eradicated. We should thoroughly consider and investigate this fact and we should know that only paññā can be the condition for tranquillity and more happiness.

Paññā is the most precious jewel, it cannot cause us any sorrow. Other precious things such as crystal, rings, silver or gold can cause us sorrow. Even wishing for such precious things is already sorrowful. Paññā, on the contrary, does not bring us any sorrow or suffering. People who hear this may like to have paññā, but where can they find paññā? We should know that paññā is reality, but the question is where and how to acquire paññā. It cannot be bought with money. There is no other way to acquire paññā but by listening patiently to the Dhamma so that understanding can grow. At this moment you have the patience to listen so that paññā grows very gradually. When you have listened to the Dhamma and you have understood even a little, paññā is already developing, and when you have listened more it will grow again. You sit here today to listen, and this is very beneficial, but only listening today is not enough. You should listen more, time and again.

But Sawong: Satipaṭṭhāna is the dhamma, when it is practised, that can lead to the cessation of dukkha. The Buddha taught the four Applications of Mindfulness in the country of the Kurus, in Rose-Apple Land (Jambudīpa Continent). Someone asked whether people who live in the other three Continents³, such as the Continent North of Mount Sineru, have any opportunity to develop satipaṭṭhāna?

Sujin: What is the use of speculating about people who are living in the other Continents, people I do not know. While we are living in this world we should speak about ourselves here and now.

But Sawong: the venerable Abbot of this Temple does not have any questions. He expresses his appreciation of the way you answered the questions, such as the question about the other Continents, explaining that we do not have to think of other Continents because we are living in this world.

Footnotes.

1. See “Dialogues of the Buddha” III, no. 26, “War, Wickedness and Wealth” (Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Sutta), where it is explained that the future Buddha will be Metteyya.
2. Parinibbāna of the khandhas is the final passing away of the Buddha and the arahat, when the khandhas do not arise again in rebirth.
3. There are four human planes where one can be reborn. Apart from the human world where we live, Jambudīpa continent, situated to the South of Mount Sineru, there are three Continents situated to the East, the West and the North of Mount Sineru (see Visuddhimagga VII, 42, footnote 15).

Chapter 3

Dhamma Discussion in the Thudong Temple (Part I).

But Sawong: someone has a question about the thirtyseven factors pertaining to enlightenment, the bodhipakkhiya dhammas. We can enumerate these as follows:

the four applications of mindfulness (satipaṭṭhānas)
the four right efforts (sammā-padhānas)
the four bases of success (iddhi-pādas)
the five “spiritual” faculties (indriyas)
the five powers (balas)
the seven factors of enlightenment (bojjhangas)
the eightfold Path (ariya magga) ¹

In accordance with which section of the Dhamma should these factors be developed? In which way should they be developed so that they are factors pertaining to enlightenment?

Sujin: First of all, we should understand what satipaṭṭhāna is. We should know that sati of satipaṭṭhāna is not sati of the level of dāna, sīla or calm of citta. Sati arises with each type of kusala. We should distinguish between sati of satipaṭṭhāna and sati of other levels of kusala. When we perform dāna, when we give things away, or when we abstain from unwholesomeness, there is sati of these levels of kusala, but this does not mean that one is able to know the truth of the characteristics of realities. Even when the citta is calm, free from akusala, one is not able to realize that it is not self who is calm. Sati of the level of satipaṭṭhāna is different from sati of the other levels of kusala. There can be sati of the level of satipaṭṭhāna when someone listens to the Dhamma and understands the realities at that very moment as not self. The dhammas at this moment are real, but what are their characteristics? The factors pertaining to enlightenment are the dhammas pertaining to the penetration of the true nature of realities through enlightenment, they concern the four noble Truths. Sati that arises when one gives things away or when one abstains from evil by the observance of sīla, is not the indriya (faculty) of sati. Thus, it is not sati as a factor pertaining to enlightenment. However, when sati arises and is aware of the characteristics of realities, it accompanies right understanding, sammā-diṭṭhi, of the eightfold Path. There is at that moment right awareness, sammā-sati, and this is the indriya of sati.

Just now I received many garlands of flowers. The citta of the giver and the citta of the receiver is kusala citta, but, there is not the indriya of sati if there is no awareness of the characteristics of realities as nāma or rūpa.

I would like to speak first about indriyas, faculties, and about satipaṭṭhāna, so that you will have understanding of some of the factors pertaining to enlightenment. Realities which are faculties, indriyas, are “leaders”, each in their own field. Some indriyas are rūpa, such as eyesense or earsense, and some are nāma. Among the indriyas which are nāma there are five which have to be developed, namely: confidence, saddhā, energy, viriya, mindfulness, sati, concentration, samādhi, and paññā. When kusala citta without paññā arises, it is accompanied by confidence, energy, sati and concentration, but these are not indriyas. However, when satipaṭṭhāna arises, the conascent cetasikas of confidence, energy, sati,

concentration and paññā are indriyas. Satipaṭṭhāna does not arise easily, but it is not impossible to develop it. There should be correct understanding of the way to develop paññā, and then sati of satipaṭṭhāna, which is sammā-sati of the eightfold Path, can arise. At this moment realities which are nāma and rūpa are appearing; these arose also in the past and will arise in the future. The person who develops satipaṭṭhāna can know for himself when satipaṭṭhāna arises and when it does not arise. When understanding of nāma and rūpa, and of satipaṭṭhāna is established, there are conditions for satipaṭṭhāna to arise naturally in daily life. If it cannot arise naturally, it is not satipaṭṭhāna.

Therefore, when there is true paññā it can further develop so that it comes to know the real nature of the dhammas appearing at this very moment. Paññā is not the understanding of what has not appeared yet. The development of satipaṭṭhāna is the development of paññā, and there should not be an idea of self who intends to do something particular in order to induce paññā. Then there is no sati which is aware of the characteristic of the dhamma that naturally arises and appears at this moment because of the appropriate conditions. Someone who does not have understanding of satipaṭṭhāna may ask, while he is seeing naturally, what he should do in order to have sati. It is not the right practice if someone wishes to do something particular in order to have sati, because nobody can cause the arising of any reality. People can listen to the Dhamma, they can investigate, consider and understand what they hear, so that they will know that the dhamma appearing at this moment is real, and that it appears through one doorway at a time. Therefore, it is necessary to have more understanding about the realities appearing one at a time through each of the doorways. At this moment, for example, an object is appearing through the eyes and thus, it can be seen. However, if there is no citta, no reality or element that experiences something, thus, a reality which sees, visible object cannot appear. If someone sees naturally but he does not realize the distinction between the characteristic of the object that appears and the reality that sees, vipassanā, insight, is not being developed. Therefore, the only thing people can do is listening to the Dhamma so that they understand correctly that seeing at this moment is only a kind of reality, a dhamma. One should listen, investigate and consider what one hears, so that one can gradually understand that there are only realities, no self. Dhammas are real, they are beyond control, they arise naturally because of their appropriate conditions.

When you are listening at this moment, sati arises, but it may not yet be satipaṭṭhāna. It may be sati of the level of listening and considering, but in that way there will gradually be more understanding. We all know that sati belongs to the khandha of formations or activities, saḍkhāra-khandha², that it is non-self. Sati is not rūpa-khandha, vedanā-khandha (aggregate of feeling) nor saññā-khandha (aggregate of remembrance or perception), but it is saḍkhāra-khandha. Sati is a dhamma that is saḍkhāra-khandha, forming up conditions for the growth of paññā; there is no self who can do anything to cause the development of satipaṭṭhāna. Therefore, when we are listening, conditions are accumulated for the growth of understanding. When we listen and when we have understanding about nāma and rūpa while we are seeing, saḍkhāra-khandha will form up conditions for the arising of direct understanding while we are seeing. When someone understands the characteristics of realities this is not merely theoretical understanding of dhammas or knowing the terms denoting them. When a reality appears there can gradually be a more precise understanding of that characteristic. One can understand seeing as a reality which experiences, as only an element, a characteristic of dhamma which can arise

and see what is appearing. At that moment there is satipaïhãna, but we do not have to name it satipaïhãna. Usually people know first the name satipaïhãna and then they doubt what it exactly is and when it arises. We do not have to use any name, because at this very moment realities are appearing and gradually understanding of their characteristics can be developed. That is satipaïhãna.

At this moment realities are appearing. If sati arises, one will gradually understand the characteristics of those realities. If some people say that that is not satipaïhãna, are they right or wrong? We can only know the true nature of dhammas that we studied already for a long time as explained in the Tipiïaka, the Buddhist scriptures, when sati arises and is aware of the characteristics of those dhammas. When understanding has grown, all the terms as explained in the scriptures will become clearer in conformity with the paññã someone has developed. Thus, through satipaïhãna there will be correct understanding of the characteristics of realities. There will be no other way to understand the true nature of realities as dhãtus, elements or åyatanas, bases ³, or of other realities denoted by different terms in the scriptures. The whole Dhamma the Buddha taught is the truth of realities he realized through his enlightenment. The person who studies in order to know the true nature of realities should develop the paññã that realizes the characteristics of realities that appear. Then he will penetrate the true meaning of all dhammas that have been taught and that he studied, to the extent his paññã has been developed.

Then one can understand even a short saying such as : "there is not, there is, and then there is nothing to be found." Just a moment ago there was no sound, then there is sound, and then sound has disappeared. Thus it can be said: "there is not, there is, and then there is nothing to be found." Realities arise and then they fall away extremely rapidly. Therefore, when something arises, the remembrance of it prevents one from seeing the arising and falling away of realities according to the truth. One is bound to remember it as something lasting. When we listen to the Dhamma we should thoroughly consider and investigate it. We should not just listen to a subject of the Dhamma and then neglect to consider it more. Each word that we hear and understand we should continue to investigate. In that way our understanding can be in conformity with the subjects we shall learn about further on. Even the saying I just referred to, "there is not, there is, and then there is nothing to be found " is miraculous. We should consider that at the moment of bhavanga-citta (life-continuum) nothing appears ⁴. If we do not use the Pali words of the scriptures but only words that we can easily understand, we could ask ourselves, when there is nothing, how can there, after that, be something that appears? The elements that are not self are miraculous. There are the elements of hardness, of sound, of odour, of heat, of cold, of anger, of attachment, of jealousy; everything is only an element. The words dhamma and dhãtu, element, have the same meaning in so far as they have no owner, they do not belong to anybody, they are not self, a being or a person. Each of the elements has its own characteristic that is real. The element of seeing is different from the element of hearing, and the element of hardness is different from the element of odour. Whenever someone knows the truth that all that appears is only an element and that there is nobody, no person, there is paññã that understands the true nature of realities.

Question: Are there among the factors pertaining to enlightenment, bodhipakkhiya dhammas, also factors which are mundane, lokiya?

Sujin: They are both mundane and supramundane (lokuttara) factors.

Question: Dukkha arises and falls away, and evenso, craving, the cause of dukkha, arises and falls away. I want to ask why there is in Buddhism the development of satipaṭṭhāna with the purpose of penetrating dukkha and why is it necessary to abandon clinging? Why is this necessary, because all dhammas arise and then fall away anyway.

Sujin: Nobody forces you to develop understanding. Buddhists listen to the Dhamma because they take their refuge in the Exalted One, the Sammāsambuddha, in the Dhamma and in the ariyan Sangha, the Community of the enlightened persons. All buddhists take their refuge in the Triple Gem. In what way are the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha of the enlightened persons a refuge? If someone says that he venerates the Exalted One, the Sammāsambuddha, without studying the Dhamma and listening to it, is that true respect? At the time when the Buddha had not passed away buddhists would visit him wherever he dwelt, in order to listen to the Dhamma. They wanted to listen because they realized the excellence of the Dhamma and valued it as a treasure. The Buddha explained that whatever arises does so because of the appropriate conditions and that it then falls away. It is dukkha because it is impermanent. It depends on the individual who listens whether he agrees with this or not, whether he is interested to know this or not. However, it is necessary to study the Dhamma first so that one can understand that the Dhamma as explained by the Buddha is entirely true.

Question: A samanera, a novice, asks about the meaning of the four predominant factors (adhipati), and the faculties, indriyas. Both the predominant factors and the faculties are “leaders”, but in what way are they different? Moreover, the four bases of success, iddhipādas, and the four predominant factors are the same dhammas, namely, desire-to-do (chanda), energy (virīya), citta and investigation (vīmaṁsa) which is paññā. In what way are the predominant factors and the bases of success different?

Sujin: The dhammas that are faculties, indriyas, are leaders each as to their own task. Even the rūpa of eyesense, cakkhu-pasāda rūpa, is a faculty, cakkhindriya. It is a leader in so far as it conditions colour to appear when that impinges on the eyesense. The dhamma which is a leader as to its own task is indriya, faculty, and some indriyas are nāma and some are rūpa. The eyesense, cakkhu-pasāda rūpa, is an indriya specifically as it comes into contact with visible object appearing through the eyes at the moment of seeing. Earsense, sota-pasāda rūpa, is an indriya specifically as it comes into contact with sound at the moment of hearing. There are several nāmas that are indriyas, leaders as to their own task, but five indriyas have been explained concerning in particular the development of satipaṭṭhāna, and these are among the bodhipakkhiya dhammas, the factors leading to enlightenment, leading to the penetration of the four noble Truths. These five indriyas or “spiritual faculties” are: confidence, saddhā, energy, virīya, mindfulness, sati, concentration, samādhi, and wisdom, paññā. These five dhammas that are nāma indriyas can arise together. It is different in the case of the predominant factors, adhipati, these cannot arise together. When one of them is predominant, the others cannot be predominant at the same time.

As regards the bases of success, iddhipādas, these are different from the predominant factors. They are factors that are bases of accomplishment, concerning both the development of samatha and the development of vipassanā⁵.

Footnotes.

1. Some of these factors, namely, the bases of success, iddhipādas, and the faculties, indriyas, will be dealt with further on. The four sammā-padhānas, right efforts are: the effort of avoiding akusala, of overcoming akusala, of developing kusala and of maintaining kusala. The five powers, balas, are the same realities as the five spiritual faculties, indriyas, but when the indriyas have been developed so that they are unshakable by their opposites, they have become powers. The seven factors of enlightenment are: sati, investigation of the Dhamma (dhamma-vicaya), energy (virīya), rapture (pīti), tranquillity (passaddhi), concentration (samādhi) and equanimity (upekkhā).
2. Saḍkhāra-khandha is the aggregate or khandha of formations or activities. There are five khandhas: rūpak-khandha or physical phenomena, vedanā-khandha or feelings, saññā-khandha or remembrance, saḍkhāra-khandha, formations or activities, and viññāṇa-khandha including all cittas. All cetasikas other than feeling, vedanā, and remembrance, saññā, are included in saḍkhāra-khandha. Thus, all unwholesome and wholesome qualities are included in it. Sati, accumulated together with other wholesome qualities is saḍkhāra-khandha that forms up conditions for the arising later on of direct understanding of realities.
3. The āyatana are the six inner bases consisting of the five senses and citta, and the six outer bases consisting of the five sense objects and mind-object, dhammāyatana.
4. Bhavanga-citta arises when we are fast asleep and not dreaming, and in between the processes of cittas. It maintains the continuity in the life of an individual. The bhavanga-citta does not experience an object impinging on one of the six doors such as the cittas arising in processes. Thus, at the moment of bhavanga-citta, colour, sound and the other sense objects do not appear. Whereas, when the processes of cittas arise, the sense objects appear through the six doors.
5. The bases of success can lead to the acquiring of the supranatural powers in samatha (Visuddhimagga Ch XII). In vipassanā they are among the factors pertaining to enlightenment.

Chapter 4

Dhamma Discussion in the Thudong Temple (Part II)

Question: When I listened to the Dhamma, I heard that there is no self, being or person. Who is then performing kusala and akusala, since there is no self?

Sujin: Can there be “I” if there are no realities at this moment? Thus, is “I” true or are dhammas true? If akusala dhamma does not arise can there be “I” who is bad?

But Sawong: This has been understood. Could Mother Sujin please give another example explaining about a self or non-self?

Sujin: It is the same in the case of kusala. If kusala dhamma would not arise, could there be “I” who performs kusala? Is kusala dhamma self or is akusala dhamma self? The answer is that kusala dhamma is kusala dhamma and akusala dhamma is akusala dhamma.

However, even when there is no wrong view, and someone does not take kusala or akusala for self, there are still conditions for the arising of all kinds of other akusala dhammas. The sotâpanna (streamwinner, who has reached the first stage of enlightenment) does not have wrong view at all, but for him there are still other akusala dhammas when there are conditions for their arising. Therefore, he should develop paññâ further so that he reaches the second stage of enlightenment, the stage of the sakadâgâmi, the non-returner, and then the third stage of enlightenment, the stage of the anâgâmi, the non-returner, and finally the fourth stage, the stage of the arahat. Then there are no more conditions for the arising of defilements. When the arahat passes finally away, there are no more conditions for the arising of dhammas anymore. This is the fruit of the development of right understanding to the degree of full accomplishment.

Just a moment ago people could answer that akusala dhamma is not “I” and that kusala dhamma is not “I”. This answer stems from theoretical understanding, but paññâ should be developed so that the truth of this fact can be penetrated.

Wrong view is a reality, and thus, people who listen to the Dhamma should be truthful, sincere, with regard to themselves. They should scrutinize themselves as to the extent of the wrong view they have. Paññâ should be developed so that defilements can be eradicated, because there is no other dhamma but paññâ that can eradicate defilements. Lobha (attachment), dosa (aversion or hate) and moha (delusion or ignorance) are realities, all akusala is real. It is possible to eradicate all akusala, but this cannot be achieved by ignorance.

Question: Dhammas arise and then fall away, but they are succeeded by new dhammas. What is the reason that the body of each one of us gradually decays and is subject to old age? Since dhammas are replaced by new ones, why can the body not stay as in childhood, and why are rūpas of the body ageing, what causes ageing?

Sujin: Is fire hot?

But Sawong: It is hot.

Sujin: Is it very hot or lukewarm?

But Sawong: It is very hot.

Sujin: If the fire is only very slight, it cannot burn anything. When someone is newly conceived, the element of fire is only slight, because the body does not have many groups of rūpa, kalapas ¹. As a person grows up, he reaches an age that the element of fire is just right and that his body has beauty. After that the element of fire becomes stronger, it burns more intensively and it is destructive, so that the body is no longer beautiful. Old age appears in the body of those who are in planes of existence that are not the result of refined kusala kamma, such as the heavenly planes and the brahma planes.

Question: Does paññâ that realizes the arising and falling away of dhammas know this in accordance with their duration? A rūpa lasts as long as seventeen moments of citta ², what does paññâ know about this?

Sujin: A rūpa that has its own distinct nature, a sabhâva rūpa ³, lasts as long as seventeen

moments of citta that succeed one another, and then that rúpa falls away.

Question: Does the paññá that sees the arising and falling away of rúpa realizes this during seventeen moments of citta? How can it realize this?

Sujin: Are we at this moment seeing and hearing at the same time?

But Sawong: No, not at the same time.

Sujin: In between the time we see and hear there are rúpas that have arisen and fallen away. The citta that sees and the citta that hears are more than seventeen moments of citta apart from each other. The development of paññá is not a matter of counting moments of citta. The first stage of paññá that should be developed is paññá that clearly distinguishes the difference between nāma dhamma and rúpa dhamma. It should know that rúpa dhamma does not know anything at all, and that nāma dhamma is completely different from rúpa, not blended into it or mixed up with it in any way.

One of the Thais asked whether one can say that the element of fire is the most important element, more important than the other elements. Would Khun But Sawong answer this question?

But Sawong: Just now Mother Sujin spoke about the element of fire or heat that is a condition for the ageing of rúpa to be slow or rapid. The element of fire conditions the rúpas of the body of humans and of heavenly beings, and these bodies are different. The four great elements of earth (solidity), water (cohesion), fire (temperature or heat) and wind (motion or pressure) condition one another ⁴. The element of fire is dependant on the other three great elements that are the proximate cause for its arising, it could not arise without them. But the slow or rapid ageing of rúpa is specifically conditioned by the element of fire. The element of fire that originates from kamma ⁵ performs also the function of the digestion of food. Thus, the element of fire performs functions regarding rúpas of the body, it causes the nutritive essence in food to support the body. It causes this body to age and it performs the function of the digestion of food. Can we say that its importance is in accordance with its functions?

Sujin: Yes, one can.

Question: Jealousy and stinginess are dhammas that are the condition for ill-will among humans and also among devas. In what way can stinginess condition ill-will of one person towards another person? Because there is stinginess only with regard to one's own possessions.

Sujin: Does anybody like a person who is stingy? Aversion, that includes anger or vengefulness, only increases because of stinginess. When someone has more and more stinginess, it creates conditions for other people to have more aversion about it. The aversion that arises is likely to condition evil deeds through body and speech, so that there is more ill-will among people.

Question: Is it necessary for the development of satipañhāna that there is first kusala of the

level of sīla (morality) as foundation?

Sujin: There may be a great deal of sīla, but if someone has no understanding of realities, satipaṭṭhāna cannot arise. Sīla is conduct through body and speech and there are many kinds and degrees of sīla. The five precepts, for example, include the abstaining from ill deeds that harm others through body or speech. Sometimes people have the intention (cetanā) to abstain from evil deeds, they decide not to kill, not to steal or commit other evil deeds, but they can only abstain for a certain period of time. Sometimes they believe that they have to perform wrong deeds, and thus there are conditions for them to do so. The sīla that include the five precepts, the eight precepts or, in the case of monks, restraint with regard to the Disciplinary Code (pāṇimokkha saóvara sīla), concern only conduct through body or speech. However, when paññā is developed that knows the characteristics of realities as they appear one at a time through the six doors, there is the guarding of the sense faculties, indriya saóvara sīla. When there is awareness of realities that appear through the eyes, the ears, the nose, the tongue, the bodysense or the mind-door, there is actually training in higher sīla (adhi sīla sikkhā) and even if a slight degree of akusala citta would arise, it could not condition any motion of the body to perform a bad deed, and one is able to know with sati sampajañña (sati and paññā) the characteristic of the reality appearing at that moment. Thus, there is indriya saóvara sīla, the guarding of the six doors, when someone is aware of the characteristics of realities appearing through the senses and the mind-door. Then he develops the paññā that knows the true nature of realities. When someone has attained the state of the sotāpanna he will not transgress any more the five precepts.

Question: If one develops satipaṭṭhāna, the objects of satipaṭṭhāna are ultimate realities, paramattha dhammas. But I have a question about the rules of Discipline (sikkhāpada) for the monk. As regards restraint with regard to the Disciplinary Code (pāṇimokkha saóvara sīla), this has only concepts as objects. If one practises this, can one realize nibbāna?

Sujin: The life of the monk is different from the life of the layman. The layman does not have to observe the restraint of the Disciplinary Code. The monk can commit offences (āpatti) against the rules of Discipline, and this is not so in the case of the layman. Since the life of the monk is different from the life of the layman, he has to observe the Disciplinary Code, and that is his ordinary daily life. He lives his daily life in accordance with the Vinaya, and thus, he has eyes, ears, nose, tongue, bodysense and mind-door, and these are paramattha dhammas. Therefore, when there are the right conditions, right mindfulness (sammā-sati), can arise, and the characteristics of realities can be known.

Bhikkhu: I have a question about nāma and rúpa. The Visuddhimagga (XVIII, 35) gives an example of nāma and rúpa which are dependent on each other, just as a blind man and a cripple who are both handicapped but who can travel when they support each other. Summarizing, I would like to ask, how can rúpa and nāma be distinguished from each other at the first stage of tender insight?

Sujin: We should know that rúpa is reality, but that it does not know anything. Whereas nāma that arises can cognize everything. While we are seeing at this moment, eyesense does not see, the visible object that appears does not see, but the dhamma that sees is the element that knows or experiences. It is nāma dhamma that arises and sees. Whatever

nāma dhamma arises must experience an object, it can know any object that appears. If there would only be rūpa dhamma at this moment, there would not be seeing, nothing could appear here. However, there is seeing at this very moment, and the reality of seeing is an element that experiences, it is nāma dhamma.

Question: The venerable Abbot has a question about the six Recollections that are meditation subjects, namely, the Recollections of the Buddha, of the Dhamma, of the Sangha, of Virtue, of Generosity and of the Deities.

Enlightened people can develop these subjects in a profound way so that they reach access concentration (upacāra samādhi) ⁶. Can ordinary people develop these subjects?

Sujin: They can develop them. It has been explained that only ariyans can develop these subjects to the degree of access concentration, but this shows that ordinary people can develop these Recollections, although they cannot attain access concentration with them.

But Sawong: Is it not also necessary to study the Dhamma so that one knows what the excellent qualities of the Buddha are?

Sujin: Indeed. Everybody recites the words “namo tassa”, may there be honour to the Exalted One, the Buddha. But to what extent is there respect if someone does not know the excellent qualities of the Buddha? If someone does not know about these qualities because he did not study the Dhamma, his respect is not much. If someone studies the Dhamma he can have understanding of the Buddha’s wisdom, his compassion and his purity. Even if he utters only a few words of respect while he reflects on the Buddha’s virtues, he pays a greater respect than the person who did not study the Dhamma.

Question: Is the confidence in the Triple Gem the same in the case of the persons who attain the subsequent stages of enlightenment, namely, the streamwinner (sotāpanna), the once-returner (sakadāgāmi), the non-returner (anagāmi) and the arahat, or is it different?

Sujin: Confidence (saddhā) is confidence. However, confidence will increase to the extent defilements are eradicated at the subsequent stages of enlightenment.

Acharn But Sawong asks Acharn Sujin to extend merit, to let other beings share in the kusala that has been performed.

Sujin: I want to extend the kusala that has been accomplished today to the ancestors, to parents, to other members of the family and to friends who have passed away. I want to extend kusala also to heavenly beings and other non-human beings. May they rejoice in the kusala and have appreciation of it.

After that the monks, the novices, the layfollowers, men and women, chant a recitation of blessings to the group.

Footnotes:

1. Rúpas arise and fall away in groups, kalapas. In the case of humans, at the first moment of life three kalapas consisting each of ten rúpas that are produced by kamma arise: one kalapa with the heart-base, one with bodysense and one with sex.
- 2 . When the duration of rúpa is compared to the duration of citta, rúpa lasts as long as seventeen moments of citta. Thus, a rúpa that is a sense object can be experienced by the different cittas arising in a sense-door process.
3. Some rúpas are sabhava rúpas, rúpas with their own distinct characteristic or nature. Other rúpas are asabhava rúpas, rúpas that do not have their own distinct nature, such as special qualities of rúpas.
4. The four great Elements always arise together with the other rúpas in each group or kalapa.
5. There are four factors that produce rúpa: kamma, citta, temperature and nutrition.
6. Access concentration can arise when calm has been developed to a high degree. It is not yet of the degree of jhāna, absorption concentration.

Chapter 5

Dhamma Discussion in the Tuan Toompong Temple

But Sawong: as we have read in the Mahā-Satipaṭṭhāna sutta, the Buddha explained that the monk should consider and see the body in the body, feeling in feeling, citta in citta and dhamma in dhamma. How should we understand the wording such as the body in the body?

Sujin: If there would not be the body, how could one see that the body is the body? There is the body, but if someone does not see it as the body, he should develop paññā in order to know that the body is the body. He should see the body in the body, not the body in the feeling, or the body in the citta. There is the body but someone may not see the body as it is. Therefore it is necessary to develop paññā in order to know that the body is merely the body, that it is anattā, non-self, that it is a reality which is not self. In the same way one should see feeling in feeling. There is feeling but one does not know that feeling is not self, and therefore one should develop paññā in order to know that feeling is only a reality that feels, not “I”, not self. That is the meaning of seeing feeling in feeling; one should not see feeling in citta or feeling in the body. We should have correct understanding of the wording of the sutta. We should know that body is body, not “I”, feeling is feeling, not “I”, citta is citta, not “I”, and dhamma is dhamma, not “I”. When we hear the words of the sutta we should investigate whether these words are right or wrong.

But Sawong: Therefore, the words, “seeing the body in the body” mean that the body is not feeling nor citta.

Sujin: Seeing the body in the body means, not seeing the body as “I”.

But Sawong: Everybody has heard the term satipaṭṭhāna, and sometimes also the term vipassanā. One may wonder what the difference is between satipaṭṭhāna and vipassanā. There are two kinds of tasks in Buddhism: the occupation with the texts, that is, the study of the Buddha's words, and the task of vipassanā, the development of vipassanā.

Sujin: Vipassanā is the paññā that clearly penetrates the characteristics of dhammas and knows them as they are. When people hear about the characteristics of the realities that are citta, cetasika and rūpa, they do not penetrate the characteristics of these dhammas. They merely hear about the different dhammas which are citta, cetasika and rūpa. This does not mean that there is paññā that clearly realizes the characteristics of citta, cetasika and rūpa. The right cause, thus, paññā, should be developed so that the characteristics of citta, cetasika and rūpa can be realized as they are. Paññā cannot arise immediately if it has not been developed first. Paññā should gradually be developed and then it can grow a little at a time. If someone says that it is not necessary to develop paññā and that one does not need to know much in order to clearly realize the characteristics of dhammas, can we believe him? If that were true the paññā of the Sammāsambuddha and his teaching would be of no use, it would not have any meaning. However, the Buddha taught the Dhamma for fortyfive years, he taught the Dhamma also to us who are living at this time.

If we had developed a great deal of paññā in the past it would not be necessary for us to listen to the Dhamma today. People may have acquired a great deal of worldly knowledge, but if they would learn about the Dhamma, the teaching of the Sammāsambuddha, they could immediately realize that they do not know anything. The worldly knowledge they acquired is different from the teaching of the Buddha. Thus, in order to clearly realize the true nature of the characteristics of dhammas people should start at the very beginning. What should they begin to develop? They should develop understanding. Understanding of what? It should be the understanding of the characteristics of the dhammas that are true, in accordance with what one has heard. But there should be sati sampajañña (sati and paññā) that begins to be aware of the characteristics of ultimate realities, paramattha dhammas, and this is satipaṭṭhāna. If the development of paññā is not in this way, someone may continue to speak and think about the fact that citta, cetasika and rūpa are impermanent, that they arise and then fall away, but this is merely theoretical understanding of realities that stems from listening. This is not sufficient, it is not the way leading to the realization of the four noble Truths. There are three levels of the understanding of the Dhamma that has been taught, namely, the level of study, pariyatti, the level of practice, paṭipatti, and the level of the direct realization of the truth, paṭivedha. The first level is pariyatti, the study of the theory about realities. When right understanding of the realities that appear and that arise and fall away has become more firmly established, it is the condition for the arising of sati that studies realities with awareness. Then one will gradually understand the true nature of realities as they are appearing one at a time. This is satipaṭṭhāna, or, it can be called the practice, paṭipatti, that is the second level of understanding. The Pāli term paṭipatti can mean going towards ¹. When sati arises it goes specifically towards such or such characteristic of a paramattha dhamma that is appearing.

Whenever sati arises and is aware at this moment of a characteristic of a reality, there is the development of the Path, that is the eightfold Way, but usually five pathfactors are developed ². This is the way leading to the realization of the four noble Truths. The Sammāsambuddha walked this way and also his enlightened disciples walked this way,

even until this moment. When satipaṭṭhāna arises it is aware of the characteristics of realities that are appearing, and it is not important whether it frequently arises or not so often. It is essential that there is gradually correct understanding of the characteristics of realities, so that one day the truth can be known, that is, the clear realization of the nature of the arising and falling away of realities.

At this moment realities are appearing, they are arising and falling away. It seems that people are waiting for paññā to be accomplished, so that it can clearly know the arising and falling away of realities. However, realities arise and fall away extremely rapidly, and therefore, one should not think of what is past already. People should not think of what has not yet arisen, they should not wonder when realities will be known as they are. There is reality at this moment with its own characteristic, reality that has naturally arisen at this moment. When paññā has become more accomplished, the moment will come that it is able to realize the true nature of realities, but that will take a long time. Can one wait such a long time? It will not be today nor tomorrow. Is it possible to realize the truth during this life? There is nobody who can answer this question except oneself. At this moment realities are appearing, and if a person is truthful, he should realize whether he understands them or not, whether sati is aware of them or not. If awareness and understanding do not yet arise, he should continue to listen again to the Dhamma, because there is no other way, and he should know the realities that are appearing and nothing else. As has been explained by the Buddha, the knife handle will wear out as someone holds it, but he does not know how much has been worn away each day. Even so a person does not know how much of the defilements has been worn away each day. In the “Kindred Sayings” (III, Khandhā-vagga, Middle Fifty, Ch 5, §101, Adze-handle) the Buddha explained that the āsavas (defilements) can only be destroyed if one realizes the true nature of the five khandhas, their arising and falling away. But this cannot be achieved if one merely wishes for the eradication but is neglectful in the development of the factors of enlightenment. If one is attentive to the development of these factors the āsavas will wear away. We read that the Buddha said ³:

Just as if, monks, when a carpenter or carpenter’s apprentice looks upon his adze-handle and sees thereon his thumb-mark and his finger-marks he does not thereby know: “Thus and thus much of my adze-handle has been worn away today, thus much yesterday, thus much at other times.” But he knows the wearing away of it just by its wearing away. Even so, monks, the monk who dwells attentive to self-training has not this knowledge: “Thus and thus much of the āsavas has been worn away today, thus much yesterday, and thus much at other times.” But he knows the wearing away of them just by their wearing away....

The dhammas that are true are appearing and paññā can develop so that it can realize their true nature.

Suppose we go from this moment back to the past four incalculable periods and a hundred thousand aeons, to the time of the Sammāsambuddha Dīpaṅkara. He proclaimed the brahman Sumedha, after four incalculable periods and a hundred thousand aeons ⁴, to be the Sammāsambuddha Gotama. People at that time who listened to this proclamation were delighted and glad, because, although they would not be able to realize the four noble Truths at the time of the Sammāsambuddha Dīpaṅkara, they would still have an opportunity to listen to a following Buddha, the Sammāsambuddha Gotama. During the

period of four incalculable periods and a hundred thousand aeons, there were, after the Sammāsambuddha Dīpaòkara, twentythree other Buddhas. Several people among those who had accumulated the perfections during the same period as the Buddha Gotama, could become his disciples, and some of the laypeople who had listened to the Dhamma before, were likely to be layfollowers again at the time when the recluse Gotama attained Buddhahood. This shows that the paññā of each person is of a different degree. Nobody can know, if he has not attained enlightenment today, when he will attain it. If we go back to the past four incalculable periods and a hundred thousand aeons, there were layfollowers at that time and these may also at this time be layfollowers who have not realized yet the four noble Truths. If we go forward to the future four incalculable periods and a hundred thousand aeons, people do not know either whether they will attain enlightenment. But if we had never listened to the Dhamma, we would not be listening at this moment, today. We should not think of the future. Because one citta at a time arises and falls away, and then it conditions the arising of the next citta. There can at this moment be right understanding of the Dhamma one hears, but one should know that the only way of practice is to continue developing paññā while satipaìhāna arises, so that the characteristics of dhammas can be realized as they are. Thus, people should not worry about it at what time paññā can become accomplished. Because surely at this moment there is this degree of paññā, not more, and therefore paññā should be developed so that it can increase.

If someone knows the cause that brings its appropriate result he will not be anxious. When the right cause has been developed the appropriate result will arise. If a person is anxious and struggles to find another way, there is no paññā. There is attachment (lobha), clinging to the idea of “I”, of self. Some people look for a shortcut and ask whether there is such a way. One should know, when someone looks for a shortcut, that that is a way of delusion, that clinging will cause him to go astray even more. Instead of reaching the goal rapidly he will slow down. It is essential to have firm understanding of the fact that the four noble Truths are profound, difficult to penetrate. The development of paññā, that is, the development of the eightfold Path, is not easy at all. People should not believe that they can develop the eightfold Path without any understanding. Satipaìhāna is the only way to develop the paññā that knows all kinds and degrees of attachment, so that attachment can be eradicated.

But Sawong: someone has a question about the Commentary to the Satipaìhāna Sutta, the “Papañcasúdaní”. After the people of Kuru had listened to the Satipaìhāna Sutta, they performed their daily work as usual. They had the opportunity to meet one another and ask one another what subject of the development of satipaìhāna they found difficult. However, they did not ask one another about awareness of the reality that was appearing. Just as at that time, people today develop only a particular Application of Mindfulness according to their preference.

Sujin: Is there anything that is not satipaìhāna? Is there any reality at this moment that is not satipaìhāna?

But Sawong: There is no reality that is not satipaìhāna.

Sujin: Is sati non-self or is it self?

But Sawong: Sati is non-self, anattā.

Sujin: Since sati is anattā it can arise at any time. Sati can be aware of any reality at this moment, is that not so? The realities sati is not aware of arise and then fall away completely. However, there are conditions for the arising again and again of realities that appear through eyes, ears, nose, tongue, bodysense and mind-door. Thus, when a reality appears sati can be aware of its characteristic. If sati is not aware of what appears now and what can be seen at this moment, of what is it aware? If sati is not aware of sound and of hearing that appear now, of what is it aware? Of what is sati aware if it is not of the reality at this moment? Does paññā know something other than the reality that appears now? One should study for the right purpose, one should not study without knowing why one studies. Some people say that they study in order to realize nibbāna. Others say that they study in order to realize the four noble Truths and to become an ariyan, an enlightened person. However, if one does not know the characteristic of the reality that is appearing at this moment, one cannot become enlightened. Therefore, the goal of the study is right understanding of the true nature of realities in daily life. They are not “I”, not self, not a person; they are only dhammas or elements (dhātus) that appear one at a time. One should study in order to realize the truth of the dhammas that appear.

But Sawong: someone has a question about the subject of the hindrances. In the Commentary to the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta, on the Application of Mindfulness of Dhammas, in the section on the hindrances, it has been explained that there are six factors leading to the abandoning of the hindrance of sense-desire, kāmaccanda⁵. Among these is the taking up of an unauspicious subject of meditation, that which is foul, asubha. The questioner asks about the mental image of asubha (nimitta) and the way of development of asubha. How should one study this subject and practise it? He only has a mental image of asubha⁶, he does not go out to the cemetery in order to look at a corpse. Can he really develop the meditation subject of asubha?

Sujin: Generally people think of the name asubha, but we have to know what the development of asubha really is. There are two kinds of development: samatha and vipassanā. The goal of the development of samatha is the suppression of defilements, of desire of what is experienced through the senses and the mind-door. If one does not see pleasant things how could there be attachment to what one does not see? But when a person sees what is pleasant, delight, attachment and clinging arise. Then he can know that there is a great deal of clinging the whole day. From the moment he opens his eyes and he gets up in the morning, he clings already through eyes, ears, nose, tongue, bodysense and mind-door. Realizing this is a degree of paññā.

Before the enlightenment of the Sammāsambuddha, there wasn't anybody who knew the way leading to the complete eradication of defilements. Therefore, people looked for other ways to suppress defilements. There were several ways by which one tried to suppress clinging to the sense objects. However, neither samatha nor vipassanā can be developed without paññā and sati, without clear comprehension (sampajañña). Why does one have to wait for the occasion to see a foul object, asubha? When at this moment akusala citta arises, sati sampajañña is able to know this and when kusala citta arises, it knows the condition for the arising of kusala. It is not necessary to wait for the occasion to develop

asubha. If the citta has no calm at this moment, it is not kusala citta. One can find out when and in which way there can be calm. There are forty meditation subjects of samatha, asubha is not the only meditation subject. When there is kusala citta there cannot be delight that accompanies clinging and one does not have to worry about the selection of asubha as meditation subject. People who wait for an opportunity for the arising of kusala citta are neglectful. One should not wait for the arising of kusala citta or select a particular object that can condition the arising of kusala citta.

Footnotes.

1. Patti means going along and pañi means towards.
2. These five factors are: right understanding, right thinking, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration. The other three factors of right speech, right action and right livelihood, which are the three abstinences, virati cetikas, arise only one at a time when the citta is of the sense sphere. When lokuttara citta, supramundane citta, arises, the three abstinences arise all at the same time, and then nibbāna is the object. While they accompany the lokuttara magga-citta they eradicate the conditions for wrong speech, wrong action and wrong livelihood, and fulfill their functions as path factors. Thus, only the lokuttara citta is accompanied by all eight path factors.
3. I inserted the Sutta and the words preceding this quotation.
4. The Bodhisatta developed the perfections during four incalculable periods and a hundred thousand aeons so that he could become the Sammāsambuddha.
5. This commentary has been translated by Ven. Soma in "The Way of Mindfulness" B.P.S. Kandy, Sri Lanka. The six factors leading to the abandoning of sense-desire are: taking up the sensuously inauspicious subject of meditation; application for the development of the jhāna on this meditation subject; the guarded state of the controlling faculties of sense; moderation in food; the sympathy and support of good men in the endeavour; stimulating talk that helps the accomplishment of the object in view.
6. When, in the development of samatha, concentration has become more developed, one acquires a mental image, nimitta, of the meditation subject.

Chapter 6.

Dhamma Discussion in the Sam Paothong Temple (Part I).

But Sawong: Upasika Ompek has a question about equanimity, tatramajjhatañā, and indifferent feeling, upekkhā. In what way are these different? Are they related to the development of satipañhāna?

Sujin: The cetika tatramajjhatañā is wholesome, it is a sobhana cetika. Its characteristic is evenmindedness or neutrality, it does not incline to any kind of akusala. Tatramajjhatañā arises whenever the citta is sobhana (beautiful) citta. Usually the citta is accompanied by lobha or dosa, it is unsteady; it goes after what appears through the eyes, the ears, the nose, the tongue, the bodysense or the mind-door. However, when sobhana citta arises it is accompanied by tatramajjhatañā cetika. Then there is the reality that is evenmindedness, a dhamma that is wholesome. Tatramajjhatañā, evenmindedness, has the characteristic of upekkhā, that is, equanimity or neutrality. We notice in a day situations of beings and people who cause us to have a great deal of happy feeling or of unhappy

feeling. However, when tatramajjhataṭṭā, neutrality or evenmindedness, arises, we understand that different kammās produce their appropriate results in the case of these beings, that beings are heirs to kamma.

The term upekkhā, equanimity, has several meanings ¹. Upekkhā can refer to the feeling that is neither happy nor unhappy, to indifferent feeling; thus, it can be the cetasika that is feeling, vedanā. It can also refer to paññā cetasika in the development of vipassanā, paññā that is neutral towards the realities arising because of conditions. Therefore, when we have equanimity, this can be indifferent feeling or it can be tatramajjhataṭṭā cetasika, or it can be paññā in the development of vipassanā. We should know that the dhammas that arise together have many different degrees and that they perform each their own function.

But Sawong: The Sammāsambuddha taught that all conditioned realities are impermanent, dukkha and anattā. The cetasika of lobha, attachment, is the second noble Truth, the Truth of the origin of dukkha. Since lobha is not the first noble Truth, the Truth of dukkha, how can it be dukkha?

Sujin: The Dhamma the Buddha taught cannot be anything else but the truth. When he taught that all conditioned realities are dukkha, this cannot be wrong, it must be correct. It is impossible that the reality which arises because of the appropriate conditions does not fall away. What falls away is dukkha, unsatisfactory. Therefore, all conditioned realities are dukkha, even the lokuttara citta arises and falls away and is therefore dukkha. When one develops the paññā that will realize the four noble Truths, one should also understand the dhamma that is cause and the dhamma that is result. The Buddha taught cause and result of realities. Paññā that arises can understand the characteristics of realities at this moment, thus, the realities that are appearing. When lokuttara citta does not yet arise, one cannot directly understand that lokuttara citta is dukkha, a conditioned reality that arises and falls away. When lokuttara citta does not arise and appear, one cannot be aware of it. However, sati can arise, consider and be aware of all kinds of other cittas, such as the citta with desire or the citta without desire.

It is true that all conditioned realities that arise and fall away are dukkha. But what is the cause of dukkha? There must be a cause of all the realities that arise. The cause of all dukkha is lobha cetasika. The Buddha taught this so that we can know that so long as we do not realize the characteristic of lobha, lobha cannot yet be eradicated and we cannot realize the four noble truths. We should correctly understand that the Buddha taught cause and result of realities and that he taught their functions. We should investigate and understand dukkha so that we know the truth. When we develop paññā, paññā should also understand lobha as the cause of dukkha, otherwise lobha can never be eradicated. Therefore, the Buddha pointed out lobha is the very cause of this whole mass of dukkha. If we do not see this, lobha cannot be eradicated.

If people merely wish to eradicate lobha, it cannot be eradicated. Only paññā that has been developed can see lobha as it is and eradicate lobha. Lobha can only be eradicated stage by stage. Clinging that arises together with wrong view as to the development of paññā should also be eradicated. In the development of satipaṭṭhāna, understanding should lead to detachment, from the beginning to the end; only understanding can bring about detachment. Some people erroneously believe that there is another way of development, but if understanding does not arise there is no way to eradicate lobha or other kinds of

akusala. It is impossible to develop paññā without knowing or understanding anything. Paññā is correct understanding and this begins with listening to the Dhamma so that understanding can grow. When sati arises and is aware of the characteristics of realities that are appearing paññā can come to know them as they are. That is true paññā.

The understanding of the four noble Truths is not merely knowing them by name: the noble truth of dukkha, of the arising of dukkha, of the cessation of dukkha and of the way leading to the cessation of dukkha. The understanding of them is not merely remembering these terms or reciting them by heart. There should first be the understanding of them that stems from carefully listening to their explanation in all details. It has been explained in the Scriptures that the four noble Truths are very profound and that they are hard to penetrate. This has been stated so that Buddhists would not erroneously think that the development of paññā which penetrates the noble Truths is easy. It has been explained that there are three rounds of realizing the noble Truths: sacca-ñāua or the firm foundation knowledge, kicca-ñāua or the practice and kata-ñāua or the realization of the truth². This shows that it is not easy to penetrate the four noble Truths. There should be right understanding of the development of satipaṭṭhāna, and only thus the four noble truths can be realized. If one does not understand the three rounds of realizing the noble Truths, one will have wrong understanding and believe in a self who can develop paññā and realize the four noble Truths.

But Sawong: One of the bhikkhus has a question concerning lobha, dosa and moha. Can these take beings to nibbāna and in what way?

Sujin: If that would be the case it would not be necessary to develop paññā, since everybody has lobha, dosa and moha.

But Sawong: The development of the four satipaṭṭhānas, such as seeing the body in the body, is the development of paññā that realizes the khandhas of clinging as dukkha. Thus, the development of this kind of paññā is actually the understanding of realities as dukkha. Does the understanding of dukkha include the understanding of the khandhas of clinging as dukkha? Are these ways of understanding the same?

Sujin: There are many degrees of paññā, there is lokiya paññā, mundane paññā, and lokuttara paññā, supramundane paññā. When nibbāna is not the object of paññā, paññā is mundane, and it can know the characteristics of the realities which are the khandhas of clinging. So long as paññā has not reached the degree of lokuttara paññā it cannot yet completely eradicate defilements. Paññā of the level of dāna, generosity, sīla, morality, or the development of samatha cannot eradicate defilements, but only paññā of the level of satipaṭṭhāna that has been fully developed can lead to the end of the cycle of birth and death.

Footnotes

1. See Acharn Sujin's "Survey of Paramattha Dhammas, Appendix to Cetasika, where it has been explained that there are ten kinds of equanimity, upekkhā (Visuddhimagga IV, 156-1660). It can refer, for example, to tatramajjhataṭṭā, to indifferent feeling, to

equanimity of effort, viriya, that is neither over strenuous nor lax in mental development. It can refer to paññā that is equanimity in vipassanā. Paññā is neutral as it investigates the object that arises because of the appropriate conditions.

2. The three rounds of the four noble Truths have been explained in the Commentary to the “Kindred Sayings” (Mahā-vagga, Book XII, Ch 2, §1), the “Sāratthappakāsinī”. As to sacca-ñāṇa, sacca means truth and ñāṇa means knowledge. It is the firm foundation knowledge of the truth that should be known. As to kicca-ñāṇa, kicca means function or task. This is the knowledge of the task that should be performed, the development of understanding. As to kata-ñāṇa, kata means what has been done. It is the knowledge of what has been understood and what has been abandoned.

Chapter 7

Dhamma Discussion in the Sam Paothong Temple (Part II)

But Sawong: For people who develop satipaṭṭhāna it is natural that sometimes the sense-door process is hidden by the mind-door process and that one therefore cannot see realities as they are. How does that happen? I ask this to help people not to go the wrong way.

Sujin: At this moment realities are appearing, such as seeing arising in the eye-door process. However, people do not know the true nature of what appears, they take what they see for people and things. Therefore, the thinking on account of what was seen, thus, the thinking of people and things, hides the truth. One does not realize that dhammas appear for an extremely short moment, that they arise and then fall away immediately. Thus, when there is thinking that arises in a mind-door process the truth of the experiences through the sense-doors is not evident. At this moment it is not evident that what appears through the eyes falls away. It seems that one sees all the time, but in reality there are cittas of a mind-door process arising and falling away in succession in between the citta that sees and the citta that hears, and these cittas arise each in a different sense-door process.

When we speak about the eye-door, people understand, because they are seeing. When we speak about the ear-door, people understand because they are hearing. When we smell the fragrant odour of a flower, there is an experience through the nose-door. A delicious or an unsavoury flavour is a rūpa that appears through the tongue-door. At this moment heat, cold, softness or hardness appear through the bodysense. However, one does not know that when each of these sense-door processes has fallen away, a mind-door process has to succeed that sense-door process immediately, after there have been bhavanga-cittas in between. Thus, at this moment it seems that there is seeing and then immediately hearing, and one does not know when the mind-door process arises. There are different sense-door processes arising and falling away one after the other, and this can be known because there is a mind-door process in between. However, that does not mean that one realizes the characteristic of the mind-door process. One may merely know in theory that when a sense-door process does not arise and there are only cittas which are thinking, that there are at such moments cittas arising in a mind-door process.

But Sawong: Can satipaṭṭhāna arise in a sense-door process?

Sujin: Let us speak about the different processes. At this moment there is an eye-door process and an ear-door process. Can sati arise? When sati of satipaṭṭhāna arises, of what characteristic of reality is it aware?

But Sawong: I would like to ask whether satipaṭṭhāna can occur during the kusala javana-cittas of the eye-door process or the ear-door process? ²

Sujin: I would like to explain that if there is paññā that understands the dhammas appearing at this moment, it can realize that, when there is seeing, there is visible object that appears, and that the citta which sees at this moment is a reality that experiences. Can satipaṭṭhāna arise? At this moment I do not speak about the theory, I speak about the characteristics that really appear and that can be understood. If someone would ask whether satipaṭṭhāna could arise in a sense-door process, he should understand, while seeing now, that seeing arises in a sense-door process. It is the same in the case of hearing, or the experience of softness, hardness, cold or heat through the bodysense at this moment. These experiences arise in sense-door processes. Can satipaṭṭhāna arise? We should carefully consider and investigate the Dhamma we have heard. It is not sufficient to just listen and to agree with what one has heard. We must investigate whether it is the truth we have heard or not. If satipaṭṭhāna arises now of what is it aware?

If satipaṭṭhāna does not arise, the nāma and rūpa of just a moment ago have fallen away, but people did not derive any benefit from them since they did not realize the true nature of those dhammas. If satipaṭṭhāna does arise, it is not aware of anything else but the characteristic of the reality that is appearing at this moment through whatever doorway. When satipaṭṭhāna arising with mahā-kusala citta ³ in a mind-door process knows a characteristic of a reality appearing through one of the six doorways, it does not arise in the same process as that reality. When satipaṭṭhāna arising in a mind-door process investigates a characteristic of rūpa, it realizes rūpa that appears through one of the sense-doors. If satipaṭṭhāna is aware of a nāma dhamma, it knows a nāma that arose and fell away. That nāma arose and fell away, but that characteristic still appears, so that it can be studied and correctly understood as a characteristic of nāma dhamma, different from rūpa dhamma. The arising and falling away of realities is extremely rapid.

Is there anybody who can, while there is seeing, discern the eye-door process that has fallen away, the bhavanga-cittas that arise in between sense-door process and mind-door process, and the mind-door process cittas that experience what appeared through the eye-door? Is there anybody who can distinguish between the sense-door process and the mind-door process? When softness or hardness is appearing, and sati is aware of the characteristic that appears, can anybody tell through which doorway that characteristic appears? The paññā that can distinguish the difference between the mind-door and the sense-door must be insight-knowledge, vipassanā ñāna ⁴.

If one asks a person who studies the Dhamma in which kinds of processes mahā-kusala citta can arise, the answer is in the sense-door processes and in the mind-door process. It can be known when mahā-kusala citta accompanied by paññā arises in a sense-door process, because at that moment paññā knows a

characteristic of rúpa. When satipañhāna is aware and studies the characteristics of realities that appear so that they can be understood, it isn't that there are no realities appearing through the sense-doors. When satipañhāna arises in a mind-door process it can also arise alternately in a sense-door process⁵. Paññā that accompanies kusala citta arising in a mind-door process can gradually have more understanding of realities, and it can also penetrate the true nature of rúpa.

But Sawong: Should there be sīla, morality, before one develops satipañhāna?

Sujin: If there is only sīla but no understanding one cannot develop satipañhāna.

But Sawong: Someone has a question about satipañhāna. In the Satipañhāna Sutta, in the section on the four kinds of Clear Comprehension, it is explained that there should be clear comprehension while standing, walking, sitting and lying down. The question is, who walks, whose walking is it, depending on what can one walk? These questions are asked so that one can know in what way there can be sati.

Sujin: If one thinks, I am walking, is that correct? At this moment nobody walks, but people are sitting. Is it correct to think, I am sitting? If someone has right understanding, it does not mean that he just thinks that he has right understanding, but there must be realities appearing and he should correctly understand the characteristics of those realities. However, if someone is not aware of the reality that appears but he merely thinks, there is no "I", no self, is that the true realization of anattā? If someone is merely thinking that there is no self, he does not benefit from the teaching of the Sammāsambuddha who attained the truth by his enlightenment. He may merely be thinking, "It is not I who is sitting."

The Buddha realized through his enlightenment the true nature of realities. There must be characteristics of realities that appear, but we never knew this before. We had wrong understanding, because we took realities for self. Paññā, right understanding, can begin to develop when we have listened to the Dhamma the Buddha explained. He explained the characteristics of the dhammas he had penetrated through his enlightenment. That is why we can understand that there are realities. We all are inclined to take the rúpas of the body from head to toe for self. Even when those rúpas do not appear, we know through remembrance that we have a body. At this moment people perceive that there is a self, and this is wrong remembrance of self, attā-saññā. When one does not know the truth and takes the rúpas of the body for self, what rúpa does one take for self? Can anybody tell which rúpa of the body he takes for self?

But Sawong: All rúpas.

Sujin: What characteristic do all rúpas have? If there are no characteristics that appear, can we say that there are rúpas? There must be realities that appear but people do not know them as they are, they take them for self. Therefore, my question is: what rúpa that appears in the body one takes for self? If there are no rúpas, can there be a body? What rúpas are there in the body?

But Sawong: There are coldness, heat, softness and hardness in the body.

Sujin: Thus, if the rúpas that are coldness, heat, softness or hardness do not appear, can one know their characteristics? When softness of the body appears there is the characteristic of the rúpa that is softness. The rúpa of softness outside is also softness. It is the same with the rúpas of heat or cold that are outside, rúpa is only rúpa and it does not belong to anybody. Wherever a rúpa arises, it falls away, but one does not know this. Paññā is the reality that has right understanding of the dhammas that are real, it should correctly understand them so that the clinging to the wrong view that rúpa is self can be abandoned. If someone says that paññā has right understanding of rúpa, thus, that paññā realizes rúpa as rúpa, non-self, there must be characteristics of rúpa appearing that paññā can correctly understand. Therefore, paññā can know as it is a characteristic of a rúpa that naturally appears at the body. The understanding of the characteristics of realities must be developed in a natural way. However, if someone has not heard the Dhamma, he does not understand realities. He is not aware of rúpa and he does not know what characteristic rúpa has. How could he know that rúpa is not self, not “I”?

When someone has listened to the Dhamma, he can understand that everything that arises must fall away. There isn't anything that belongs to a self, all realities are non-self. When we have really understood this, we can investigate the rúpa that appears at the body and we can know what its characteristic is. At that moment there is sati that is aware of a characteristic of rúpa appearing at the body and thus, there can gradually be the correct understanding that this is only a type of reality. In that way paññā will be able to realize the arising and falling away of rúpa. Paññā can understand: first nothing appears, then there is reality, and after that there is no reality to be found ⁶. When paññā realizes the characteristic of rúpa that arises and then falls away, it knows that there is no owner of the reality which is there and which then, after that, is not to be found, since it has disappeared. True paññā is able to know the characteristic of the dhamma that is real at this moment. This is something one should think over and not forget: if paññā does not know the characteristic of the reality that appears at this moment, what does paññā know?

But Sawong: The Commentary to the Vinaya, the “Samantapāsādikā” explains about the degrees of paññā of ariyans in the different periods after the Buddha's passing away. During the period of the first thousand years there were still arahats with the four “analytical knowledges”, paññābhīdā ⁷. In the following period of thousand years there were only arahats who are sukkha vipassaka, those who had not attained any stage of jhāna, but who had developed only insight. In the third period of thousand years there are only people who have attained the state of non-returner, anāgāmi, in the fourth period of thousand years there are only sakadāgāmis and in the fifth period of thousand years there are only sotāpannas. However, in the Commentary to the Suttanta it is different. In the first period of thousand years there were arahats with the four analytical knowledges, in the second period of thousand years there were arahats with the six superpowers, abhiññās ⁸. In the third period of thousand years there are arahats with the threefold knowledge, tevijja ⁹. In the fourth period of thousand years there are arahats who are sukkha vipassaka and in the fifth period of thousand years there are non-returners. Why are these explanations different?

Sujin: In the “Samantapāsādikā”, in the Commentary to the Vinaya, to the Cullavagga, Ch X, on Nuns, the decline of Buddhism has been explained in the Buddha era of this

Buddha, the Buddha Gotama. In the “Sumaḍgalavilāsinī”, in the Commentary to the “Dialogues of the Buddha”, no. 28, “The Faith that satisfied”, the declining of Buddhism in the Buddha era of a former Buddha, Kassapa Buddha, has been explained. We are living in the Buddha era of the Buddha Gotama. At this moment we are living in the third period of thousand years after the passing away of the Buddha Gotama. We should not think of persons, it is more important to think of the way leading to the realization of the four noble truths. If people do not follow the right way there will not even be an ariyan of the degree of the sotāpanna.

But Sawong: Of the two ways of mental development, vipassanā and samatha, which way leads more rapidly to nibbāna?

Sujin: Samatha is the development of calm, freedom from akusala. When this way of kusala has become firmer one can attain access concentration and then attainment concentration, jhāna of different degrees. If the jhānacitta arises shortly before the dying-consciousness it conditions birth as a brahma in a brahma plane. However, if one does not develop the paññā that knows at this moment the characteristics of realities as they are, there is no way of attaining nibbāna. Characteristics of dhammas are truly appearing, and if one does not know them how could one come to realize nibbāna?

Footnotes

1. Seeing , hearing and the other sense-cognitions arise in a series or process of cittas that each perform their own function. There are sense-door processes and mind-door processes. When a sense-door process has fallen away it is followed by a mind-door process of cittas that experience the sense object which was experienced by cittas arising in that sense-door process and which has just fallen away. Visible object, for example, that is experienced by cittas arising in the eye-door process, is also experienced by cittas arising in the following process, which is the mind-door process. These cittas just experience the visible object, they do not think about it. Thinking of shape and form, of concepts of people and things can arise later on, in other mind-door processes.
2. In the sense-door processes and in the mind-door process there are, in the case of non-arāhats, seven javana-cittas, kusala cittas or akusala cittas that experience the object in a wholesome way or in an unwholesome way.
3. The term mahā-kusala citta is used for kusala citta of the sense sphere. Mahā-kusala citta can be accompanied by paññā or unaccompanied by paññā. When there are conditions,

mahā-kusala citta accompanied by paññā can arise also in a sense-door process.

4. There are several stages of insight knowledge, vipassanā ñāṇa. The first stage is distinguishing the difference between nāma and rūpa and this arises in a mind-door process. Rūpa can be known through a sense-door and through the mind-door, and nāma can only be known through the mind-door. Thus, the difference between nāma and rūpa is known through the mind-door. Now, at this moment, the mind-door is covered up by the sense-doors, but at that stage of insight knowledge it is understood what the mind-door is. Acharn Sujin explains in “A Survey of Paramattha Dhammas”, Part V, Ch 2, The Stages of Insight: “The rūpas which are sense-objects are experienced through the corresponding sense-doors and after each sense-door process the object is experienced through the mind-door. However, when there is no vipassanā ñāṇa, insight knowledge, the mind-door process does not appear, it is as it were hidden by the sense objects experienced in the sense-door processes. At the moments of vipassanā ñāṇa, rūpas appear very clearly through the mind-door, and at that moment the mind-door hides as it were the sense-doors. Then the situation is opposite to the moments when there is no vipassanā ñāṇa.”

5. The different processes arise one after the other extremely rapidly.

6. A reality does not come from anywhere when it arises, it does not exist before its arising. Therefore one can say: it is not.

7. Only the arahat with the highest attainment has these analytical knowledges.

8. These are magical powers, divine ear, penetration of the mind of others, divine eye, remembrance of former lives and the eradication of all defilements.

9. These are remembrance of former lives, divine eye and eradication of all defilements.

Chapter 8.

Dhamma Discussion in the Tuan-Toompong Temple.

But Sawong: What is the difference between kāma-rāga and kāmúpādāna?

Sujin: Kāma-rāga is desire for and enjoyment of visible object, sound, odour, flavour and tangible object. Kāmúpādāna, sensuous clinging, is firmly holding on, clinging to these objects ¹.

But Sawong: When there is craving for non-existence, vibhava-taṅhā, one wants to be without existence. Why is this classified as craving, taṅhā?

Sujin: It has been explained in the Scriptures that vibhava-taṅhā is the clinging to the wrong view of annihilation, uccheda diṅhi.

But Sawong: Does vipassanā that is mundane, lokiya, have rebirth as result?

Sujin: In so far as kusala is not lokuttara, supramundane, it can be a condition for rebirth.

But Sawong: In the “Gradual Sayings” the Buddha explained that nibbāna is an āyatana, a base. However, this does not have to be understood as sphere of unbounded space, ākāsañcāyatana, one of the subjects of arūpa jhāna, immaterial jhāna. Nor is nibbāna a place where one goes to. In what sense is nibbāna an āyatana? Some people say that

dhammāyatana is nibbāna. Is this correct?

Sujin: All realities are āyatanas. Realities have been classified as different āyatanas. Nibbāna is real, and it cannot be experienced through the eyes, the ears, the nose, the tongue or the bodysense, and therefore, it is the reality that can be experienced through the mind-door. It is dhammāyatana, mental object.

But Sawong: Which of the three dhammas of lobha, dosa and moha is the easiest to eradicate?

Sujin: The non-returner, anāgāmi, who has attained the third stage of enlightenment has eradicated dosa, but only the arahat has eradicated lobha and moha.

But Sawong: Upasika Mom has a question. In several meditation centers one explains that sitting is rūpa and that knowing that one sits is nāma. I have read that the Buddha said, “Bhikkhus, when sitting, there can be sati which is aware of the characteristics of realities that appear.”

Sujin: If someone says that sitting is rūpa, in what way can it be rūpa? One should know what rūpa is, and whether rūpa is reality. All that is real and cannot know anything, no matter it is visible or invisible, is rūpa dhamma. It is rūpa dhamma because it does not know anything. We have to understand this first of all. If someone says that sitting is rūpa, he should know what exactly is rūpa and then he can know which realities are rūpa. Today we have to do tasks in our house and we may wonder which things in our house are rūpa. Is there rūpa at this moment?

But Sawong: There is.

Sujin: We have to know first which rūpas.

But Sawong: There are rūpas that can be seen, and in the body there are the rūpas of motion and pressure.

Sujin: Is sound rūpa? It is. We should correctly understand that that which is real and has a characteristic that appears but which cannot know anything, is rūpa. If we have no eyes do we see rūpa? If we have no ears, can we hear the rūpa that is sound? We do not hear the sound of rūpa, but sound itself is rūpa. Are the rūpa that is seen and the rūpa that is heard, the same? They are not. There are many kinds of rūpa and each kind can appear through the appropriate doorway. Can rūpa sit? It cannot. If we understand this, it is correct understanding, because hardness does not sit, heat does not sit. Therefore, the rūpas of the body have the characteristics of cold, heat, softness, hardness, motion or pressure. If one truly understands this, one will be able to realize the arising and falling away of those rūpas. If one has right understanding one will see that of the rūpas all over the body only very little is left. But where do they remain? The rūpas from head to toe have all disappeared. Very little is left, but where? If one has a concept of a whole, of a sitting posture, the idea of self cannot be abandoned. Only the rūpa is experienced exactly at that point where it appears, no matter whether it is hardness, heat, motion or pressure, and this is according to the truth that rūpa cannot be self. We used to believe that the rūpas from

head to toe, the great Elements (mahā-bhúta rúpas), were present all the time. However, in reality those rúpas only appear one at a time, when they are experienced through body-contact. Even if one has not attained vipassanā ñāṇa, insight knowledge, can one understand that this is true? We should consider whether it is true or not that rúpa appears only at that point where it is experienced through body-contact. At the other parts of the body there are no rúpas appearing, they do not remain.

Everybody at this moment knows through remembrance, saññā, that he has arms, legs, a face and the body he is familiar with. Can anything appear, such as the head, eyebrows, face, nose, mouth, when it is not experienced through body-contact? Is this true or not? We have to verify and investigate even at this moment whether this is the truth. Otherwise the wrong view of a self who exists cannot be abandoned. Insight knowledge is the penetration of the truth of realities as they naturally appear in daily life. The truth is that nothing is left except the rúpa which appears through the bodysense. This is the truth, but at this moment one has no insight knowledge because paññā has not been developed to that degree. Paññā has not been developed that knows that in reality that only one characteristic of rúpa appears at a time, when it is experienced through touch. When the rúpa that arises because of its appropriate conditions is not experienced through body-contact, it just arises and falls away very rapidly and it does not appear. If we understand the truth and sammā-sati, right mindfulness can arise and be aware, there is only a characteristic of rúpa that appears, only the characteristic that sati is aware of. When the understanding of the characteristics of nāma and rúpa grows, no matter whether they appear through the eyes, the ears, the nose, the tongue, the body or the mind-door, one will gradually cling less to the wrong view of self. Insight knowledge that clearly realizes dhammas as they are, knows the truth because paññā leads to detachment from the wrong view of self.

Therefore, one should not do anything that is unnatural. At this moment of seeing nobody has to do anything special to cause its arising, because there are conditions that this reality arises and performs the function of seeing. At this moment there is no self who can perform a function of any reality. When a reality arises because of the appropriate conditions, it performs its own function. We should begin to understand correctly that there is no self who can do something. There are only realities that arise and perform their own functions. People who listened to the Dhamma understand in theory that seeing is a dhamma that is real, that arises because of the appropriate conditions and then falls away, and that it does not belong to anyone. Hearing is another reality that is not self. When there are the appropriate conditions it arises and hears sound and then it falls away. When understanding of realities is more developed, there will not be a concept of self. At this moment everything is dhamma, but one does not really know yet that there are only dhammas. Therefore one should develop paññā so that one will know the truth.

But Sawong: Can attachment, lobha, and stinginess, macchhariya, arise together?

Sujin: This is not possible. Lobha is the reality that clings; it is attached to and enjoys the objects that are appearing. When stinginess arises, when someone wants to keep things for oneself, he is not happy. What feeling accompanies stinginess?

But Sawong: One feels unhappy.

Sujin: When there is unhappy feeling, what type of citta is there at that moment?

But Sawong: There is a citta accompanied by aversion, dosa.

Sujin: Because of his great compassion the Buddha taught about the feeling arising with each type of citta. Otherwise people would have misunderstandings and believe that stinginess could arise with attachment. Realities arise and fall away succeeding one another very rapidly and thus it seems that realities such as stinginess and attachment can arise together. For example, the moment of seeing is different from the moment of hearing, but it seems that both seeing and hearing occur at the same time.

But Sawong: What reality is fear of bandits?

Sujin: What type of feeling arises when there is fear, whatever kind of fear it may be and whatever its object may be?

But Sawong: When someone is frightened, there is unhappy feeling. Then there is citta with dosa, aversion, thus, akusala citta.

There are only ten minutes left for this session. This is the last night of Dhamma discussions in Phnom Penh. It is regrettable because people still have many questions. Someone asks whether there is each day someone among the Buddhists who is accomplished to the degree of becoming a sotāpanna, streamwinner, or a sakadāgāmi, once-returner.

Sujin: If one has correct understanding and one develops paññā, the result depends on the appropriate cause. If there is the right cause it will bring its result accordingly.

But Sawong: In Kmer language we say that dhammas take beings somewhere. Kusala dhamma prevents beings from falling into an unhappy plane. However, as to akusala dhamma and avyākata dhamma, indeterminate dhamma that is neither kusala nor akusala, where do they take beings to?

Sujin: If akusala kamma is a completed course of action ², it can produce an unhappy rebirth as result. As to indeterminate dhammas, these include vipāka citta and cetasika which can arise in different planes of existence.

But Sawong: Someone asks about the three classes of dhamma: kusala dhamma, akusala dhamma and avyākata dhamma. He wants to know in particular about the classification of sobhana dhammas, beautiful dhammas.

Sujin: Beautiful dhammas include kusala dhammas and also avyākata dhammas that are sobhana, namely sobhana cetasikas that arise with sobhana vipākacitta and sobhana kiriya citta ³.

But Sawong: The last question is about nibbāna. What is nibbāna?

Sujin: Only paññā that can know this.

But Sawong: Can Mother Sujin say something to the listeners by way of conclusion?

Sujin: All of us in our group who have come to Cambodia wish to express their appreciation of the kusala citta of all people who are interested in the study of the Dhamma; their study will be a condition for continuing the development of pañña.

But Sawong: The Abbot wishes to chant a recitation of texts on the occasion of this last session before Mother Sujin and the group return, and he invites Mother Sujin to come in front of him. Mother Sujin is the ambassador of the Dhamma, she has come to explain the Dhamma in Cambodia. We invite her to sign the book as a souvenir of her explanation of the Dhamma today.

Footnotes.

1. Kāma can mean sensuous desire as well as the objects of sensuous desire. As regards upādāna, clinging, there are four kinds: sensuous clinging, clinging to wrong view, clinging to rules and ritual (wrong practice) and clinging to personality belief.
 2. Akusala kamma is not always a completed course of action. There are certain factors which make it into a completed action. In the case of killing, for example, there must be a living being, one must know that there is a living being, one must have the intention to kill, there must be the effort to kill and consequent death (Expositor I, Book I, Part III, Ch V, Courses of Immoral Action, 97). Akusala kamma that is a completed action can produce as result an unhappy rebirth.
 3. Vipākacittas can be ahetuka, not accompanied by hetus, roots, or sahetuka, accompanied by sobhana hetus. The arahat cannot perform kamma anymore that produces result, since he will not be reborn. Therefore, he has, instead of kusala cittas, kiriyacittas accompanied by sobhana cetasikas.
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Chapter 9

Dhamma Discussion in Hotel Sofitel, Phnom Penh (I)

Sujin: When pañña of the degree of insight knowledge, vipassanā ñāna arises, it arises even against our expectations. We should not think ahead of time that it should arise in a moment, very soon. This is wrong, because the development of pañña must be with detachment. If desire slips in, we are not on the right way and we shall not reach the goal. The right way, the development of pañña, is very intricate, very subtle. As has been appropriately stated in the scriptures: it is difficult to understand the four noble Truths because they are profound. For the development of satipaṭṭhāna, we should not sit and think of getting hold of sati in order to “use” it. We cannot “use” pañña, but there should

be correct understanding from the beginning, from now on. This understanding is included in the khandha of formations, saòkhàrakkhandha, which forms up conditions for the arising of sammàsati that is aware of realities. When one touches things which are hard during the day there is no sati, because one has the notion of touching things such as a table. But when we have listened to the Dhamma we understand that hardness is only a kind of reality. If we often listen and have more understanding, there can be firm sañña, we can remember that everything is dhamma, reality, and this is the first level of understanding. We should not forget that everything is dhamma. If we do not forget this, there are conditions for the arising of sati that is aware of the reality of hardness, odour or other dhammas. It depends on conditions whether sati arises and is aware of realities. When sati arises it can be aware precisely of a characteristic of the dhamma that we used to take for something hard. When there is awareness, pañña can know that this is only a kind of dhamma, and that the element that experiences hardness is not self. However, before we can know that it is an element that experiences, not self, we should develop pañña for a long time until there is no longer the concept of the whole world that we used to have. Then only the element that experiences remains, and this is the characteristic of nàma that is not blended or mixed with rúpa. Nàma dhamma is the reality that can know everything. From birth to death there is nàma dhamma, at every moment. When sati arises we can gradually begin to understand the characteristics of rúpa dhamma and nàma dhamma which we used to know from listening to the Dhamma and from the study of the different texts of the scriptures. When we are aware of the realities that are appearing we shall begin to understand the characteristic of rúpa and the characteristic of nàma. Sati is aware, not because we cause its arising or do something special to induce it. We should understand that each life is citta, cetasika and rúpa. When sati is aware and there is gradually more understanding, little by little, satipaìhàna develops, so that one day insight knowledge, vipassanà ñàua, can arise. This kind of pañña can penetrate the true nature of the characteristics of nàma dhamma and rúpa dhamma, without there being concepts of people and things blended in. The element that experiences appears through the mind-door. At the moments of insight knowledge nothing else exists but the element that experiences, nàma dhamma, and rúpa dhamma, and these appear one at a time. Insight knowledge is the pañña that realizes the difference between nàma dhamma and rúpa dhamma, it realizes their characteristics as distinct from each other, as they appear one at a time through the mind-door. We have heard of sense-door process and mind-door process, and also now a mind-door process is in between the sense-door processes, it follows upon each sense-door process. However, the mind-door process is not evident because it is, as it were, hidden by the sense-door processes. Also when there is thinking of names and concepts on account of sense objects, the mind-door process is not apparent. At such moments the arising and falling away of realities is not evident. Realities have already arisen and disappeared anyway. When concepts hide the truth one does not know paramattha dhammas, ultimate realities. However, when pañña has been developed to the degree of insight knowledge, the mind-door process appears and then there is no more doubt about it. At this moment realities appear through the sense-doors, through the eyes or the ears, but while one is thinking, nothing appears through the eyes or the ears. While one is thinking, there is no colour, no sound. We know through the study of the Dhamma and by memorizing what we learnt that there is the mind-door process, but the reality of the mind-door process does not appear. However, the pañña that is insight knowledge knows all realities through the mind-door. Realities appear one at a time through the mind-door. How does one feel about that?

Jarurin: Perhaps one is frightened.

Sujin: It depends on conditions. It is an experience that never before arose in life, but pañña at that moment is able to know that characteristic as nāma, and that is vipassanā ñāna. One may be frightened or astonished while thinking why realities appear in this way, because one never thought that the world one is familiar with does, in the ultimate sense, not exist. Usually the whole wide world appears, because one has eyes and ears and thus this world one is familiar with appears. It appears in this way until the time comes when the world appears as empty; then there is only the citta which knows the characteristics of dhammas that appear, and which knows that the realities arise and appear because there are the appropriate conditions. Pañña will clearly realize that rūpa appears through the sense-door and subsequently through the mind-door. This is according to the truth.

The saying: “There is nothing, then there is something and after that there is nothing to be found”, is according to the truth. Pañña knows that everything the Buddha taught is the truth that appears and that can be known, from the first level of pañña on, which is knowing the characteristics of nāma and of rūpa. People should not forego any stage of pañña and try to do something else. They should develop pañña so that they know first of all the characteristics of realities that are nāma and rūpa. We cannot know yet as it is lobha-mūla-citta, and we cannot know yet whether it is accompanied by wrong view or not. When we study and we have theoretical knowledge of realities, the characteristics of nāma and rūpa do not appear, because we only know the terms. We may say that this type of lobha is accompanied by wrong view and that type by conceit, but this does not mean that we know the realities that arise and appear and then fall away. Realities arise and then fall away, they disappear very rapidly, but we only know the names of dhammas. If one wants to understand the true nature of realities, it is not sufficient to know only terms and concepts of the different dhammas. The purpose of listening to the Dhamma should not merely be theoretical understanding of realities, but it should be the practice, that is the development of pañña according to the method of the Suttanta, of the Abhidhamma and of the Vinaya, the Book of Discipline for the monks.

Jaran: In which way is the practice according to those three methods different?

Sujin: These are different methods of teaching. The Vinaya deals with conduct through body and speech. When we study the Vinaya we know that wholesome conduct through body and speech is developed by kusala citta. An example of this is the case of a monk who entered a house and sat down without having been invited by the owner of the house. When the Buddha heard of this he laid down a rule that only when the owner of a place had invited the monk he could sit down. Thus, when the monk goes to someone’s house, but the owner has not yet invited him, should he sit down? Even small matters, matters that concern etiquette and manners, such as while one is eating, are all explained in the Vinaya, and everybody can apply these. We do not need to sit down and consider how many more sīlas in addition to the five precepts we shall observe. Sīla concerns our conduct through body and speech.

As to the method of the Suttanta, this is very subtle and detailed, such as the teaching of dukkha-dukkha (intrinsic dukkha, bodily pain and unhappy feeling), vipariyāma-dukkha (dukkha because of change) and saṅkhāra-dukkha (dukkha inherent in all conditioned

realities) ¹. We should study the Suttanta so that we acquire a more detailed understanding of confidence, saddhā, moral shame, hiri, and fear of blame, ottappa ². When we listen to the Dhamma there is confidence, sati, hiri and ottappa. We do not realize that there are hiri and ottappa, even though they are there in reality. Whenever kusala citta arises it is accompanied by hiri and ottappa, without the need to think that we are ashamed of akusala. We do not need to think first of moral shame in order that it arises and that we shall listen to the Dhamma. Whenever the reality of moral shame arises there is kusala citta at that moment. Thus, we should have more understanding of realities in detail. With regard to the Abhidhamma method of teaching, this elucidates the true nature of all paramattha dhammas, ultimate realities. One should not merely know the concepts nāma and rūpa, but the characteristics of nāma and rūpa that are appearing should be realized. When satipaṭṭhāna arises there is awareness and understanding of the characteristics of realities, one at a time. When anger arises, is there anybody who does not know this, even if he does not study the Abhidhamma? When jealousy or stinginess arises, is it necessary to study the Abhidhamma so that one knows it? People know it without study, but they take these realities for self, and they do not know that these are only different dhammas. Through the Abhidhamma method one can come to understand that all realities are non-self. When attachment, aversion or conceit arise, or when we enjoy ourselves, there is no person, no self. When there is the firm remembrance of the truth of anattā, a person will not have misunderstandings about it and believe that he can do whatever he likes because everything is anattā anyway. Then he uses anattā as a trick to excuse his behaviour and he gives his own interpretation of this term. As regards the truth of anattā, does paññā grasp already its meaning? Or do we just repeat that everything is anattā? There is a considerable difference in the understanding of someone who merely studies the theory of the Dhamma and of someone who develops paññā and knows the characteristics of realities as they are. We should understand this correctly: if we know only terms and names of dhammas, we shall remain only at that level, and we shall continue to know only terms. We should develop paññā so that the truth of anattā can be realized, in accordance with the teaching that all dhammas are anattā. Otherwise, to use a simile, we are like the ladle that serves the curry but does not know the taste of it ³. If we study but we do not realize the true nature of realities, how many lives shall we be only at that level, and this means that we study and then forget what we learnt.

If we know that we study with the purpose of understanding realities at this very moment, then such understanding will be in accordance with our ability. We can understand, for example, what ārammaṇa, object, is. It is impossible that citta does not experience an object. Citta is the reality that experiences and thus there must be something that is experienced. That which is experienced can be anything, it can be citta, cetasika, rūpa or nibbāna. A concept, paññatti, is the object of citta that thinks. We can know when the citta knows a concept and when an ultimate reality, paramattha dhamma. Every paramattha dhamma that is the object of citta, has a characteristic, and that characteristic is impermanence; it arises and falls away. When the object is not a paramattha dhamma with its true characteristic, the object is a concept. If we understand this, sati can be aware of the characteristics of paramattha dhammas, because satipaṭṭhāna must know paramattha dhammas. The study can support correct understanding of the way of development of paññā. Everything we learn from the beginning is accumulated as the khandha of formations, saḍkhāra-khandha, and this is a condition for the growth of paññā.

Question: Is it correct to say that paññā and ñāṇa are the same in meaning, but that they are of different levels?

Sujin: It depends on the context, on the way it is used. For example, the term is used that is: kusala citta ñāṇa sampayutta, kusala citta that is accompanied by paññā cetasika.

Question: If someone is at the beginning level of study, he learns terms and concepts. How can he go beyond this level and do without them?

Sujin: At the beginning level we learn terms and names, but what do such names designate? As to the term citta, for example, what does it designate? It is a term for a dhamma that is reality, for the element that experiences, the reality that experiences. Therefore, we should not cling to the term citta, we can change the term citta into viññāṇa (consciousness) or into mano (mind). But these terms refer to the nature that experiences something, to the reality that experiences. When citta arises it must experience something, it is impossible that it would not experience something. If our understanding is correct, it will become firmer and more established. While we are asleep, is there citta? There is. While we are asleep, does citta experience an object? The nature of citta cannot be altered; it is the reality that experiences and thus, also that citta must be like that. However, while we are asleep, the object of citta does not appear, because it is the object of the bhavanga-citta, life-continuum. The bhavanga-citta succeeds the rebirth-consciousness and experiences the same object, and the rebirth-consciousness has the same object as the citta that arose shortly before dying in the previous life. All bhavanga-cittas throughout that life experience the same object. Therefore we should know that the bhavanga-citta is not a citta that is depending on the doorways of the eyes, the ears, the nose, the body or the mind. However, it knows an object, because citta is a reality that must experience something. If we understand the true characteristics of realities there is correct understanding. If we cling and in that way interfere with the understanding of realities it is evident that they cannot be seen as they are.

Question: Does this mean that when I have understanding of the realities of citta and cetasika, I do not interfere with their functions?

Sujin: At this moment realities perform their own functions already, but we do not know that they are citta and cetasika. However, when we study the Dhamma, we know that citta is the leader, it is the chief in knowing an object; it does not remember, it is not angry, it does not love, it does not hate. Its only function is being the leader in knowing an object. Citta is able to experience the characteristic of what appears at this moment. The rūpa that presents itself at this moment through the eyes appears to citta. When sound appears, there are actually many kinds of sounds, but citta is able to experience each kind of sound. Thus, citta is the chief, the leader in cognizing an object, it clearly knows the different characteristics of the objects that present themselves. However, citta is not paññā; paññā is correct understanding that knows realities as non-self.

Footnotes.

1. The suttas deal with the teaching and its application in daily life. The Buddha spoke, for example, about dukkha in daily life, about the loss of family and friends through death. He would speak about dukkha because of change, vipariñāma dukkha, when people were ready to understand this. If people had developed more understanding he would speak about the five khandhas that are impermanent and thus dukkha. The purpose of the study of the Suttanta is knowing the characteristics of realities appearing now, the khandhas, dhātus (elements), āyatanas (sense-fields), thus nāma and rūpa. Also in the Suttanta Abhidhamma is taught.
2. The Buddha taught in the Suttanta the benefit of kusala and the disadvantage of akusala. When hiri, ottappa and saddhā arise, one sees the benefit of kusala and the disadvantage of akusala.
3. The ladle that serves the curry is time and again in contact with the curry, but does not know the taste. Evenso, all realities are anattā, but we do not realize this.

Dhamma Discussions in Hotel Sofitel (Part II)

Question: Someone said that he thought of hardness, but this is a term. You said that this kind of thinking is better than thinking of other things.

Sujin: Thinking of citta, cetasika and rúpa is better than thinking of other things.

Question: That resembles clinging to samádhi, concentration, fixing our attention on one object.

Sujin: Nobody can prevent himself from thinking. There are conditions for thinking and thus we think time and again. However, before we listened to the Dhamma we used to think of this or that person, this or that thing. After we have listened to the Dhamma, we think of citta, of cetasika, but we should know that this is only thinking, not awareness and understanding of the characteristics of realities. Therefore, paññá should grow and understand realities more deeply.

Question: When we cling, we may keep on concentrating on realities, is that not so?

Sujin: Therefore, paññá should develop. We should know that at such moments there is no understanding of the characteristics of realities. People may merely think about realities when they experience the characteristic of hardness through touch. At such moments they are inclined to think, this is hardness, or, hardness is rúpa. They think of names, of words. From now on one should understand that when one knows at such moments just words, it is not satipañhāna. Realities must have characteristics that appear. Hardness is a characteristic of dhamma that is real; hardness arises and falls away, but this can be known by paññá. When paññá does not arise it seems that a reality is present already all the time, but one does not realize the truth. A reality arises so that it can be experienced through contact; thus, it can appear, and then it falls away immediately. If people have listened to the Dhamma, the right cause can bring its appropriate result. When they have realized the truth they know that it must be in the way I just explained.

Krayadib: Before I practised, it seemed that I was clinging to the word bhāvanā, mental development. But gradually this inclination disappeared when I asked myself what kind of habit I was accumulating. Now I study the Dhamma and I have refrained already for a long time from clinging in that way. Now I am used to often think about concepts designating realities. I know that this is a dhamma that thinks. Acharn explained this, so that we know that it is a reality that thinks. I worry about it that I seem to merely repeat these words, and I wonder how this will gradually disappear.

Jonothan: Acharn says that hardness is a reality that arises and falls away all the time.

Sujin: Hardness arises and then it appears; if it does not arise it cannot appear. Is this true or not? Paññá should know the truth of everything.

Jonothan: Knowing the characteristic of hardness when it appears and knowing its arising

and falling away is not the same. Is that correct?

Sujin: There must be different levels of paññā that realizes these matters. The paññā of the beginning level does not penetrate the arising and falling away of realities. In the beginning people have only theoretical knowledge of the elements of nāma and the rúpa, stemming from listening to the Dhamma, but they do not realize the characteristics of nāma and rúpa; they do not realize them as elements, dhátus. At this moment there are nāma and rúpa, but their characteristics do not appear, they do not appear as elements. There are several levels of insight knowledge, and insight has to be developed stage by stage. It is impossible to realize the arising and falling away of realities immediately, before the preceding stages have been reached. We can know, when someone tries to “watch” nāma and rúpa in order to realize their arising and falling away, and pretends that he has realized this, that he is on the wrong way.

Phannipa: Do some people believe that this is the right development of satipaṭṭhāna? In reality this is wrong understanding.

Sujin: Generally people use the term sati, but they do not know the characteristic of sati. They use the word paññā without knowing what paññā is. They say that they want to control paññā, but where is paññā?

Phannipa: People who study by themselves erroneously believe that satipaṭṭhāna has arisen already, but that is wrong understanding, different from right understanding based on listening.

Sujin: Therefore, people should listen to the Dhamma and consider carefully what they have heard so that they will understand it. For example, sati is not samādhi, concentration, but people follow the wrong way because they take samādhi for sati. Samādhi is the reality that concentrates on one object, but sati is not samādhi. Sati is a sobhana sādharma cetasika (general, common to sobhana); it accompanies only sobhana cittas, and it accompanies each sobhana citta. Sati accompanies each level of kusala, be it of the level of dāna, sīla, samatha or vipassanā. There is satipaṭṭhāna when someone is aware of the characteristics of realities as they are naturally appearing at this moment. This kind of understanding stems from listening to the Dhamma. Before one listened to the Dhamma one could not be aware of the characteristics of realities. When someone has listened and understood what he heard, he can be aware of the characteristics of realities. Gradually he can begin to understand the characteristics of realities which are of two different kinds: nāma dhamma and rúpa dhamma. There is, for example, seeing at this moment. Seeing is the reality that experiences, seeing does not have any shape or form; seeing sees what is appearing through the eyes.

Seeing is nāma dhamma that is able to see something, this is the function of that kind of element. It is an element that has no shape or form. Paññā can gradually develop and penetrate the nature of nāma dhamma and that is satipaṭṭhāna. When a reality appears, sati can arise and be aware of that reality, and then paññā can begin to gradually develop so that there will be correct understanding of its characteristic. If others say that it is not satipaṭṭhāna at the moment when understanding of what is real and what appears gradually develops, is that true?. Satipaṭṭhāna does not depend on someone else's words; it is reality,

and at such moments there are dhammas appearing. We are usually forgetful of realities, but when sati arises and is aware, there is gradually more understanding of the characteristics that are real, the characteristics that are appearing. This is satipaṭṭhāna. We have theoretical knowledge of the four applications of mindfulness of body, feeling, citta and dhammas, but we should understand that these are real at this moment. Hardness, for example is a reality that is appearing. When sati arises and is aware just for a few moments, the understanding cannot not be clear yet, but this is like the knife handle that wears away each moment someone holds it. Therefore, each time paññā arises there is a condition for its growth and accomplishment. One must have the firm conviction that paññā can know only the reality that is appearing. Paññā is not able to know something that does not appear, something that has fallen away or that has not yet arisen. Paññā can know what is true at this moment, and in this way we can understand the dependent origination of phenomena, the paticca samuppāda: not knowing the truth is the first link of the dependent origination, which is ignorance, avijjā¹.

Avijjā, ignorance, accompanies citta, it cannot arise with rūpa. Whenever we do not understand the truth of realities there is avijjā. If we study the Dhamma more in detail we shall know when there is akusala citta and when vipākacitta, citta that is result of kamma. Avijjā cetasika is not conascent with vipākacitta, but there is the latent tendency of avijjā, avijjānusaya, in each citta so long as avijjā has not been eradicated. More understanding of the details of the Dhamma is a condition for beginning to develop the paññā that realizes the truth, and then there will not be clinging to mere words and concepts. However, we should know that reading, listening and studying a great deal is beneficial, because this is a condition for the growth of understanding. We should study and consider the Dhamma with right understanding and we should see the benefit of this. It is necessary to have patience with regard to the development of paññā, it is bound to take a long time. In the Tipiṭaka the expression of “cīra kāla bhāvana” is used, meaning, development that takes a long time. When we study the life stories of those who could attain enlightenment after they had developed paññā for an endlessly long time, we should not worry about it how long we have developed paññā already and how much longer we should develop it. At this moment we can evaluate the paññā we have developed because we can verify whether paññā can understand the paramattha dhamma that appears now. It is not a concept or idea; at each moment there is paramattha dhamma.

Question: Sati is a sobhana cetasika, it arises with kusala citta. Is it correct to say that sati can be aware of dosa, aversion, or another kind of akusala?

Sujin: What is reality is true in every respect. Akusala is reality, but sati cannot be conascent with akusala citta; sati can arise afterwards and be aware of its characteristic. Akusala has arisen, if it had not arisen it could not appear. Akusala arises and falls away, but in a following process there can be kusala cittas accompanied by sati which is aware of the characteristic of that akusala dhamma that arises and falls away very rapidly; processes of kusala cittas accompanied by sati can arise in alternation with processes with akusala cittas. This can go on for several rounds.

Question: At this moment I pay attention to it that this is dosa and that lobha.

Sujin: This is thinking, and when you know this, thinking will stop. Also when we do not

think there are realities. The rūpa that is hardness is present without the need to think of it. Instead of thinking we can begin to be aware of characteristics of realities. We do not have to think of them or name them, but gradually we can pay attention to and understand what is real and appears. It is the same as when we see an orange and know that it is an orange without having to think that there is an orange.

Question: A friend of mine wishes to ask something. He used to sit and concentrate on something and afterwards he acquired knowledge such as we have now from the study of Dhamma, but he continues to cling and concentrate on something. When he is troubled by a problem, he sits down in order to concentrate on something and then he feels more comfortable. I explained to him that that is clinging, that it is lobha. He likes to concentrate because it makes him feel contented. I said that he may not feel happy each time because this is anattā, and that sometimes he may not succeed in becoming contented. He said that most of the time when he sits down to concentrate he feels more contented and therefore he likes to continue doing this. Would you please help me to give him an answer?

Sujin: There are many kinds of Buddhists, some of them do not study the Dhamma, they do not listen and do not understand the Dhamma. Others again study just a little, and what they study is sometimes wrong, sometimes correct. The Dhamma is very difficult, profound and subtle. People should study it carefully and thoroughly. They should know to what purpose they study it, this is most important. Most people go to the temple because it makes them feel contented. When they enter a temple they feel happy already and they find this sufficient. Or when they listen to the Dhamma they feel contented and this is enough for them. They do not think of paññā, they do not consider what the Buddha realized through his enlightenment. The Buddha's compassion that motivated him to teach the Dhamma he realized through his enlightenment is immeasurably great. The Dhamma is the truth that is profound and that can eradicate defilements completely. People who just think of being contented do not think of the eradication of defilements, they do not think of understanding. Therefore, they are Buddhists who are just of the level of wanting the means that make them contented.

Jonathan: We have different methods of suppressing dosa that arises. People may listen to tapes about the Dhamma or they may sit in order to concentrate. By these ways dosa will decrease, but they cannot prevent dosa from arising again, and it is the same with the other kinds of akusala cittas.

Sujin: Therefore, we do not have to think of what other people want to have, no matter they want contentedness or something else. We who are born into this world, have the opportunity to hear the Dhamma, but listening to the Dhamma is not easy, it is most difficult. We can notice this when we look at people in Thailand or all over the world. When we have the opportunity to develop understanding of the truth we should do so. We should use the word truth, because we do not need something that deceives, that is temporary, because that is of no use; it is not the teaching of the Sammāsambuddha. If people only wish to be contented, they do not need to pay respect to the Buddha; they can read any text that comforts them.

It is most difficult to know what the truth is at this moment. If a person is not the Sammāsambuddha he cannot teach the truth of the reality of this moment. Therefore, we should study so that we understand the truth. Paññā is saòkhàrakkhandha, the khandha of

formations, that is accumulated and in that way there can be conditions for its development. Is there anybody at this moment who says that he wants to realize nibbāna or that he wishes to go to nibbāna? At this moment we do not know yet what nibbāna is. Although people do not understand yet the reality at this moment, they think that nibbāna is a place and they hope to go there. They wish to go to nibbāna without knowing what nibbāna is. How will they attain nibbāna? When paññā knows and understands the truth of realities, paññā will tend towards nibbāna, and then there is no idea of self who is forcing himself to do so. When one knows and understands the truth it will be a condition to gradually incline to nibbāna. Whether this is a slow or a rapid process depends on the power of defilements and on the power of paññā.

There is no self who can force his inclinations he has accumulated for an endlessly long time, hundred thousands of aeons or more. However, the paññā that has been developed will know the truth of dhammas that are non-self, but realities which have been accumulated and arise at this moment. There are conditions that a person is such or such, and therefore nobody can establish any rules with regard to what one should do. People are not identical, each person is unique, and thus each person has his own accumulated inclinations. Therefore nobody can establish any rule that would cause the arising of paññā. The only conditions for paññā to gradually develop are listening to the Dhamma, studying it, investigating the Dhamma and taking part of Dhamma discussions. Some people believe, when they come to listen to the Dhamma, that they have to dress in white, but this is not the right condition for the development of paññā, for correct understanding.

Footnote

1. Ignorance is the first link of the Dependent Origination. So long as there is ignorance we continue being in the cycle of birth and death. For the arahat who has eradicated ignorance, there will not be rebirth, for him there is the end to the cycle of birth and death.

Chapter 11

Dhamma Discussions in Hotel Gakkalok, Siem Reap (Part I)

Question: I have a problem in daily life. I am a person who worries and who is tense. I like to sit and concentrate on something in order to get rid of my tenseness, but I can only concentrate, I do not know how to progress further.

Sujin: What do you want to acquire?

Answer: I want to acquire happiness, I hope for a great deal of happiness. I experience a lot of unhappiness in my life and if my suffering can disappear I will be happy and I wish happiness to last for a long time. I think that if I sit and concentrate there will be happiness. I believe that this is wholesome.

Priya: I used to sit and concentrate for a long time, two hours daily, and I thought that this was happiness. I kept on concentrating, but was this real happiness? When I came to study the Dhamma I changed my ideas. I knew that when I concentrated I did not know anything, thus, this did not mean happiness, it was rather ignorance. But during the time I was concentrating I was not unhappy. When I came to study the Dhamma, I realized that I had lobha during the time I was sitting with concentration.

Nina: We can verify everything ourselves. Acharn Sujin speaks about seeing what appears through the eyes, hearing sound that appears through the ears, and we can verify this. Seeing is not the same as thinking about what we have seen. Seeing or hearing are different from thinking of concepts of beings, people, a table or a chair. We can verify everything ourselves through the six doorways of the senses and the mind. There are only six worlds appearing one at a time through these doorways. We think that there are people, beings, a table or a chair, but in reality there are only nāma and rūpa, and we can prove this ourselves.

Nipat: How can we prove this ourselves? By means of which?

Nina: We should listen to the Dhamma very often; we need to hear about seeing and hearing, and then we shall have more understanding. This is a condition for sati to very gradually be aware of the characteristics that appear. However, we should remember that it is not self who develops understanding.

Pradhib: I understand that when someone sits and concentrates, he accumulates akusala.

Sujin: Some people think that it is akusala to sit and concentrate, but I feel that someone simplifies matters when he says that as soon as he is contented and relaxed there must be akusala citta. This shows that if someone does not understand realities, he does not know precisely when there is kusala citta and when akusala citta at the moment of feeling contented. Or someone may erroneously think that there is kusala citta and he may try with attachment to make it arise. In reality kusala citta can arise without the need to sit with concentration. Whenever there is right understanding, it is a kind of kusala. There are many kinds of kusala. Some people think that only giving things away is kusala. However, when one abstains from akusala it is kusala. When we listen to the Dhamma at this moment, there is kusala citta accompanied by paññā. This is kusala of a higher level than kusala of dāna, generosity, or sīla, morality. Also other religions teach kusala of the level of dāna and of sīla, but they do not teach the development of paññā that understands the true nature of realities; this is only taught in Buddhism. Other religions do not teach that the truth of realities is penetrated through the attainment of enlightenment.

Priya: Kusala of the level of satipaṭṭhāna is much higher than the development of samatha. We should listen to the Dhamma so that we have more understanding. When someone performs meritorious deeds, puñña, there is purity of citta. There are ten kinds of meritorious deeds that can be classified as threefold: as dāna, sīla and bhāvanā, mental development. Dāna includes giving, transference of merit, that is, giving others the opportunity to rejoice in one's kusala, and rejoicing in the kusala of others. Sīla includes: abstinence from akusala, kusala through body and speech, the observance of five or eight precepts and kusala such as helping other people.

Nipat: Respectful behaviour through body, speech and mind towards people who are superior in age, in rank or superior with regard to kusala dhamma, is also kusala included in sīla.

Jaran: Do we have to remember each subject of the Dhamma we have learnt?

Nipat: We should understand the Dhamma that is within ourselves, not in the texts.

Fongchan: Does listening often to the Dhamma help our understanding?

Sujin: Remembering is not the same as understanding.

Kulvilai : If we listen to Acharn who explains the way to understand realities in daily life, it will help us to have more understanding

Soun Osoth: I know that it is very important to remember the theory of the Dhamma one has learned. In the “Questions of King Milinda” Nagasena speaks about seventeen kinds of sati. Sati that remembers is most important. There can be remembrance with sati. Would Mother Sujin explain this, please?

Nipat: It is useful to remember correctly. But what is the benefit of remembrance?

Soun: It is beneficial for the development of satipaṭṭhāna. We should remember the objects of satipaṭṭhāna.

Nipat: There should be remembrance that leads to understanding. Remembrance of terms will not lead to understanding. When you only remember the terms you will not understand the characteristics of realities.

Sujin: Remembrance is not sati, it is saññā cetasika. When we come across a certain term we should have correct understanding of its meaning. We cannot change the characteristic of the reality conveyed by a certain term. No matter whether saññā arises together with effort or with paññā, saññā is still saññā. There are other cetasikas which also arise together with saññā; saññā can be firm remembrance and that is because paññā cetasika arises together with it. Saññā that is just ordinary remembrance is different from saññā that arises with viriya, effort, or with paññā, and these cases saññā is of a different level. We should not overlook the original meaning of saññā we are familiar with. We should not confuse saññā with sati.

Soun: Saññā can arise with kusala citta or with akusala citta. Sati is a sobhana cetasika. There is a level of sati when we listen to the Dhamma or read the texts and understand the Dhamma. In the “Questions of King Milinda” it is said that while counting there can also be sati. Please would you explain this?

Sujin: We used to remember a great deal, but don't we also forget what we learned? It makes, however, a great difference if we remember something that we have understood. We shall not forget what we have understood. But if we only remember names, concepts

or different topics, don't we forget? It is useless to follow all the texts without understanding the meaning of those topics and words. When we read certain texts we should know their meaning, we should know why different topics are stated in a specific order, because then we shall have more understanding. We should know the reason for such classifications. However, it is more important that we understand realities at this moment. If Khun Soun would not hold on to all the things he has memorized and he would consider the realities that are appearing in order to understand them, he could explain the meaning of what is real at this moment by correct understanding. Then it is his own understanding stemming from reading, listening, thinking, investigation, careful consideration and awareness of the characteristics of realities.

Therefore, the real benefit of the study of Buddhism is the understanding of the realities that are appearing. Perhaps we have studied the Tipiṭaka a great deal in former lives, but who can remember this? If we in this life do not understand realities, we may try again to memorize them. But it may happen that, as soon as we hear explanations about realities, we immediately understand them and this is conditioned by former moments of listening. That is why we can consider and investigate the characteristic of nāma that is different from the characteristic of rūpa. When somebody speaks about nāma and rūpa we do not think of them as mere names. In some texts the terms nāma and rūpa are translated as name and form and one may wonder what the reason is. One should understand the meaning of the reality of "name", that is the translation of nāma. Nāma is a Pali term that can be translated as that which bends towards an object ¹, thus, the realities of citta and cetasika which arise because of the appropriate conditions. Whenever citta and cetasikas arise, they must experience an object, their characteristic is different from the characteristic of rūpa. We should really understand this and not merely remember names and terms, so that we shall not be confused.

Amara: We are different from someone who is dead because for us there is nāma. If we do not study nāma and rūpa more profoundly, we do not know that there is the element, dhātu, that experiences; we do not know that there is nāma. Because of nāma we are different from someone who is dead.

Jaran: Acharn said that when there is understanding you can remember what you learnt. Did I understand this correctly? When I listen to the Dhamma and I understand what I heard, kusala citta arises. Then there is sati with the level of kusala that is listening to the Dhamma, thus, the level of theoretical understanding. Saññā cetasika that arises with sati of that level will be of such strength that one can remember what one has heard. Is that correct?

Sujin: Saññā accompanies each citta and it depends on conditions what type of citta arises. Saññā accompanies kusala citta of the level of dāna, of sīla, of samatha and of satipaṭṭhāna. Thus, the degrees of saññā are different, but saññā is not sati.

Amara: Saññā and sati can arise together, but they perform each their own function.

Soun: All dhammas that arise do so because there are conditions, paccayas, for their arising. These conditions are realities. We should often study the Dhamma. Mahā-kusala cittas are of different degrees, and confidence, saddhā, in the Buddha is of different

degrees. Also sati has different degrees: sati arises when we read the scriptures or when we listen to the Dhamma. Saññā, remembrance, arises with sati. I would like to ask what sati arising with the fivefold Path is.

Sujin: It is satipaṭṭhāna. It is of the fivefold Path, without the three factors which are the abstinences ².

Soun: When sati arises with paññā, the kusala citta is ñāna-sampayutta (accompanied by paññā), and kusala is of the level of satipaṭṭhāna.

Jaran: What are puñña, merit, and pāpa, evil?

Pradip: Puñña are the citta and cetasikas that are kusala of the level of dāna, sīla and bhāvanā, including samatha and satipaṭṭhāna. When citta is not engaged with the ten meritorious actions, it is pāpa, evil.

Sujin: Pāpa are the realities that are not good, not beautiful. Puñña are the realities that are good, that are beautiful. Dhammas are very intricate because they arise and fall away very rapidly. Citta and its accompanying cetasikas arise and fall away together. Sometimes they are kusala, sometimes akusala, and the series of kusala cittas and of akusala cittas alternate with each other extremely rapidly. Sometimes people mistakenly say that at this or that moment there is kusala or akusala. They should study the Dhamma so that they know that when lobha, dosa, moha and other akusala dhammas arise there is pāpa, unwholesomeness. Jealousy, issā, and stinginess, macchariya, for example, are characteristics of akusala dhammas. Kusala or puñña is the opposite of akusala, thus, at that moment citta and cetasikas that are beautiful and wholesome arise together. Body and speech are the doorways of kusala citta and of akusala citta. There are not only citta and cetasika, there is also rūpa. If there would only be citta that is kusala or akusala, could other people be troubled? There is rūpa, and thus, when akusala citta arises, there are doorways of kamma, namely, bodily action and speech that are evil. Such action and speech originate from akusala citta and they harm and trouble other people. In reality, when akusala arises someone harms himself first. When akusala arises he does not feel contented and peaceful.

When lobha arises we believe that this is good. Lobha is clinging to and desire for something. When we acquire what we want we are glad, we are absorbed in it and rejoice in it; we believe that it is something good. What we ourselves believe to be valuable is different from what is valuable in the way of the Dhamma. We estimate happy feeling to be valuable. However, in reality, lobha is akusala, it is the reality that clings. People are not satisfied to cling just a little, they want to cling more intensely, so that they have pleasant feeling accompanying clinging. No matter what they are doing, they desire pleasant feeling, not just indifferent feeling. Thus we see that if we do not study the Dhamma we have wrong understanding of it. When people, for example, do not feel happy, they sit and concentrate. They believe that at such a moment the citta is kusala, but they do not know that there are likely to be both ignorance and clinging at such moments.

If someone has studied the Dhamma, he will more clearly understand that there cannot be lobha, dosa and moha at the moment of kusala citta. When kusala citta arises he will

correctly understand what the objective of kusala citta is. It is not easy to know the characteristic of that citta, but when it expresses itself by deeds through body or speech we can know it. However, someone's understanding should be correct, otherwise he will be misled and have wrong understanding. When we see a poor person and we think of helping him, is there kusala citta or akusala citta? When we think of helping, it is kusala citta, but kusala has not been completed, because we did not perform any action. If kusala that has not been completed would be regarded as an accomplished action, everybody would have a wealth of kusala. When someone thinks of performing kusala, it is not sure that the wholesome action he intends to perform will arise. There are three times, kâla, of kusala: the time before one performs kusala, and then cetanâ, intention or volition, is called: pubba cetanâ (pubba meaning former); there is the actual time of performing kusala, and then cetanâ is called: muñcana cetanâ (muñcana meaning emitting or bestowing); there is the time after one has performed kusala, and then cetanâ is called: apara cetanâ (apara meaning following)³. The citta is kusala, it is pure, when one can help someone else to be free from suffering and to be happier. Kusala are the meritorious actions which can be classified in brief as threefold: dâna, sîla and bhâvanâ. In the case of the monk, kusala can be classified as sîla, samâdhi and paññâ. Kusala dhammas arise with the citta, they are the dhammas that are good and wholesome. Akusala dhammas arise also with the citta, they are the dhammas that are unwholesome, such as lobha, moha and dosa. Do we have today a great deal of kusala or of akusala? If a person is truthful he is actually taking his refuge in the Dhamma.

Fongchan: Someone may be sincere, but he has akusala time and again. At least he knows that it is important to be sincere.

Footnotes

1. The Pâli term namati means to bend.
2. Only when the citta is lokuttara citta the three abstinences arise all at the same time and then the citta is accompanied by eight Path factors.
3. When someone, for example, performs dâna, there can be three times of kusala: before, when he thinks of giving, during the action of dâna and afterwards, when he thinks with kusala citta of his kusala.

Chapter 12.

Dhamma Discussions in Hotel Gakkalok, Siem Reap (Part II)

Kulvilai: I know from the study of the Dhamma that there are eight types of kusala citta, and that some of them are accompanied by paññâ and some unaccompanied by paññâ. If we have theoretical understanding of realities but we do not realize their characteristics, can we say that there is paññâ?

Sujin: There is paññā but it is very slight. It can be compared to a very small tree that has not grown yet. While one is listening to the Dhamma at this moment, there is kusala of the degree of mental development, bhāvanā, but it is not yet of the degree that satipaṭṭhāna can arise.

Kulvilai: Kusala of the degree of dāna and of sīla do not arise easily in daily life. If we understand the characteristics of realities and develop satipaṭṭhāna, we shall be able to develop all kinds of kusala in daily life.

Sujin: All people here are good, they are not bandits, they do not kill, steal or engage in other kinds of bad conduct. But this does not mean that one understands realities. Kusala citta or akusala may arise, but people may not know the characteristics of those realities. When they commit akusala, they may not know that it is akusala, or they may know it, but they still commit it. Even when they know that it is akusala, they do not realize that it is not self. There are several degrees of wholesomeness. In reality not self, but kusala is good, and not self but akusala is evil, and it is paññā that can realize this.

Question: When we still see beings and people, is there akusala citta?

Sujin: When we see that there are beings and people it is because of saññā that remembers. When paramattha dhammas have fallen away, we remember that what appears is this or that thing or person. When we remember things it is not necessarily akusala. The Buddha remembered and we also remember different things, but the cittas which remember are varied. People who have listened to the Dhamma have understanding stemming from listening, they know that moha, ignorance, is the greatest danger. Whereas those who have not listened to the Dhamma do not have this degree of understanding.

Jaran: Forgiving is a kind of dāna, abhaya dāna. I would like to ask in what way it is kusala.

Sujin: The “a” in abhaya is a negation, meaning: not. Bhaya means trouble, danger or different kinds of harm. Abhaya is freedom from harm or danger. In the case of abhaya dāna, a person wishes that there will not be any kind of harm to someone else. Is it not kusala to abstain from harming someone else through body or speech, or from even harming him in thought? When we forgive, thus when we perform abhaya dāna, there is kusala citta, and when we do not forgive there is still anger.

Kulvilai: The performing of abhaya dāna is actually mettā, we give friendship to someone else, even if he is our enemy.

Question: What kind of citta arises when I wish to have kusala, when I wish to perform kusala?

Sujin: The moment you wish to have kusala is different from the moment you perform kusala. When you wish to have it, there is lobha, and when you perform it there is kusala citta. We should investigate whether there is wishing or whether there is the sincere determination for kusala. You can only know this with regard to yourself. Wishing to

perform kusala is something other than the actual performing of kusala. If we can perform a good deed and we perform it immediately, there is kusala citta straightaway. Or it may happen that we wish to perform kusala but we are not able to do this. Someone, for example, may be very wealthy, but he says that he will perform kusala only if he wins a lottery prize. Thus, we should consider whether there is mere wishing for kusala or the determination to perform it. When there is merely wishing for it there is lobha.

Question: What is the difference between people who listen to the Dhamma and have understanding of realities stemming from listening, and those who penetrate the characteristics of realities? Although these people have a different level of understanding, they are the same in as far as they know that realities are not beings or people.

Sujin: There are different levels of paññā, namely, pariyatti, theoretical knowledge, paipatti, practice, and paivedha, realization.

Question: In what way are these levels of paññā different?

Sujin: What appears now?

Answer: Hardness. That is a reality.

Sujin: Why do you say that it is a reality?

Answer: Because I remember that everything is a dhamma with its own characteristic (sabhāva dhamma).

Sujin: This is understanding of the level of pariyatti.

Pradip: Paññā of the level of pariyatti is the understanding stemming from listening. When we listen we learn something we had not known before: dhammas arise and appear through the six doorways of eyes, ears, nose, tongue, bodysense and mind-door. Through the eyes only colour is known, through the ears only sound. Realities are not beings, people or self.

Kulvilai: I heard Acharn say that we should pay attention to the kusala of someone else in order to rejoice in it (anumodana), and as regards ourselves, we should look for our akusala in order to eradicate it.

Sujin: Do we look for it or do we see it?

Kulavilai: We should see it.

Sujin: If a saying is true, it must be spoken by the Buddha, no matter which method of explanation is used. One should not be fixed on it to find out in which text of the scriptures these words can be found. If they are true they explain realities.

Nipat: There is the saying of the Buddha that we should not think of the superior and the mean deeds of someone else, but that we should think of the superior and the mean deeds

of ourselves.

Sujin: Isn't that also in agreement with the saying that we should not pay attention to the evils of someone else? We read in the "Dhammapada" verse 50¹:

"One should not pry into the faults of others, things left done and undone by others, but one's own deeds, done and undone."

It is certain that the citta will be impure when we see someone else's evil. We should immediately realize that we forget to consider our own citta at that moment. If we look into the mirror we can see our own citta at that moment and we can find out what kind of citta thinks in that way. Therefore, instead of thinking of someone else's evil, which conditions the arising of akusala, we should think of his wholesomeness. When we think of someone else's wholesomeness, without jealousy or contempt, it is excellent. At that moment there is kusala citta.

Nipat: In the Buddha's time there were not yet books and people could study the teachings by listening, not by means of textbooks. Those who listened could immediately understand what they heard. At the present time it is difficult for us to reach the level of abandoning the clinging to texts.

Question: When Khun Jaran knows hardness, is this of the level of pariyatti, theoretical knowledge, or paipatti, practice?

Jaran: It is the practice; well, I am not sure.

Kimrod: Someone should not use the word practice, if he is not sure about its meaning.

Jaran: Pariyatti is theoretical understanding of realities according to the texts. Acharn asks about my understanding when I study the texts. I do not know whether my understanding at such moments is of the level of pariyatti or paipatti. But I still think that there is a self who is here.

Sujin: Paipatti is different from pariyatti. When there is only pariyatti, theoretical understanding, and not paipatti, one may doubt what level of understanding one has. What appears at this moment?

Jaran: Hardness appears at my hand.

Sujin: Is this pariyatti or paipatti?

Jaran: Pariyatti.

Sujin: If there is paipatti, what is it?

Jaran: When a characteristic of reality appears to sati there is paipatti.

Sujin: That is the difference. We understand the name or the meaning of the word sati. However, when sati arises with dāna or sīla, it may not be apparent. At the level of

samatha, when the citta is calm, free from akusala, there is sati but it does not appear as non-self. However, when sati of the level of satipaïhãna arises, its characteristic appears.

When hardness is experienced through touch, everybody can say that this is hard. When people experience heat, taste something hot or sweet, or when they hear a sound, they know it and they can say what it is. The reason is that citta is the reality which can experience an object through each of the doorways. Seeing-consciousness sees what appears through the eyes and hearing-consciousness hears sound. When odour appears, smelling-consciousness experiences odour. When flavour is experienced, tasting-consciousness experiences flavour. If something is experienced through body-contact, body-consciousness is the reality that experiences hardness naturally, and everybody knows this.

However, when sammã-sati, right mindfulness, arises and is aware, there is understanding based on listening, which realizes that there is no self. It realizes that there are elements or dhammas, each with their own characteristic, that can appear through the doorways of the eyes, the ears, the nose, the tongue, the bodysense and the mind-door. The realities that appear through the bodysense are the characteristics of softness, hardness, cold, heat, motion or pressure appearing at this moment. However, when they have appeared, they pass away extremely rapidly. Mind-door process cittas arising afterwards know that there is a table or a chair, but whenever sati arises and is aware, the mind-door process cittas do not know concepts, but they know realities. Understanding, although it is still very slight, can begin to realize that there are dhammas, each with their own characteristic, and at such moments there is no need to think of them or to speak about them. There can be understanding of the characteristic of hardness that appears at such a moment, it can be realized as a kind of dhamma that has the characteristic of hardness.

When hardness appears, there are two kinds of realities: hardness and the experience of hardness. The moment of sati and of paññã that gradually begins to understand realities, is very short, because such a moment arises and then falls away extremely rapidly. It is impossible that there is immediately clear understanding of realities. There can gradually be awareness and more understanding of the characteristic which experiences, of the reality which experiences hardness; there will be more understanding of that characteristic as it really is. This is satipaïhãna, but not yet of the level of païvedha, the direct realization of the truth. One only begins to develop correct understanding of the characteristics of realities we used to take for people, for beings, for this or that thing. When sati arises and is aware of what appears, one begins to understand that there are only different dhammas, each with their own characteristic, and that this is reality. When sati arises people will know when they are forgetful of realities and when there is sati. Knowing the difference between the moment of sati and the moment of forgetfulness is the beginning level of its development, and people can only know this themselves. Other people cannot know with regard to someone else what sati is aware of, whether sati arises or not. Each person can only know this for himself.

Soun: In the Tipiaka it has been stated that seeing Dhamma is seeing the conditions for nãma dhammas and rúpa dhammas. If one is aware of rúpa dhamma there must be paññã that is powerful. At such a moment akusala cannot arise, there is only the dhamma that knows realities as they are. The development of satipaïhãna begins with understanding

and considering the body, outside as well as inside. Is thinking of conditions the practice, païipatti?

Sujin: Thinking is not practising. There are three levels of paññā: paññā of the level of knowledge based on listening, suta-mayā-paññā; paññā of the level of investigation, cintā-mayā-paññā; paññā based on mental development, bhāvanā-mayā-paññā. The moment of thinking is not the moment of awareness of the characteristics of realities, you are merely thinking about conditions.

Nina: We should understand akusala, we should not try to eradicate akusala because that is not possible. There are several stages of vipassanā ñāua. The first stage is knowing the difference between the characteristic of nāma and the characteristic of rúpa, but at that stage one does not realize conditions, that is known later on.

Jaran: When sati is aware of dosa, why is that not the practice?

Sujin: Is there anybody who is angry but does not know what anger is? When dosa arises everybody knows that this is not lobha, not kusala. The characteristic of dosa is coarse, it is harshness. Is there anybody who does not know the characteristic of dosa? But only knowing this is not paññā.

Jaran: When there is the practice, in what way is one aware of the characteristic of dosa?

Sujin: When there is dosa sati can be aware of the characteristic of dosa as only a kind of reality, not our dosa, not self. We can have anger as usual, but when sati arises, the characteristic of anger appears and sati can be aware of it so that it is known as only a kind of reality. Paññā should develop so that we become acquainted with the truth that everything is dhamma. Everything appearing at this moment is dhamma, reality; everything that appears through each of the six doorways, through the doorways of the eyes, the ears, the nose, the tongue, the bodysense and the mind-door is dhamma. Through the study one knows that everything is dhamma, but sati has not been aware of all realities. Therefore, through theoretical understanding, understanding of the level of pariyatti, we cannot really understand that everything is dhamma. Only paññā of the level of païipatti, of the practice, can really understand this.

One will really understand that everything is dhamma when sati is aware of the characteristics of realities as they appear one at a time, so that paññā can develop and realities appear as just dhammas, not self. Paññā should be developed continuously so that it is understood that everything is dhamma and there is no doubt about the characteristics of nāma and rúpa, no matter through which doorway realities appear, through the sense-doors or through the mind-door. When we are seeing and satipaïhāna does not arise, there is no way of knowing that seeing is an element or reality that experiences something; this characteristic is real, and it does not have shape or form. We should consider the reality that is the element which experiences something: there is no rúpa that is blended or mixed with it. Then it will be clear that the characteristic of the element that experiences is penetrated through the mind-door. Such a moment is different from the moments that everything seems to appear together, such as visible object that seems to appear together with seeing ². Paññā of the level of satipaïhāna that investigates the characteristics of

realities should develop to the degree of paivedha, the realization of the truth, when realities appear as they are through the mind-door. If pañña has not been developed to that degree it is impossible to penetrate the characteristics of realities.

Jaran: Can pañña of the level of pariyatti be a condition for having less anger?

Sujin: Sometimes, and this depends on the level of correct understanding. In reality, anger that arises falls away, there is no anger that does not fall away.

Soun: Just a moment ago we spoke about thinking, which is of the level of pariyatti. Would you please explain the difference between paipatti and paivedha?

Sujin: I just explained about dosa that everyone knows, but people think that it is self who is angry. However, when sati arises the characteristic of dosa appears and they will begin to gradually understand that that characteristic is just a reality, a dhamma. We should consider whether the idea of self who is angry is different from knowing that it is just a reality with that characteristic. We believe that it is self who is angry, but we should know that it is a reality with its own characteristic. We should thoroughly know everything that appears now, be it colour, sound or thinking. Satipaïhãna should be aware of all realities so that it can be understood that everything is truly dhamma. The study of the Dhamma should be in conformity with the pañña that is to be developed stage by stage. The first stage is knowing that everything is dhamma, and this is the stage of pariyatti. The stage of paipatti, practice, is satipaïhãna which knows the true characteristics of the realities that are appearing and which begins to realize that they are just dhammas. There is a considerable difference between the idea of self who is angry and the understanding that that characteristic is only a kind of dhamma. Everything that appears through the sense-doors and the mind-door are different kinds of dhamma. When sati arises, it is known through which doorway the reality sati is aware of appears.

If sati is aware when one is angry, but it is not aware of other dhammas, such as what appears through the eyes, one will not know that these are also dhammas, each with their own characteristic. Moreover, we should begin to understand also the characteristic of pañña. We should know that pañña cetasika is a reality that correctly understands the characteristic of what appears. There are many degrees of pañña. Pañña based on listening to the Dhamma is still very weak, it knows the meaning and the names of the different notions, thus, only concepts. However, when someone has listened and understood a great deal, it can be the condition for understanding the characteristic of sammã-sati which is aware of a reality that has arisen and appears. Sati can be aware, and we should not think it too difficult or impossible. People may doubt whether they can be aware in this life, but that is just thinking. When there are conditions for the arising of sati it can arise. One may think that sati may only arise after ten years or in the next life, but thinking in that way is useless. Sati is dependent on conditions, just like hearing and other realities: when there are conditions for hearing, it must arise; and when there are conditions for seeing it must arise. Even so, when there are conditions for the arising of sammã-sati, it arises. Therefore, we should correctly understand that sati can arise naturally.

Each dhamma arises naturally. It is not natural if someone because of his ignorance wishes for the arising again of sati. We should not forget that pañña is developed with the aim to

become detached. Sati arises and then falls away, this is normal. Why does one wish for its arising again? Whenever there are conditions sati will arise. We should clearly understand that all realities appearing at this moment do so because there are conditions for their arising. If someone really understands this, he will not worry. Lobha will arise because there are conditions for its arising. Dosa will arise because there are conditions for its arising. Whatever reality arises must fall away again, and we cannot do anything else but study with sati sampajañña, clear comprehension, the realities that arise and fall away. We know the truth, we know that whatever appears is just dhamma and this is in conformity with what we learnt by listening. In this way pañña is developed in combination with the study of realities. People should not merely study and then wait for the arising of satipañhāna or wish for its arising. Right understanding is the condition for sati to arise and to be aware naturally. Everything that concerns the development of pañña should be natural. When sati has fallen away, it has fallen away, and when it arises, it arises. In this way one will know the difference between the moment when sati arises and the moment when there is forgetfulness.

Footnotes

1. I inserted the text of the “Dhammapada”.
2. When there is seeing there is also that which is seen, visible object, but sati can be aware of only one reality at a time. Seeing is nāma and it can only be experienced through the mind-door. Visible object is rúpa and it can be experienced through the eye-door and through the mind-door. When insight-knowledge arises, nāma and rúpa are realized one at a time through the mind-door.

Chapter 13

Dhamma Discussion in Hotel Gakkalok, Siem Reap (Part III)

Soun: When sati arises, is that full comprehension of the known, ñāta pariñña?

Sujin: No, it is not. Full comprehension of the known begins at the first stage of vipassanā ñāua, insight knowledge, which is knowing the difference between nāma and rúpa, nāma-rúpa-pariccheda ñāua.

Soun: When satipañhāna arises, one is aware of nāma dhamma and rúpa dhamma.

Sujin: Satipañhāna is developed little by little, very gradually, until there is clear understanding. From the very beginning sati needs to be aware again and again, very often, so that vipassanā ñāua can be reached. “Full comprehension of the known” is the pañña that penetrates the true nature of the characteristics of nāma and rúpa that appear, but this is not the beginning stage of satipañhāna. Satipañhāna arises when one develops understanding.

Soun: This is true, in the “Visuddhimagga” (Ch XX, 4) it is explained that “full understanding of the known” begins at the stage of insight knowledge that is knowing the

difference between nāma and rūpa.

Nina: When you, Khun Soun, are angry or unhappy, do you like it?

Soun: I dislike it but I do not know the reality at that moment as it is.

Nina: I think that nobody wants to have anger, but we forget to be aware of the characteristic of anger. This is most important: everything that appears should be understood.

Sujin: We should know that everything that is real at this moment is dhamma. The word “dhamma” means element, dhātu. Is it easy or difficult to know that there are different elements? It is surely difficult to know nāma dhātu. If we take something for self, we do not realize it as an element. Whereas, if we do not cling to the idea of self, we know that what appears is dhamma, that there are different kinds of elements.

Jaran: What is the difference between the moment one sees anger with the wrong view of self and the moment without the wrong view of self, when sati is aware of the characteristic of the citta which is harsh?

Sujin: What do you mean by seeing anger? If the characteristic of anger arises and you know that this is anger, it is just normal.

Jaran: You explained that the person who has not studied the Dhamma erroneously believes that there is self but that he can also see his anger.

Sujin: That is correct. Everybody knows anger. When anger arises everybody knows that this is anger. Isn't that correct?

Jaran: I still do not know what the difference is between the moment that sati is aware of the characteristic of anger as non-self and the moment of knowing anger with the wrong view of self.

Sujin: We should know the difference between the characteristic of sati and forgetfulness. When sati arises the characteristic of sati appears. Then we can know that sati is aware of the reality of anger at that moment. When sati arises, the characteristic of sati appears as a reality that is aware of the object at that moment. Whenever sati arises we should know that it is not self. It is not necessary to be in a room where one sits quietly so that sati can arise. It can arise naturally at this moment. Dosa arises and it has a characteristic, sati arises and it has another characteristic. When sati arises it can be aware of the characteristic of the reality appearing at that moment. Paññā which accompanies sati when one just begins to develop satipaṭṭhāna is still very weak, it is merely paññā of a beginning stage.

However, If people do not have correct understanding of the right Path, cetanā, volition or intention, is of the wrong Path, micchā-magga. When one has listened to the Dhamma, saññā, remembrance, becomes steadfast and remembers that there is dhamma, reality, at this moment. That is a condition for sammā-sati, right mindfulness, to arise and to be

aware of a dhamma that appears. Then there is paññā of the right Path. When one studies and gradually has more understanding of the characteristics of realities, this is not merely the level of theoretical understanding, of thinking about concepts of realities. When characteristics of dhammas really appear to sati, one begins to have correct understanding of the reality that appears. At this moment a dhamma appears but when there is ignorance there cannot be right understanding of the characteristic of that dhamma, because ignorance is not satipaṭṭhāna. When satipaṭṭhāna arises there is awareness of the characteristic of the reality that is naturally appearing, and in this way paññā gradually begins to understand that reality. When satipaṭṭhāna arises, there is training in higher sīla (adhi-sīla-sikkhā), in higher citta or concentration (adhi-citta-sikkhā), and higher paññā (adhi-paññā-sikkhā).

Pramesavan: There can only be paṭipatti, practice, when there is first pariyatti, theoretical understanding which is correct. Is that right?

Sujin: We have to understand first what pariyatti is, the study and the correct understanding of the characteristics of realities so that they are known as dhammas, not self. From birth to death dhammas arise and fall away but we take them all for self. When we study the theory, we begin to understand that what we take for self are citta, cetasika and rūpa. However, we should have a deeper understanding, we should realize them as dhamma. We learn that the rebirth-consciousness, the paṭisandhi-citta, the first citta of a new life, is an element that experiences, nāma dhātu, different from rūpa arising at the same time. Nobody knows the moment of his rebirth-consciousness, but after that characteristics of rūpa dhammas and nāma dhammas appear. If someone does not study, there is no awareness of them, but if one studies and understands nāma and rūpa, there can be conditions for the arising of sati, depending on the degree of understanding. Sati does not arise when one clings to the view of a self who wants to have sati. When someone really understands that there are only dhammas, it is a condition for satipaṭṭhāna to be aware of the characteristic that is dhamma.

Pramesavan: Thus, we should begin with the study of the Dhamma, no matter whether this is done by reading, listening or Dhamma discussions. We must consider correctly the teachings in conformity with what the Buddha taught, namely, that realities are not a being or person, that they are only elements. We have to develop this understanding all the time.

Sujin: We should also understand that dhammas are not theory, that they are not merely contained in the texts. We have to know that at each moment now everything is dhamma. Studying dhamma is studying what is appearing at this very moment. We should never forget this.

Pramesavan: Study should be based on something, because we cannot know the truth just by ourselves. Study must be based on listening, reading and considering what we read and heard.

Sujin: When we truly consider the Dhamma while we are listening, we can understand that the Dhamma we studied is here at this very moment. If we understand this, it is a condition for sati to arise and to be aware, because dhamma, reality, appears each moment; it appears at this very moment. Some people separate pariyatti from paṭipatti which they see

as something that is not part of their normal daily life, as something particular they have to be engaged in. They forget that when they study the theory, pariyatti, they should study with the aim to understand the reality that appears at this moment. One should study in order to understand that any reality of this moment is dhamma, be it seeing or hearing, but one never knew before that it was dhamma. Thus, people should study with the aim to correctly understand that nāma dhamma at this moment is the reality that experiences, the element that experiences. Nāma dhamma is not theory, but there is nāma dhamma while we are seeing now. One may have heard and understood that seeing at this moment is nāma dhamma, because it is a reality that experiences something, but the expression “the reality that experiences” is most difficult to understand and to penetrate. When one sees, there is something that is appearing through the eyes, but the reality of nāma that sees does not appear. Only when its characteristic appears, it can be known as an element or a kind of dhamma that is real.

When people have understood this, they know that what is appearing through the eyes at this moment could not appear if there would not be nāma dhamma that has arisen and sees that object. One can gradually understand that seeing at this moment is dhamma. Therefore, when one studies the Dhamma one studies with the purpose to have right understanding of the characteristics of realities that are the truth of each moment in daily life. This can be a condition for sati to arise and to be aware and in this way one will gradually understand that when one sees at this moment, it is a reality, an element that experiences, or when one hears, that it is an element experiencing sound.

People who listened at the time when the Sammāsambuddha had not yet finally passed away, could understand immediately the characteristics of nāma and rūpa. The reason was that they had developed understanding, that they had listened and considered what they had learnt to a great extent. When we read the life stories of those people we see that, before they could realize the four noble truths at the moment of enlightenment, they had to study and listen a great deal during many lives, so that they could become “bahussuta”. A person who is bahussuta (bahu is much, and suta is heard) is someone who has listened and studied a great deal in order to understand realities. As Khun Nipat has said, at that time there were no books. Therefore, people listened with understanding and they did not think of textbooks or different subjects written down in books. They heard about realities that were appearing, they could investigate and understand them immediately. Their study was based on listening and considering, they knew that what they heard concerned the reality appearing at that very moment. When the Buddha asked whether seeing was permanent or impermanent, they answered, “impermanent”. They did not memorize this from a textbook, but seeing was performing the function of seeing, and the paññā they had developed was the condition for understanding the truth of the reality at that moment.

Is seeing at this very moment permanent or impermanent? People at the Buddha’s time could answer that it was impermanent. It depends on the level of paññā how someone can answer this question. People who had developed paññā that could penetrate the truth could give the right answer. Just a moment ago I asked Khun Jaran whether he knew hardness on the level of the theory, pariyatti, or on the level of paipatti, the practice. One should be sincere, truthful, when one considers this. When it is still pariyatti, one takes hardness for the hardness of a table or a chair. When a person has studied the Dhamma he knows that it is a kind of element that can be experienced through the bodysense, a reality that is

hardness. People at the Buddha's time who answered the Buddha's question about realities being permanent or impermanent could, when his discourse was finished, become a sotāpanna or even an arahat. We may give the same answer as those people but has pañña reached the same level as their pañña? It depends on conditions what level pañña has reached. When satipaṭṭhāna arises one can begin to understand the difference between sati of the level of dāna or sīla and of the level of satipaṭṭhāna. Sati of satipaṭṭhāna has a characteristic that arises and appears. Not a self, but sati is aware of the characteristics of realities. It is aware of the realities that naturally appear in daily life. Pañña that arises and is conditioned by satipaṭṭhāna is the reality that clearly understands those realities as they are. Pañña is different from sati.

Sati is the reality that is aware, it is not pañña. Sati has the function of awareness from the beginning on, all the time. Whereas pañña has the function of understanding the characteristics of realities while it is gradually developed stage by stage. It depends on the degree pañña to what extent the realities that appear are clearly understood. At this moment everybody experiences hardness and knows that satipaṭṭhāna is aware of hardness. However, the moment of understanding the characteristic of hardness is extremely short; other realities appear and then there is forgetfulness again. Thus, it will take a long time before there is firm understanding of the characteristic of the reality appearing right now, and before such understanding conditions the different stages of insight knowledge, and even the stages of enlightenment of the sotāpanna and eventually of arahatship. However, not only the reality of hardness should be known, also the characteristics of other realities that appear should be thoroughly known and understood. The level of theoretical understanding stemming from listening is not sufficient, but sati should be aware over and over again. We say that everything is dhamma, but if there has never been awareness of what appears through the eyes at this moment, realities cannot appear as just dhamma. We should begin to be aware of realities so that it will become evident that everything is dhamma. Understanding can gradually grow, and everybody will know for himself to what extent it has been developed. We should be very sincere with regard to what we understand or not yet understand. This is the true benefit of studying the Dhamma. People who study but who have no awareness at all during their whole life are like the ladle who serves the curry but does not know the taste. The next life they have to listen again, they have to memorize what they heard, but if they thoroughly study the realities that appear they will begin to understand their characteristics. This is the true benefit of the study, namely the study of the level of pariyatti and of the level of paṭipatti, and this will lead to the level of paṭivedha, the direct realization of the truth.

Pramesavan: You stress studying for the right purpose, namely, right understanding of realities as they are at this very moment. It is very beneficial to read your book "A Survey of Paramattha Dhammas" as an introduction to the study. I understand that the study of the dhammas really has to be developed for a long time, it is cira kāla bhāvanā. We do not expect to cause the arising of satipaṭṭhāna at a particular time or even in this life.

Sujin: The study of the characteristics of realities has to be developed for a long time. People should study so that they have first theoretical understanding of realities and this will lead to direct understanding of the characteristics of realities.

Pramesavan: Some people say that one should not study at all, that one should only

investigate realities.

Sujin: This is not right. We do not have pañña to the same extent as the Sammāsambuddha who realized the truth through his enlightenment all by himself, without having heard the Dhamma from someone else in his last life. He considered and was aware of the characteristics of realities and in the last watch of the night he attained enlightenment and thereby became the Sammāsambuddha.

Footnotes

1. At the moment of mindfulness of nāma and rúpa, there is training in higher síla, the six doors are guarded, there is no transgression. There is training in higher citta or concentration, because concentration, samādhi cetasika, performs the function of one-pointedness on the nāma or rúpa that appears. There is training in higher pañña that realizes nāma and rúpa as they are and that can eventually eradicate defilements when enlightenment is attained. At the moment of satipañhāna one does not take síla, samādhi or pañña for self.

Chapter 14.

Dhamma Discussion in Hotel Gaggalok, Siem Reap (Part IV)

Pramesavan: Is it necessary to read your book “A Survey of Paramattha Dhammas” entirely?

Sujin: No matter what we read, the aim should be the understanding of realities. We may have read a great deal, the Tipiṭaka and the Commentaries, but we should take part of Dhamma discussions and it should be emphasized from now on that dhamma, reality, appears at this very moment. We heard about realities while we listened to the Dhamma, but they are appearing now. Someone can test his understanding of all that he has learnt, by finding out whether he can really understand the characteristics of realities that are appearing now, or not yet. Generally there are two ways of study: by way of repeating and memorizing and by way of testing or verifying. As to the way of repeating or memorizing, we should forego that method. Some people believe that they should repeat for themselves what they learnt, but this leads only to remembering what was learnt, not to understanding it. Memorizing the subjects one learnt takes a long time, and moreover, when someone does not understand what he learnt he is bound to forget it, and thus it is not useful.

At this moment realities are appearing. What do we learn? We learn to understand the dhammas that are real at this moment, and we should not forget that this is our goal. Some people learn the Dhamma by repetition and memorizing, and then they check their knowledge. Others memorize what they learnt but do not check their knowledge. Others again do not repeat, memorize or check their knowledge, they just study but do not consider the goal of their study. The goal is the understanding of the truth of the realities that are appearing. If someone understands the goal, he will not study what is beyond his ability to understand. Our understanding is not of the degree of the understanding of the

Sammāsambuddha. The Buddha taught in his great wisdom the three parts of the Tipiṭaka in all details during fortyfive years. All people read the same scriptures, but why do they practise in different ways? Their practice shows whether they understand the goal of their study or not. It shows whether they comprehend the way to reach this goal, the real understanding of realities, or not. When we study different subjects of the Tipiṭaka, of the Vinaya, the Book of Discipline, the Suttanta or the Abhidhamma, we should know for ourselves to what degree we can understand what we have read. Can we understand only a little or is our understanding the same as the paññā of the Sammāsambuddha? Do we study in order to acquire theoretical knowledge, or do we see that the understanding we gain from the study will help us to clearly know realities as they are? For example, we may understand the object-condition, ārammaṇa-paccaya which is one condition among the conditions for realities. Anything that citta cognizes is the object of citta, it conditions the citta by being its object. An object is what citta is cognizing or experiencing, and this pertains to this very moment now. The object is an important condition for citta, citta cannot do without it. If there is no object that can be known by citta, citta cannot arise. If sound does not impinge on the earsense, hearing cannot arise. Thus, the object, that which citta cognizes, is a condition for the arising of citta by being its object. Citta is the element, the reality that experiences, and there must be an object that can be known so that citta can arise at that moment. A simile can help us to understand this better. Just as a disabled person has no strength to stand up by himself but needs something he can hold on to and by which he can pull himself up so that his body can stand erect, evenso is the object the condition for the arising of citta. It is helpful to understand this condition, and when people gradually study the other conditions with right understanding it will help them to understand the realities at this moment. In this way there are conditions for sammā-sati to arise and to be aware of their characteristics. However, if a person just memorizes what he reads in the texts but he is not able to understand the characteristics of the realities that are appearing, his study is not useful.

Pramesavan: When we study, the goal is not memorizing, is that right?

Sujin: Khun Jack will remember that last time we were in America I said to him that he began to be interested in understanding satipaṭṭhāna, because there was the foundation of understanding that could condition the arising of satipaṭṭhāna. The Buddha generally taught satipaṭṭhāna when the listeners had already sufficient understanding of the Dhamma. People who have understanding of the Dhamma should continue developing satipaṭṭhāna, that is, awareness of the characteristics of realities. This is actually the development of paññā with the aim of penetrating the truth of the realities that are the noble Truths. If people only speak all the time about the concepts of dhammas without any understanding of satipaṭṭhāna, satipaṭṭhāna cannot arise.

Pramesavan: Our group of people in America who are studying the Dhamma have no teacher. We help each other to read your book “A Survey of Paramattha Dhammas” as a foundation, but we do not read the Tipiṭaka and the Commentaries. Is this all right?

Sujin: But that is studying concepts of dhammas. Khun Anop thinks that both the recordings of discussions and this book are helpful.

Anop: I believe that someone should listen and consider the Dhamma so that he will

understand it. Reading helps one's understanding in certain aspects, but I believe that listening to the recordings is most important.

Sujin: The book "A Survey of Paramattha Dhammas" is a collection of some parts of Dhamma lectures and it deals with only a very small part of the Dhamma. There are also the Vinaya, Book of Discipline, and the Suttanta, but some people do not read these. I think that it is not sufficient just to study my book, because in my lectures I explain only a very small part of the Dhamma. I want everybody to come into contact with the original Tipiṭaka, and to study it completely. I introduced in my book only those parts that people would be able to gradually understand. When they have understood those they can read the scriptures by themselves and in that way their understanding will become more thorough. They should not neglect reading by themselves.

Phemsombat: I listen many times to your recordings from beginning to end. If I only read your book but I do not listen to the recordings, my understanding will not be as good. It is best to do both.

Fongchan: If someone listens to recordings and reads, but does not consider the realities that are appearing, it will not help much.

Pramesavan: It is not possible to consider realities without having studied the Dhamma.

Amara: Everybody should begin at the foundation, namely, knowing what satipaṭṭhāna is. When someone has understood this he can develop paññā, but it depends on his accumulations to what extent he can develop it. When someone has right understanding and he develops paññā, he can attain enlightenment. If he studies a great deal but does not consider and is not aware of the characteristics of realities, he will not understand realities as they are.

Pramesavan: The many explanations I receive from reading and from listening to the Dhamma are not the same as the explanations from Acharn Sujin personally.

Sujin: People may not understand what reading implies. I have read the Tipiṭaka. But I leave out those parts which I believe to be beyond my awareness and understanding. If they are beyond my understanding I am not interested in them. Only those parts are beneficial that help me to understand the realities that are appearing. I am interested to study and consider realities so that right understanding can become clearer. We are inclined to overlook the realities of our daily life and then they are not of any benefit to us. Events of daily life can remind us of realities, they can condition sati that sees the benefit of detachment. We can see the great compassion of the Buddha who did not avoid uttering short, uncomplicated statements that are not difficult to understand but that deal with daily life, in order to remind people of the truth. He spoke in that way because he knew that people's accumulated inclinations are very different. As to my own study, I read the subjects that I can understand. If people only memorize or just read texts, they receive no benefit from them. However, if there is a subject of Dhamma that is useful, even if it is a very short text, I will study and consider that subject until I clearly understand it. This is of a far greater benefit.

I intend to read all of the Suttanta, the Vinaya and the Abhidhamma and also the Commentaries, but I have not finished them. The Tipiṭaka is most difficult. I have given many lectures about the “Expositor”, the Commentary to the Dhammasaṅgani (Buddhist Psychological Ethics), the first Book of the Abhidhamma. I have given lectures about the twentyfour conditions contained in the Paṭṭhāna, the “Conditional Relations”, that is the last Book of the Abhidhamma, so that other people could have understanding of them. When we study the realities of citta, cetasika and rūpa, we should also understand their conditional relations. Several monks have said that they believe that they in this life will never understand the subject of conditions. They read the scriptures including also the teaching on conditions, but they need explanations so that they can grasp the meaning of paccaya, condition, and can gradually understand this subject from the beginning. For example, citta and cetasika must arise together, they are both nāma dhammas that are closely joined and cannot do without each other. However, they are not the same paramattha dhamma, ultimate reality. Citta and cetasika that are conascent, condition one another by way of sampayutta-paccaya, association-condition, because they are both nāma dhammas. Even though nāma dhamma and rūpa dhamma arise and fall away together, their characteristics are different from each other, they cannot be as closely joined as nāma with another nāma. Therefore, nāma and rūpa cannot condition each other by way of association-condition. Nāma and rūpa are completely different realities, each with their own characteristic. Even though they can arise at the same time, and are thus related by way of conascent-condition, saha-jāta-paccaya, they condition each other by dissociation-condition, vippayutta-paccaya. Nāma-dhamma is a condition for rūpa-dhamma and rūpa-dhamma is a condition for nāma-dhamma by way of dissociation-condition, vippayutta paccaya. Thus, they cannot condition each other by being closely joined together, such as nāma that is a condition for another nāma, they cannot condition each other by way of association-condition. In this way we can gradually begin to understand conditions. When there is a foundation knowledge for people who have studied paramattha dhammas they can have understanding of them. It is the same in the case of my book “A Survey of Paramattha Dhammas”. If someone reads from the beginning about citta, but he has no foundation knowledge of paramattha dhamma, if he does not know what paramattha dhamma is and how many of them there are, he will not be able to thoroughly understand them. The correct understanding of realities from the beginning is a most important foundation for the development of paññā.

As for myself, I study only in order to have more understanding, and I study also in so far as I can understand what I study. If a part of the teachings is beyond my ability of understanding I am not interested in the study. I do not need to speak about terms, to arrange subjects in the right order or to write essays for others. I only want other people to have real understanding of dhammas. I know that if I arrange a lay-out of the subjects of the Dhamma, it is too easy for people; they will just read and they may not ponder over those subjects at all. People may just look at it and believe that they themselves have understood it. When we study the Dhamma with the aim of really understanding it, we do not have to separate the different chapters, and study them in the right order. When someone really understands a particular subject of the Dhamma, he can understand other subjects as well. He can, for example, understand the rebirth-consciousness; he can understand of what jāti (class or nature) it is, what object it experiences, and by what factor it is conditioned. It is conditioned by kamma-condition, because it is vipākacitta,

citta that is result. Thus, we should consider and understand the words we have heard, we should not just follow the text without any understanding. Then there can be the foundation knowledge for understanding the realities that are appearing, and this understanding is most beneficial, it is the purpose of our study. Therefore I like to suggest people to read the Tipiṭaka and Commentaries in addition to listening to lectures and Dhamma discussions. However, everyone should know for himself whether he is able to really understand particular subjects of Dhamma or not, and he should know to what extent he can understand them. He should not merely understand the letter of the Dhamma, or know the amounts of the different classifications of dhammas.

I myself study in order to understand what I read thoroughly, profoundly and in all details. I do not disregard or neglect to consider the things I read, such as bhavanga-citta. When there is bhavanga-citta, life-continuum, realities do not appear, but why is it that, after the bhavanga-citta has fallen away, realities do appear, is that not amazing? In this respect we should understand the term āyatana (sense-field or sphere of contact), we should understand where the āyatanas are. When are there āyatanas¹? If we do not know this we are only learning terms. We should understand that at the moments when there are no cittas arising in processes (vīthicittas), there is no appearance of an object. Every citta, no matter what kind, must know an object, but some kinds of cittas can know an object without being dependent on one of the six doorways². In this way we can understand the difference between the moment of vīthi-citta and the moment of bhavanga-citta.

When we study and understand realities in this way, we shall see that the realities are appearing just in conformity with what we studied. Each saying in the Suttanta, even if it is short, is actually Abhidhamma. The Suttanta and the Abhidhamma are in conformity with each other. When we read a sutta we should also correctly understand its essence, namely, the reality that is referred to. The “Discourse on the Analysis of the Elements”(Middle Length Sayings III, no. 140), for example, deals with the elements in increasingly more details and one should understand these elements before one can grasp their conditionality.

We read in this Sutta³ that the Buddha spoke to the potter Pukkusāti about the six elements, six fields of (sense-)impingement, eighteen mental ranges, four resolves:

Monks, when it is said: “This man has six elements,” in reference to what is it said? To the element of extension (Earth or solidity), the liquid element (Water), the element of radiation (Heat), of motion (Wind), of space, of consciousness. Monk, when it is said, “This man has six elements”, it is said in reference to this.

Monk, when it is said, “This man has six fields of (sense-)impingement”, in reference to what is this said? To the field of visual impingement, of auditory... olfactory...gustatory...tactile...mental impingement...

Monk, when it is said, “This man has eighteen mental ranges,” in reference to what is it said? Having seen visual object with the eye... cognised a mental state with the mind, one ranges over the mental state that gives rise to joy...to sorrow...to equanimity. Thus there are six ranges for joy, six for sorrow, six for equanimity...

Monk, when it is said, “This man has four resolves,” in reference to what is it said? To the resolve for wisdom, the resolve for truth, the resolve for relinquishment, the resolve for calm....

We then read that the Buddha explained about the elements in detail. We read about the monk who develops the stages of jhāna, but sees that these are “constructed”, conditioned phenomena. He sees their disadvantage, grasps after nothing in the world and attains nibbāna. We read that the monk is endowed with the highest resolve for wisdom, the highest resolve for truth, the highest resolve for relinquishment, the highest resolve for calm. All his defilements are eradicated at his attainment of arahatship.

Each person should study only in as far as he is able to understand what he studies. A person with a great deal of paññā who is able to study the Dhamma in all details and who can truly understand what he has learnt, who can understand it profoundly, clearly and correctly, should study the Dhamma evermore in detail. If someone merely memorizes what he learns, it is not beneficial. Different people have different accumulations.

Nipat: We should not forget that we are only beginning to study. People who really study are the enlightened ones who are “learners” (sekha puggala), who are classified as seven, beginning with the person who has attained the Path-consciousness of the “Streamwinner”, the sotāpanna, up to the Path-consciousness of the arahatta. The person who has attained the fruition-consciousness, phala-citta, of the arahat is a non-learner, asekhā. Therefore, we should not be downhearted about our study, because we only just begin to study. However, we should be firmly convinced of the truth that there are realities appearing through six doors, the doors of the eyes, the ears, the nose, the tongue, the body and the mind-door.

Sujin: Our study will be beneficial if it can be combined with the understanding of the level of paṭipatti, of the practice. The study is not merely knowing what is in the texts, but it is really the true investigation and consideration of realities. In this way someone who studies can develop the paññā that knows the characteristics of realities which are appearing. Some people who came to study in Khun Jack’s group in the U.S.A. said that they listened to the discussion on Dhamma but did not understand it, but that they found listening without understanding better than not listening at all. However, if someone listens without understanding he accumulates more ignorance, and is this in conformity with the goal of the study? How could it be beneficial to accumulate ever more ignorance. We should try to understand what we study so that there can be more understanding. We should understand what we hear by carefully considering it, and in that way we accumulate understanding.

Someone thought that remembrance, saññā, was rūpa, he did not know that it was nāma. This is an example which demonstrates that if someone does not understand the basic notions, he should go back to the beginning, he should begin again with the study. People can understand the Dhamma more profoundly if they develop satipaṭṭhāna, because then they will begin to understand realities as they are. They will not understand realities if they just listen to the Dhamma. I said this to Khun Jack so that he would be interested at the understanding of satipaṭṭhāna. He has already sufficiently studied Dhamma on the theoretical level, and now he should combine the study of the theory with the development of satipaṭṭhāna.

Amara: When a reality appears we can verify our understanding of what we studied, no

matter what kind of subject of the Dhamma we are studying.

Footnotes

1. The āyatanas are the twelve bases on which the cittas arising in processes depend. They are the five sense-doors and the mind-door, the five sense objects and the mental object.
2. The cittas arising in processes experience objects through the six doorways. The bhavanga-citta does not experience an object impinging on one of the six doorways, it experiences the same object as the rebirth-consciousness, and this is the object experienced shortly before dying in the preceding life. The object of the bhavanga-citta does not appear.
3. I have added the text of the Sutta and, in the following paragraph, some explanations of the Sutta.
