Vipassanā-sammā-diṭṭhi

Right View on the Path of Vipassanā

Ven. Kothmale Kumarakassapa

TRANSLATED BY

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VERIFYING DHAMMA ACCURACY

Ven. Russiave Asankhata



Translator's Note

Before you is a translation of a Dhamma sermon by Bhante Kothmale Kumarakassapa Thera on giving rise to Right View, the practice of insight (vipassanā), and common mistakes on this path.

This translation was made from the Sinhala language based on a video recording of Bhante's sermon. The Sinhala transcript of the sermon was carefully checked against the original recording by Bhikkhu Horepola Samitha (Chittaviveka Buddhist Monastery). The translation was checked for accordance with the Dhamma by Bhikkhu Asankhata Rusiave (Chittaviveka Buddhist Monastery).

The author of this sermon is a truly exceptional bhikkhu. He is a disciple of Bhante Mankadawala Sudassana and Bhante Mankadawala Nandarathana, the founders of Labunoruwakanda Forest Monastery. Today, Bhante Kumarakassapa is the abbot of this monastery.

He holds a Master of Arts degree and the title of

"Royal Pandit" (Rajakiya Panditha). This is one of the highest traditional scholarly titles in the field of Buddhist and classical Oriental studies in Sri Lanka.

Holding this title means:

• Direct mastery of primary sources: the holder of this title has successfully passed the rigorous three-level examinations of the Oriental Studies Society of Sri Lanka, demonstrating a deep knowledge of Pali, Sanskrit, and classical Sinhala. This means that he is able to read, translate, and interpret the Tipiṭaka (the Pali Canon) and the ancient commentaries by working directly with the original texts, rather than relying solely on modern translations.

• Doctrinal authority: in Sri Lanka, a monk with the title of "Royal Pandit" is recognized as an authoritative expert in Buddhist philosophy, history, and grammar.

• Equivalent to a doctoral degree: in a cultural and academic context, this title is comparable in significance and depth of training to a doctoral degree (PhD) in classical and Buddhist studies, although it belongs to Sri Lanka's traditional system of scholarship.

In other words, in addition to fulfilling his monastic duties, Bhante is an officially recognized scholar of a high level with a deep mastery of the sacred texts of Theravada Buddhism and classical languages. Bhante received this title when he was only around 20 years old (he has been in monastic life since childhood).

He is also a board member and director of the Paramaththa Foundation. This organization supports

the religious and social initiatives of the monastery, including preserving and digitizing ancient palm-leaf manuscripts, distributing digital versions of the Tipiṭaka (on tablets) and printed editions among monks and scholars, and running regional programs for environmental protection and support of the local community. You can read an earlier post dedicated to one of Bhante Kumarakassapa's teachers — Bhante Sudassana. Bhante Kumarakassapa himself has also taken part in all the initiatives listed there.

Furthermore, Bhante serves as a director of VenasaMedia Entertainment Private Limited in Sri Lanka. He actively uses digital platforms (including YouTube channels such as Sathi TV and Paramaththa — Labunoruwakanda Forest Monastery) and hosts Dhamma programs on Sri Lankan television and radio.

He is a member of the International Centre for Theravada Buddhism (ICTB) in Australia and the United Kingdom, and frequently leads programs across England, the United States, and Australia.

Venerable Kothmale Kumarakassapa is widely known in Sri Lanka as one of the most active and resolute scholar-monks speaking out against distortions of the Dhamma — non-canonical interpretations of Theravada Buddhism that have spread across the island over recent decades. He regularly participates in panel discussions and public forums dedicated to protecting the orthodox teaching of Theravada. During these discussions, he examines doctrinal errors in detail, relying on direct quotations from the Sutta Piṭaka and the Vinaya Piṭaka.

Among the key tools of his work in countering distortions of the teaching are a digital media platform and a series of YouTube videos. In hundreds of short question-and-answer episodes as well as in-depth lectures, he answers questions from laypeople confused by popular claims on social media. He analyzes specific Pali phrases in detail and explains why certain widespread "new interpretations" contradict the authentic words of the Buddha.

Bhante also took part in developing the school curriculum on Theravada Buddhism in Sri Lanka.

If you type Bhante's name in English on YouTube (venerable Kothmale Kumarakassapa), you will be able to see for yourself the immense work he is carrying out.

This year we have already published two translations of sermons by Bhante Kumarakassapa's teacher, Venerable Mankadawala Sudassana Thera: "From the Conditioned to the Unconditioned" and "Sammādiṭṭhi Sutta: The Section on the Paths of Kamma." You can also read more about the topics mentioned in this sermon in the books by Bhante Rakwane Gnanaseeha, "Bhāvanā — The Art of The Mind" and "How to See the Buddha." These books are available as a gift of the Dhamma on the website of Chittaviveka Buddhist Monastery.

I hope that as a result of this work, all this information will become accessible to Russian-speaking and English-speaking audiences and will help strengthen Theravada Buddhism.

Spoken speech always requires adaptation when converted into written form. In this book, we have

tried to make Bhante's lectures accessible to a wide audience. As a result of such editing, some errors inevitably find their way into the text and remain the responsibility of the translator; therefore, we ask readers for their understanding and invite you to write to us if you come across any typos or inaccuracies.

The publication of this translation is dedicated to a milestone occasion for all Russian-speaking Theravada Buddhists — the twentieth Rains Retreat (Vassa) of Bhante Pannyaavudho Topper Mahāthera, the most senior Theravada Buddhist monk of Russian origin permanently residing in Russia. For more than twenty years, with unfailing patience and devotion to the Word of the Buddha, Bhante Topper has been helping to spread Theravada in Russia, showing rare patience and dedication to this cause. Both I, Bhante Asankhata, and many other Buddhists — laypeople and bhikkhus alike — came to the Dhamma precisely thanks to Bhante Topper's Dhamma sermons. His many years of work, devotion to the Dhamma, and service to the Saṅgha deserve the deepest respect and gratitude.

It was in the St. Petersburg community of theravada.ru that I met my best friend Alex. In that community, I found many good spiritual friends with whom I still keep in touch to this day, even though we all now live in different countries and do not see each other in person as often as we would like. I remember how in 2018 my best friend and I flew to Sri Lanka for the very first time — precisely on Bhante Topper's advice — to Malwessa Monastery in order

to meet Bhante Gnanaseeha. Sasha had previously taken Refuge with Bhante Gnanaseeha, again on Bhante Topper's advice. For me, however, it was our first meeting. I remember how Bhante Gnanaseeha showed us a small cottage in a remote area, a 40-minute drive from Digana, hidden among dense vegetation, practically in the jungle and right on an elephant trail. He spoke about his plans to create the world's first Russian-speaking Theravada monastery in that place. Today this place is known to many, just like the name of Bhante Gnanaseeha. On that spot, the large and growing Chittaviveka Buddhist Monastery has risen. My best friend left worldly life, received monastic ordination under the guidance of Bhante Gnanaseeha, and now bears the beautiful name Asankhata, living in this monastery. And today, looking back over the past 10 years of my life, it is hard for me to imagine what my life would be like now if all of us had not met Bhante Topper at some point. Therefore, I wish to dedicate this first translation of a sermon by such an outstanding monk as Venerable Kothmale Kumarakassapa specifically to Bhante Topper, and to wish that all his merits, wisdom, and faith may help him stay on this Path and become free from all suffering.

We publish this translation with the permission and blessing of Bhante Kumarakassapa as a gift of the Dhamma for free distribution for the benefit of all living beings. When copying any material, please include links to the websites theravada.ru and samatha-vipassana.com.

Maksim Suleimanov

> The entire holy life consists of good friends, good companions, good comrades.
>
> — Kalyāṇamitta Sutta, SN 3.18

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Introduction

Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato
Sammāsambuddhassa!
Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato
Sammāsambuddhassa!
Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato
Sammāsambuddhassa!

Homage to the Blessed One, the Worthy One, the
Perfectly Enlightened One!
Homage to the Blessed One, the Worthy One, the
Perfectly Enlightened One!
Homage to the Blessed One, the Worthy One, the
Perfectly Enlightened One!

Faithful and virtuous listeners! Today you have joined the meditation program that we are holding during this Rains Retreat. During this noble Rains Retreat (*Vassa*), we pay special attention

to meditation — the development of the mind (*bhāvanā*) — in order to give you the necessary instructions for your spiritual growth.

Virtuous listeners, this morning you listened to a Dhamma sermon about the recollection of the Buddha (*buddhānussati*) and how to practice it. When we turn to the Teaching of the Buddha, we find many ways to develop the mind and strengthen our spiritual faculties (*indriya*). Among them, faith (*saddhā*) is strictly necessary for understanding the Dhamma, and the recollection of the Buddha helps to grow this faith.

At the same time, when we develop wisdom (*paññā*), if the spiritual faculty of wisdom becomes too strong, this also becomes an obstacle to understanding the Dhamma. We can balance wisdom by developing faith alongside it. That is why it is so important to develop faith.

So, virtuous listeners, when we practice this Dhamma, the most important thing for us is Right View (*sammā-diṭṭhi*). Right View is the knowledge of the Four Noble Truths: the knowledge of suffering, the knowledge of the cause of suffering, the knowledge of the cessation of suffering, and the knowledge of the Path that leads to the cessation of suffering (*dukkhe ñāṇaṃ*, *dukkha-samudaye ñāṇaṃ*, *dukkha-nirodhe ñāṇaṃ*, *dukkha-nirodha-gāminī-paṭipadāya ñāṇaṃ*). Understanding this Teaching of the Four Noble Truths is called Right View. We practice meditation in order to gain this understanding.

Meditation (*bhāvanā*) can be divided into two parts: the development of the mind (*citta-bhāvanā*)

and the development of wisdom (*paññā-bhāvanā*). We develop both of these sides. The development of the mind is calm (*samatha*), and the development of wisdom is insight (*vipassanā*).

In any case, virtuous listeners, in order to give rise to the Right View, we need both of these sides: the development of the mind and the development of wisdom. Moreover, the Blessed Buddha teaches that Right View must be supported by five factors: "Bhikkhus, when Right View is supported by five factors, it has liberation of mind as its fruit, and it has the fruit of liberation of mind as its benefit; it has liberation by wisdom as its fruit, and it has the fruit of liberation by wisdom as its benefit" (Anuggahita Sutta, AN 5.25).

Five Factors Supporting Right View

The Buddha explains: "Bhikkhus, when these five factors support Right View, it is this Right View that produces liberation of mind (*ceto-vimutti*) and the fruit of liberation of mind (*ceto-vimutti-phala*); it produces liberation by wisdom (*paññā-vimutti*) and the fruit of liberation by wisdom (*paññā-vimutti-phala*)."

What are these five factors? What five qualities support Right View when we incline our mind toward Right View?

First: Right View must be supported by virtue (*sīlānuggahitā*); it must rely on virtue. Without a firm foundation in virtue (*sīla*), we simply cannot give rise to Right View. Therefore, it is necessary for virtue to support Right View.

Second: support by learning through hearing (*sutānuggahitā*). The word "suta" means hearing, or what has been heard. Support must come from listening, from what has been heard. We learn the Dhamma from others, through the voice of another

(*paratoghosa*). Nowadays, we hear the Dhamma from the disciples of the Blessed Buddha. This is called support by learning through hearing.

Third: support by discussion (*sākacchānuggahitā*). "Sākacchā" means discussion, conversation, and clarifying the Dhamma together. Right now, while you are listening, hearing (*suta*) takes place. In this case, understanding arises only on the basis of what you hear. However, during a discussion, we speak about our thoughts on a certain point of the Teaching and how we understood that point, and through this discussion we come to a deeper understanding. Such discussion becomes more effective than mere listening.

Why? When we explain certain points of the Teaching, ten people [usually] understand those points in ten different ways, according to the level of development of their own spiritual faculties. Only during conversation and discussion does it become clear whether the other person has understood the essence. Therefore, when Right View is supported by discussion, we can establish Right View even more firmly within ourselves.

Fourth: support by calm (*samathānuggahitā*). Calm of the mind (*citta-samatha*), [that is,] one-pointedness of mind (*citta-ekaggatā*), becomes one of the main conditions for giving rise to Right View.

Fifth: support by insight (*vipassanānuggahitā*). Insight helps Right View to arise.

All five factors must be present in our life as a single practice of developing the mind, meditation (*bhāvanā*). When we strive for Right View, we must

develop all five of these factors. Only then will it be possible to give rise to Right View.

Right View is something that arises only in a specific environment, in an ecosystem. Without the support of this ecosystem, it is impossible to give rise to Right View — Right View simply will not arise. It is within such an environment that Right View grows and develops.

Right now, around you, you see trees and bushes. Among them there are huge trees called vana-mee (forest Madhuca trees). This species grows only on Mount Ritigala and here, on Mount Labunoruwa. Why? Because nowhere else is there the ecosystem necessary for this tree. Botanists confirm this: if a sapling is taken away from here, it will not take root and grow anywhere else. This tree cannot be grown in any other place. I gave this example to show that such a tree grows only in a suitable ecosystem. In the exact same way, Right View will develop only when we create the necessary environment, the necessary ecosystem, within our own mind. Without this ecosystem, Right View will not arise.

If some factors are missing, Right View does not arise. One person may have knowledge and a certain understanding on the side of insight (*vipassanā*). Another person may have the side of calm (*samatha*) well developed. However, even if our mind has progressed in some aspects while a gap remains in other aspects, we will not get the needed result.

Sometimes a person does not think about virtue (*sīla*) at all. He listens to Dhamma sermons and understands them well, but he does not care about pu-

rity of conduct. What happens then to his Right View? His Right View is not supported by virtue — it lacks a foundation in virtue.

Sometimes a person is not inclined to listen to the Dhamma again and again, and neglects Dhamma sermons [and the study of texts]. Then he is unable to see clearly even his own position. In this case, support by learning through hearing is lost.

It also happens that people lack support by discussion. What do they do? Having heard something, they start practicing according to how they themselves understood it. And what happens when a person begins to practice in this way? He will certainly get stuck at some point. Later, one can often hear from such practitioners: "I practiced in a certain way, and a certain thought came to me. Then I observed this for some time, and later I decided that this method was not working, and that I needed to do it differently. So I started doing it like this..." From such stories it immediately becomes clear what the problem was: Right View lacked support by discussion. The person did not speak about this with good spiritual friends (*kalyāṇa-mitta*) and did not discuss his practice, but simply did everything in whatever way seemed right to him.

Sometimes there are people who possess wisdom, but they never develop concentration of mind (*samādhi*). This means that they lack the support by calm that is necessary for Right View to arise. The same applies to support by insight: sometimes a person gains very good concentration, but knows nothing about insight and has no idea of right vision.

He has neither inclination nor interest in this. If we look at Western society, meditation there is very often understood exclusively as the side of developing concentration. Yet there is no awareness that one must go further and develop wisdom and vision.

Virtuous listeners, only if we give rise to all five of these conditions in our mind will Right View be planted, take root, and grow strong. This is possible only on the condition that these five qualities, these five factors, arise in our mind. Therefore, we need to develop these five factors. And since we are developing this Path and walking upon this Path, we need to understand how exactly these factors develop in our mind.

So, in our worldly life, there must be a foundation in virtue, listening to the Dhamma, discussion of the Dhamma, calm of the mind, and insight. Virtuous listeners, only by practicing in this way will we be able to cultivate this fruit called Right View (*sammā-diṭṭhi*).

Five Types of Right View

If we look at the concept of Right View itself, we will see that Right View has different kinds. Right View is seeing reality as it truly is. We understand this as the knowledge of suffering (*dukkhe ñāṇaṃ*) and so on. It is in this way that, starting from the Right View of insight (*vipassanā-sammā-diṭṭhi*), one can come to the arising of the Right View of the Path (*magga-sammā-diṭṭhi*).

However, that is not all: there is also worldly Right View (*lokiya-sammā-diṭṭhi*). This is the knowledge of what is wholesome (*kusala*) and what is unwholesome (*akusala*). It is this worldly Right View that becomes the cause for a person to perform good deeds and accumulate merit.

A person who develops concentration also has a kind of Right View. Virtuous listeners, this is called the Right View of jhāna (*jhāna-sammā-diṭṭhi*), and it relates to attaining meditative absorptions (*jhāna*).

There is yet another kind — the Right View of insight (*vipassanā-sammā-diṭṭhi*). Here, we direct our

wisdom to investigate the true nature of these aggregates (*khandha*). We have not yet reached direct, personal realization. However, relying on the instructions of those who have reached full realization, we compare those instructions with our own life and examine whether this is truly so. This is what is called the Right View of insight.

As we continue this investigation, we cultivate very deep wisdom. Through our own direct experience, we become convinced and realize that this very truth is reality. The Right View (or vision) that arises while eradicating defilements (*kilesa*) is called the Right View of the Path (*magga-sammā-diṭṭhi*).

Then, once the defilements have been eradicated, together with the calming of effort (*payoga-paṭippassaddhi*) — that is, now without applying further effort — that very same wisdom, which is now directly present in the practitioner, is called the Right View of Fruition (*phala-sammā-diṭṭhi*).

In this way, we can distinguish five kinds of Right View.

The Right View of Insight

So, virtuous listeners, our goal is to attain the Right View of insight. The Right View that we generally apply in our meditation is precisely this Right View of insight. A person who develops insight must be able to maintain mindfulness and wisdom regarding the reality of our life. However, as I already said at the beginning, insight cannot arise on its own. Without one-pointedness of mind and the other factors, we cannot give rise to insight.

Let us now examine those five factors that, as we said, support the development of Right View. The first three are support by virtue, listening [to the Dhamma], and discussion [of the Dhamma]. We do not develop these three factors directly in meditation. They are carried out through our everyday actions. We maintain virtue, listen to Dhamma sermons, and discuss the Dhamma. These are our actions.

However, what are support by calm and support by insight? We develop these two directly as medita-

tion. Therefore, here these two factors — calm and insight — become the main ones for us. Calm helps insight, and insight helps calm: they support each other. Yet their functions are different: calm has its own task, and insight has its own task.

What, then, does each of the forty [traditional] meditation objects (*kammaṭṭhāna*) that we practice produce? Calm. Each of these meditations produces one-pointedness of mind. Specifically, one-pointedness of mind.

Among these meditations that create one-pointedness of mind, there are some whose result consists entirely in achieving calm. They are directed solely toward achieving calm of the mind. However, there are also meditations whose purpose is not limited to achieving calm of the mind. Calm of the mind arises in them too, but they also create the necessary foundation for insight.

What happens, in particular, during the meditative directing of attention (*bhāvanā-manasikāra*) related to the foundations of mindfulness (*sati-paṭṭhāna*)? At this stage, what develops is not yet insight itself, but calm. However, in the process of developing this calm, the foundation necessary for insight is laid. A foundation necessary for maintaining insight wisdom is created.

Regarding calm, you must understand that calm is the establishment of one-pointedness of mind. And if we speak about the methods that we can use to gain one-pointedness of mind, there is no limit to them. Even if we speak of them as meditation objects (*kam-*

maṭṭhāna), they are countless. We can produce calm of the mind (*citta-samatha*) based on anything at all.

Calm of the mind can be produced in both a wholesome (*kusala*) state and an unwholesome (*akusala*) state. This is because the mental quality (*dhamma*) called one-pointedness arises not only in a wholesome mind, but also in an unwholesome mind, and therefore it can serve both. However, what do we do within our meditation? We make an effort to apply one-pointedness to an object that supports wholesome states. After all, a person whose mind is scattered and lacks focus is unable to properly perform even his ordinary everyday tasks.

You have surely seen how predators hunt: in order to catch prey, an animal needs one-pointedness. When a leopard rushes after prey, it runs past other animals, paying no attention to them, because it is pursuing one specific target. Why does the leopard do this? It has one-pointedness toward its object. It intends to catch the exact animal that it has made its object and chosen as its target. That is why, virtuous listeners, it is said that one-pointedness is also common to what is unwholesome.

However, when we speak of what is wholesome, we consider one-pointedness as a quality belonging to wholesome states (*kusala-pakkhika-dhamma*). Here too, if we take the meditation objects on which you can keep your mind, there is no limit to them. Yet this does not mean that all of them should be used in practice.

Even based on this concrete pillar, one can develop calm. Why? If you keep your mind only on

this pillar, focusing attention exclusively on this pillar, on its shape and its color image (*vaṇṇa-nimitta*), without letting anything else enter the mind — by doing so, you bring out this single image (*nimitta*). You block access to all other images and, by force of will, bring only this image to the forefront. Other images are forcefully excluded from the mind. And what will that be then? Concrete-pillar meditation! That will also be a meditation. That is, what arises in it? Calm of the mind (*citta-samatha*) arises; concentration (*samādhi*) arises. Other images do not arise; the mind is kept only on this one image.

However, such a method is not practical, because as practice deepens, other sides begin to appear in it. When the mind gains concentration, levels of perception open up to you that differ from the ordinary, everyday experiences you deal with right now. Completely different states and manifestations arise. And it is right at these stages that such an image will start creating problems for you. That is why for practice we do not take just any random object.

Through this example, I want to convey to you the fact itself that any image can be used to achieve calm (*samatha*). Understand through this the very characteristic of calm. What is this characteristic? It is the creation of one-pointedness of mind. The very nature and characteristic of calm consists in establishing one-pointedness of mind.

So, this very building of one-pointedness of mind, this creation of concentration of mind, takes place both in the contemplation of the body (*kāyānu-*

passanā) and in any other meditative contemplation (*bhāvanā-manasikāra*) that you practice.

Even in the recollection of the Buddha (*buddhānussati*), concentration led by faith (*saddhā*) arises. On the surface, faith is visible, but what arises on the basis of faith? Concentration. Therefore, support by calm arises in all of these cases.

Insight

Virtuous listeners, in insight we do only one thing: bringing our right vision to the forefront, we make reality evident. In insight, we do only this. Therefore, there are neither many kinds of insight, nor many ways to give rise to insight. In insight, the reality of life must become clearly visible to us. And wisdom (*paññā*) directly influences this: for insight, we must have a mind capable of investigating [this reality]. However, if wisdom does not rely on concentration and does not receive support from concentration, then gaining insight becomes so difficult that it is practically impossible. Without the help of calm, we will not be able to develop and apply insight in practice.

Why is this so? When you approach insight and try to understand characteristics such as the arising and passing away (*udaya-vaya*) of the aggregates, if you do not see the aggregates themselves, and instead see only many different objects, you will not be able to give rise to wisdom there. You will only be di-

recting mindfulness to each object separately, one after another — just like that squirrel that tried to empty the ocean with its tail.

Why? As soon as you open your eyes and look around just once, tens and hundreds of millions of images (*nimitta*) immediately arise for you. None of these images needs to be taken separately and investigated through insight. If you try to do so, there will be no end to it — this is simply impossible to do. As a result, you will only be left with unnecessary exhaustion all the time. There will be tiredness in the mind.

If you start thinking everything over like this, you will have to think about each object in turn. Suppose you thought about your home, but while you were remembering it, that has already passed. Then something else arises, and some person comes to mind. What will you have to do next? You need to examine that person too. Once you have thought about that person, the next person comes to mind. And you need to examine that person as well. Will there be an end to this? There will be no end.

While you are getting ready to examine one thing, a hundred more things have already come up in memory. In this way, you will never be able to bring this to an end. That is why what must certainly be present here? Support by calm. The insight that we develop must receive help from calm.

Helping Insight Through Calm

How, then, does calm help insight? In what way does calm provide support? This support arises when we produce calm directly from insight itself, on the basis of insight. This means that at every moment, beneath the multiplicity of objects, there is one and the same reality. Keeping the mind on this reality is the form of calm that is developed on the basis of insight.

Imagine that there are several clay pots in front of us. All of them are painted differently and covered with all kinds of colors. Yet no matter what colors these pots are painted with, if we direct the mind beyond these colors, what will we have to place the mind on? On the clay. After all, the clay is one and the same everywhere. In the same way, clay vessels can be of many different kinds and shapes, yet clay is always present in each of them.

In the exact same way, the nature of calm based on insight is that, with the help of wisdom, you begin to establish the mind on what is common — on what

can be seen beyond perceived diversity and taken as a single object. It is right here that those meditations I mentioned earlier, which create the foundation for insight, help you.

Look at all the meditations of contemplation of the body (*kāyānupassanā*), except for the meditation on mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpānasati-bhāvanā*). How exactly do these meditations develop? Is it not according to this very same principle? The development of each of these meditations follows this very path.

Suppose you examine hair of the head, hair of the body, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, and tendons. What exactly are you examining? Those component parts of which the body consists, is that not so? When you examine hair of the head in this way, what do you find? The common nature of what is called hair. You can see it simply as the phenomenon "hair," which is neither "me" nor any other person. That is, you see an unattractive (*asubha*) part of the body. Indeed, you can see a separate part that is neither "me," nor "mine," nor a self (*attā*).

Looking at a few fallen hairs lying somewhere, we do not say: "Here I am; something of mine is lying right here." We do not speak like that. And if a pile of hair is lying somewhere in a public place, no one will say about it: "These hairs here are mine."

What, then, happens here? A person who examines these parts, these impure (*kuṇapa*) parts of the body, instead of the former habitual perception (*saññā*), gives rise to a special idea, a special perception. What perception does he give rise to? He gives

rise to the perception that what is present here is simply component parts such as these.

Then, where previously people were seen — good and bad, beautiful and ugly — that multitude of objects (*ārammaṇa*) that scattered the mind disappears. And one-pointedness appears in the mind. Then this one-pointedness can easily be directed toward insight.

Suppose a person examines the four great elements. In these elements, there is no division into "my four great elements" and "the four great elements of other people." And when we develop this even further: "Whatever internal earth element (*paṭhavī-dhātu*) there is, and whatever external earth element there is, all this is simply the earth element." Whether internal or external, the earth element is completely the same everywhere. In the exact same way, the elements of water (*āpo*), fire (*tejo*), and wind (*vāyo*) are also the same. Thus we see all of this merely as groups of impersonal elements of the same kind.

What happens thanks to such vision? Where previously the perception of multiplicity (*nānatta-saññā*) [and diversity] arose, there now arises the perception of unity (*ekatta-saññā*): that [only] the four elements are present here. Virtuous listeners, it is precisely this [perception of] unity that is meant where support by calm is spoken of. It was this very thing that was meant when it was said that calm provides support.

The Transition to Insight

So, when there is support by calm and support by insight, with them it is already very easy to direct the mind toward insight. How do we easily turn toward insight? What do we do within insight itself? In the exact same way, we incline the mind toward unity and give rise to wisdom.

Look: regarding the form (*rūpa*) that you see, you maintain mindfulness (*sati*), perceiving this form simply as aggregates (*khandha*). Even if a thousand forms appear before you, what is the truth of all one thousand of them? They are simply aggregates. This is a causally conditioned process: when causes are present, it arises, and when causes cease, it ceases. Even if a thousand images of form (*rūpa-nimitta*) appear to you, the truth of all one thousand of them will be one and the same truth, one and the same reality. And when you keep your mind on this reality, calm (*samatha*) arises in you. And the wisdom that arises there is insight (*vipassanā*).

It is this calm and this insight that become the

basis and the cause for giving rise to the Right View. What kind of Right View? The Right View of the Path and the Right View of Fruition. Therefore, today, as we practice the Right View of insight, if we give rise to it on the basis of calm, we will be able to turn this Right View of insight into a reliable weapon for achieving our goal.

Thus, when this Right View of insight arises — as we also spoke about during our previous programs — first of all, you must be able to free yourself from the perception of multiplicity and keep your mind on the perception of unity.

When I speak about meditation, the same question always comes before me: should I continue from the point where we stopped in previous sessions, or should I repeat everything from the very beginning? Why? If there were a group here that practices continuously, I would only need to see what stage you are at and continue the explanations from there. However, right now I have to return to the basics every time. As a result, each time, all the time goes into the Dhamma sermon, and no time remains for the meditation itself. Well, that is alright.

In any case, why was it said that right now, when we direct our attention to this meditation, an object (*ārammaṇa*) brought to unity must be held in mindfulness — or, in other words, must be present? Because first we must learn to see everything as aggregates. We speak about the need to develop the contemplation of impermanence (*aniccānupassanā*), the contemplation of suffering (*dukkhānupassanā*), and the contemplation of non-self (*anattānupas-*

sanā). Yet what do we need in order to see these? We must be able to see the phenomena of the aggregates (*khandha-dhamma*). Or else we must be able to see the phenomena of the sense bases (*āyatana-dhamma*). Virtuous listeners, without discerning and seeing these, we will not be able to take this meditation any further. Therefore, it is precisely in this [vision and understanding] that we need to make real progress.

Otherwise, what I spoke about at the beginning will happen. We think about one thing, then it seems to us that there is something else, and we start thinking about that as well. As soon as we finish with that, another object comes to mind, and we start examining that object too. Just like a squirrel trying to empty the ocean with its tail, day after day we will only exhaust our mind, and in the end we will come to the thought: "I have practiced meditation for so long, yet I have gained no result from it." That is what will remain in the end. However, we should reflect: is the problem that meditation itself brings no result, or is it that we did not practice meditation in a way that brings a result? The problem lies precisely in the fact that we do not apply meditation in the right way.

How, then, should we develop meditation in the right way?

The first step, virtuous listeners, and the most important thing that you need, is the ability to free the mind from objects connected with multiplicity and bring the mind to an object brought to unity. This is precisely what needs to be developed.

If today you begin making an effort in this direction for the first time, what do you need to work on? On [learning to] establish the mind on the unity among the multiplicity of objects. If we give an example from the side of calm [meditation], we can take the perception of a skeleton (*aṭṭhika-saññā*). What is the perception of a skeleton? It is keeping mindfulness (*sati*) on what is called a skeleton.

A person who keeps the mind on the perception of a skeleton encounters only a multitude of skeletons instead of all kinds of different people. Recall the story about the parrot or the story about that monk. You have heard these stories, so there is no need to tell them again. In the story about the parrot, the bird said: "One skeleton carried away another skeleton." And in the story about the monk, when a smiling woman walked past, the monk saw nothing other than a skeleton. When people asked him: "Did you see who walked along the road?", he replied: "No, I saw a smiling skeleton walk past." Why was that? After all, the monk's eyes had not turned into an X-ray machine! What, then, is the matter?

[Translator's note: For more details about these stories, see the Appendix.]

Even though what is seen is the same, in what way does the mind take the visible object? The mind takes that object by applying a certain perception to it. That is, the mind engages with that object through the perception of a skeleton. What does this mean? Although different people are seen, the mind comes into contact with this through the perception of a

multitude of skeletons. Virtuous listeners, this is what I called unity.

[Translator's note: "a multitude of skeletons" can also be translated as "a heap of bones."]

The perception of multiplicity is our ordinary nature. "This is such-and-such a person, and that is such-and-such a person; this is a person of such-and-such a kind" — that is how it arises in us; such is the nature of the mind. This is the ordinary state. And right where everything is seen in this way, we constantly establish the mind on unity: "a skeleton."

In the exact same way, a person who is going to apply the mind to insight must have his own unity [on which to establish the mind]: it must be evident that these are only aggregates. "There is a mother, there is a father, there are houses, there are things familiar to us, good and bad things, valuable and useless things" — wherever all this multiplicity is encountered, your mind must certainly gain the ability to make it evident to itself that these are simply phenomena of the aggregates. Only after this will you be able to see arising, passing away, and so on.

So, as soon as it appears to you: "Here is my child," in the very next moment, in the very next instant, what must you be able to establish your mind on? On the understanding that the very fact that anything is seen arises due to the arising of the aggregates.

You must be able to maintain wisdom regarding this. Where it is said that "something is seen," only phenomena of the aggregates (*khandha-dhamma*) arise. You must be able to see the aggregates there.

As soon as you sense: "There is a car," what must

you understand? You must realize that this is simply a collection of aggregates. When you keep your mind on this handful of aggregates, what will be seen in all these diverse objects everywhere? The reality that there are only aggregates will begin to become evident to you.

Therefore, the basic state for insight that you must have first of all, and that you must certainly develop and cultivate within yourself, is the ability to see: "There is only a collection of aggregates."

However, if you try to look in this way and do not see this, if this is not clear to you, then what do you need to do? You need to listen to the Dhamma. This points to a lack of knowledge based on hearing (*sutamaya-ñāṇa*), a lack of support by learning through hearing. Without this, when you try to look at everything as aggregates, you do not see the aggregates. What, then, appears to you? "This is seen only because there is a child; if this person were not here, would everything be seen like this? Everything is seen like this precisely because the child exists" — this is what our mind brings.

Only if we have support by learning through hearing, a foundation in what has been heard, and if our mind is nourished by this, can we say to ourselves: "No, although it appears like this, the eye sees only color-form (*vaṇṇa-rūpa*). At every moment, this is merely color-form that comes to the eye right in this very moment. After all, this color-form did not appear to the eye as a 'child.' Otherwise, everyone who sees this color image would have to perceive it only as a 'child.' Yet this does not happen. Therefore,

the color-form did not become a child. Did the eye, which took that color-form as its object (*gocara*), become a child? No, the eye did not become a child either. Then perhaps the mind, which knew that color had appeared, became a child? No."

And where none of these became a child, with the mind we take as an object what we call a "child," and it is precisely this that we experience. So am I seeing a child, or am I experiencing what I have taken with the mind as an object (*ārammaṇa*) under the name "child"?

If we are able to deeply investigate and clarify this in our mind, what will happen then? The idea that "there is a child there" will disappear, and the mind will easily be able to stay on this collection of aggregates. So, the essence here is that we gain this possibility to reflect in this way, this ability to direct attention in this way. Thanks to what does this ability for such directing of attention and reflection arise and develop? Thanks to listening, thanks to what has been heard [from the Teaching]. We have listened to this well and grasped well what we heard. We have listened to the Dhamma.

It is precisely what has been heard, when we reflect on it and analyze it, that begins to reveal to us the falseness of what seems to us to exist. And it is right then that we begin to see clearly and understand: "No, in reality, there are only phenomena of the aggregates (*khandha-dhamma*) such as these here."

So, here is the first stage of your meditation, by which you can determine where you are. This basic

stage is that it must become evident to you: these are simply aggregates. Virtuous listeners, I do not mean that this [perception] must be continuously present in you at every moment of time. I am not speaking about a state in which you no longer sense anything else at all, and the only thing that comes to mind is that "these are only aggregates."

What, then, am I speaking about? What must you be able to do at any moment with an object whose presence you sense? If you direct your mind and look at that object as aggregates, realizing that it is simply a collection of aggregates, you must [clearly] see this. That is what I am speaking about.

When we say that we have remembered something, that we have learned something, how does this show itself? At any moment, as soon as you wish, you can recall it and repeat it. This means that you hold it firmly in memory [and that you have grasped it]. In the exact same way, how can you understand that your mind and your understanding have become established in this?

In any situation, if you direct your mind to an object, you must be able to see that object simply as aggregates — you must have this ability. If you direct the mind, you see; if you do not direct the mind, you do not see — such is the nature [of the mind]. If you direct the mind, it is seen that this is merely a collection of aggregates. If you do not direct the mind, it is not seen that these are aggregates, and you can be deceived by this as usual, thinking: "This is a child."

However, this first level, this first stage that I am speaking about, is as follows. You must make your

mind mature enough so that wherever [the perception] "The child truly exists" arises — at the very instant when the child's presence is sensed — as soon as you direct your attention there, the mind, without any reasoning or deliberation, sees the object as it truly is: "No, there are only aggregates here." This is the very first stage on your Path of the Dhamma. It is right from this point that support by calm begins.

So, if you have mastered at least this level, going further is no longer so difficult. After all, this very first stage is the most difficult one. Why? In a world that we have made into reality for ourselves, it is very difficult to show us another reality — to show: "No, reality is not this at all," in such a way that we truly accept it. Since the day we were born — and together with the habit from beginningless saṃsāra — we have trained and strengthened this certainty: "No, this very thing is reality." Therefore, the mind cannot agree and accept all at once that the world we have made into truth for ourselves is a falsehood.

I usually give this example: suppose you had a wall clock hanging in your house. Its battery ran out, and you yourself took the clock off the wall and put it aside somewhere. If later someone suddenly asks you: "What time is it?", where will your gaze immediately go? Straight to that spot on the wall! Your gaze will instantly turn to the wall. Why? This is called habit. Virtuous listeners, these are our inflows of defilements, inflows of defiled experience (*āsava*) — the habit toward what we have constantly engaged with. And if a habit formed over just a few years is so strong, think of how strong the habit must be that we

have been developing throughout all of saṃsāra! Therefore, eradicating this habit will not be easy at all. This is no easy matter — do not think that this habit will disappear in a single instant.

So the familiar picture may still appear to you, yet if you direct your mind there, it can be seen [that these are only aggregates]. First bring your practice to such a level that, when you direct your mind, you are able to see this. If the mind, without reasoning or deliberation, agrees with this fact and understands: "Yes, this is truly so; there is simply a collection of aggregates here" — if you have been able to bring your mind to such a level, this means that you have already progressed significantly in meditation. This is the first milestone in meditation, and it is precisely to reach this milestone that you need to work diligently.

What, then, is the sequence of steps for this? It is as follows: you need to reflect and direct your attention to the images (*nimitta*) arising in your mind, comparing all of this with the points of the Dhamma that you have heard. I assume that you have already listened to Dhamma sermons before, and I will continue the explanation starting from this. This sense that "the child exists" or "the child is here" needs to be examined in light of those points that we spoke about earlier.

You examine the sense "the child is here" by applying these points of the Dhamma to it and examining it through them: seeing — [the very fact that we see] — arises from the meeting of three factors: the eye, visible form, and eye-consciousness. With the cessation of these three factors, seeing itself also

ceases. And what begins to become evident to you then? That never in your life have you seen a child with your two eyes.

When you match one thing with another step by step in this way, when you investigate this in this way, you must see that the eyes have never seen a child. And if you see this rightly, the thought can no longer arise: "Yet is what I am seeing right now not a child? Is this visible thing not a child?" However, if the mind speaks like that, what does this show? It shows that your mind has not yet developed and grown strong enough in these points of the Dhamma. Why? Because you do not "see" a child [with the eyes]; we must clearly realize the difference between knowing [with the mind] and [direct] seeing [with the eyes].

We can see how these points are explained in the "Instruction to Kaccānagotta" (Kaccānagotta Sutta, SN 12.15) — namely, how we should proceed without falling into the two extremes of existence and non-existence. This is also an important aspect. Yet even more valuable for our topic is another teaching — the "Instruction to Māluṅkyaputta" (Māluṅkyaputta Sutta, SN 35.95). In it, the Blessed Buddha asks Venerable Māluṅkyaputta a very beautiful question. What does he ask?

"Māluṅkyaputta, if you have not seen something in the past, and if you are not seeing it in the present, and if you will not see it in the future — simply put, if there is no such 'seeing' at all — will passionate desire (*chanda-rāga*) arise in you, Māluṅkyaputta, toward such an object? Will longing arise in your mind?" — thus the Blessed Buddha asks Venerable

Māluṅkyaputta. And Venerable Māluṅkyaputta replies: "No, Venerable Sir, longing will not arise."

So, virtuous listeners, if longing arises in us, if passionate desire arises, on the basis of what do they arise? On the basis of something seen. Only if we have seen something do passionate desire and longing arise based on what was seen. However, if there is neither anything seen in the past, nor anything being seen now, nor anything that can be seen in the future — if the very fact of seeing is absent — then longing does not arise either. Toward such an object, longing will never be able to arise.

Why does the Blessed Buddha ask this question? Virtuous listeners, he asks this question because it is in this way that wisdom can be brought to the state spoken of as: "in the seen, there is only the seen" (*diṭṭhe diṭṭhamattaṃ*). The wisdom [of understanding] that seeing ceases immediately after the very act of seeing arises in a person together with this state, together with this realization.

Then, virtuous listeners, what does the realization that seeing ceases immediately after the very act of seeing mean for us? Love, passionate desire, and attachment toward a child exist because you have the idea that there is a child on the side of what is seen, and that what is seen itself exists [permanently]. However, if you clearly understand the cessation of what is seen after [the very act of] seeing, then desire directed toward what is seen has not even the slightest possibility to arise in you.

That is precisely why the Blessed Buddha reveals this reality to us in his Teaching. He explains and

shows this reality in such a way that we can establish our wisdom, our mind, in a state where seeing is merely seeing itself [and nothing more].

That is why the Blessed Buddha asks Venerable Māluṅkyaputta this question. Neither what is seen now, nor what was seen in the past, can [continue to] exist. Why? What is "seeing"? After all, it is an effect, a fruit (*phala*). It is an effect that has arisen due to several causes. Is the effect those causes themselves? No. The effect arises from several causes, yet it does not belong to those causes. Therefore, that which is seen — what is seen — belongs neither to the eye, nor to the form, nor to the mind. It does not belong to all three of them taken together either.

What, then, was there in the past? A combination of three causes. What arises now? A combination of three causes. If something arises in the future, what exactly will arise? A combination of three causes will arise.

Yet these three causes themselves are not the result that has arisen. And the result is not those three causes. It is an effect that has arisen due to the combination of these three. It is an effect that has arisen thanks to the combination of these three, and this effect ceases with the disappearance of all three, or with the disappearance of even one of them.

[Translator's note: Venerable Mankadawala Sudassana, the teacher of Venerable Kothmale Kumarakassapa, gives the example of a tree's shadow in his Dhamma sermons. For a shadow to arise, a tree, the sun, and the ground are needed. The shadow is the effect (fruit), while the tree, the sun, and the

ground are the causes. When these causes are present, the shadow arises. If even one of the causes is removed, the shadow will disappear. The shadow does not exist separately from these causes, yet at the same time the shadow cannot be reduced to any single cause on its own, nor is it all of them taken together.]

Therefore, what we have once seen has no possibility at all of arising again. And what will be seen in the future cannot in any way exist right now either.

Simply put, "what is seen" itself seems to us to be something existing in the world. What is our perception today? That the things that are seen are existing things. That is precisely why, having come here, you are able to go back to where you came from. Why? Because we hold on to the thought that what was seen earlier continues to exist. However, the things that were seen never become something that exists [permanently].

If right now I ask you to turn around and look behind you, what will you see? You will see that people are sitting there and some objects are there. And when you look forward again after that, what do you think? All the time you remain certain that behind you that whole world exists: those people are sitting there, and [besides them] there are other people as well.

Yet are there really people there, or are you right now simply staying within such a perception (*saññā*)? After all, all that is there [in reality] is merely your own thought, your conviction that those people are there.

If you look back again, will you see the same

people who were there before, or something new? Something completely new will be seen by you. Yet where something new is seen, you think that the same people as before are there.

Suppose that while you are looking straight ahead, all the people sitting behind you stand up completely silently and leave. And then, right before I ask you to look back again, those people return in the same way, without being noticed, and sit back down in their places. Will you have any possibility at all of knowing about this? No. However, at the same time you will think that the people who were sitting there before are still sitting in their places without any change.

So, virtuous listeners, this is the reality of the world in which we live all the time. What reality is this? To a visual image [— an impression of form —] we attached the idea that "there are people [there]." And then we continue to live within such a perception (*saññā*), thinking that these people are continuously present there. This is merely conceptual proliferation (*papañca*) produced by our own mind, and not reality.

So, now within this insight we must be able to see that the effect is not contained on the side of the cause. It is precisely in order to explain this that the Buddha asks Venerable Māluṅkyaputta that question. This did not exist in the past, does not exist in the present, and will not exist in the future. Why? That which is called "what is seen" cannot be on the side of the cause. At every moment, when causes are present, what is seen arises, and when causes cease, it disap-

pears. And it was right in the process of such directing of attention and reflection that wisdom arose in Venerable Māluṅkyaputta as a result. What wisdom? "*Diṭṭhe diṭṭhamattaṃ bhavissati*" — the wisdom of understanding that in the seen there is only the seen, that seeing is only seeing. Therefore, he no longer bound himself to what is seen through craving, and [the very idea] that something "seen" exists ceased to be built up in him.

So, when we clarify the path of our insight, what do we understand? At the first stage, these phenomena (*dhammas*) themselves that are present where seeing arises must become clear and visible to you.

It must be visible to you that this is not a mother, not a father, not a house, not a car, not things that are desirable or undesirable, not things that are valuable or without value — rather, these are merely phenomena that arise due to causes and disappear when those causes cease.

Whatever method of explaining the Dhamma (*pariyāya*) you use when examining this — whether through the aggregates or the sense bases [or through any other method given by the Blessed One] — you must see this very essence.

If we examine this as aggregates, these are *rūpa* (form, matter), *vedanā* (feeling), *saññā* (perception, recognition), *saṅkhāra* (volitional formations of the mind), and *viññāṇa* (consciousness). So, the eye and visible form are the aggregate of form (matter), *rūpakhandha*. Feeling, experiencing, which has arisen due to contact (*phassa*), is the aggregate of feeling,

vedanā-khandha. After all, when we see a form, neutral feeling (*upekkhā-vedanā*) arises in us. Next, recognizing — this is called *saññā*. Thinking, intention (*cetanā*) — this is called *saṅkhāra*. Knowing is called *viññāṇa*, consciousness. The result of all this is the arising of "seeing."

When this point is discussed, people are often mistaken about what recognition, *saññā*, is. They think: "After all, we recognize this monk's hand fan, which means we recognize precisely that it is a hand fan, or we recognize this very shape."

No, that is not so. At that moment, recognition is primary recognition. This means that at that moment you do not yet know about any hand fan. In primary recognition, you do not know those conventional names that we have established [for ourselves]: "yellow color," "blue color," "red color."

What exactly do you recognize at that moment? You recognize only that these outlines and colors differ from one another — only the difference itself between them. Only such recognition is present at that moment.

When many patches of color appear before the eyes, recognizing the differences between them is the most basic, primary level of recognition that operates in you. Only this primary recognition relates to the moment of "seeing" itself. And only after this does the mind move to the level where it reflects and comes to know, having already developed a more pronounced recognition.

This can be explained as follows. Right now, when you look straight ahead, objects do not appear

before you separately and in isolation, one by one. After all, it does not happen that only one single detail called a "hand fan" flies in separately [from everything else] and strikes your eyes. When you look, all these forms, colors, and outlines come before your eyes at the same time.

And what exactly do you come to know in this case? You come to know by thinking [about this] with the mind — yet do you come to know everything that came to the eye? No. Out of this entire big picture that came to the eye, you come to know only those objects that your mind has marked off and singled out for itself [and isolated from the overall picture]. And it is only by relying on these [isolated] objects, and thinking that they exist, that you then produce [for yourself] what you like or dislike, wholesome or unwholesome states.

Then can there be objects that were not marked off [and singled out by the mind]? Were they not visible [to the eye]? Yes, they were visible. However, if you have not marked them off in any way [and have not singled them out with your mind], then you will have no knowledge of them either.

Right now you see this microphone. And you see that there is this strip of cloth here, right? If I ask you something about this strip of cloth right now, you will of course be able to look at it and answer. However, if I had said nothing at all about it, and on some other day asked you: "On that day, did you see a strip of cloth tied near the microphone?" — what would you answer? You would say: "No, we did not see it."

Yet did you really not see that strip of cloth? After

all, when you look straight ahead, it is simply impossible for it not to enter your field of vision. It was visible to you; your eyes saw it. What, then, was absent? There was no marking it off [and isolating it]. Your mind did not single it out [from the overall picture and] did not think about it separately. Therefore, you have no knowledge of it.

Then tell me: when you recall everything that you have seen in your life, everything that you consider "what was seen" — what are you actually recalling? Are you recalling what was seen, or what your mind marked off and conceived in thought? Precisely what the mind marked off and conceived in thought, and not what was seen.

In this way, you can easily understand the difference between what is seen [by the eye] and what is known [by the mind]. Everything that you can think about right now as images (*nimitta*) [of this world] — "that" or "this" — does not relate to what was seen itself. It is merely what you marked off and isolated with the mind from what was seen, and conceived in thought on the basis of what was seen.

Therefore, if I ask you to tell me what you saw on the way here today, you will mention not what your eyes saw. You will mention only what your mind marked off and singled out. And you know nothing about anything else. And if we ask both you and another person who traveled with you in the same car about what was seen along the way, will your answers be the same or different? Your answers will certainly be different. Why will they differ? Because each person will speak about the experience of what his

own mind marked off, while no one will speak about what was seen. So, understand: what was seen [by the eye] is one thing, and what we come to know [with the mind] is something completely different.

What, then, must disappear in us? That foolishness must wear away by which we place what is known [by the mind] onto the side of what is seen [by the eye] and look [at everything] in that way.

So, now it is clear to us where we need to direct the attention of insight (vipassanā-manasikāra). Where do we need to direct this attention? We need to eliminate that foolishness in which we project the experience of what is known [by the mind] onto the side of what was seen [by the eye], thinking that we can directly see what is actually only known [by the mind]. The foolishness that we construct — when we place back onto the side of what is seen the experience of what we come to know by thinking with the mind about what was seen — must disappear.

In order to see this foolishness — or in order to abandon this foolishness — we point out [to the mind] the true reality of what is seen itself. What is the reality of what is seen that we point out? Mother, father, houses, property — we see none of these [with the eyes]. To what does all of this belong? To the side of what is known.

What, then, is the true reality of what is seen? At every moment, what is seen merely produces the fact of seeing, and ceases after seeing. [In the same way, what is heard] produces the fact of hearing, and ceases after hearing. It is precisely on this reality that we now establish our mind.

You must gain the ability, regarding what is seen, to maintain mindfulness on the fact that a combination of such elements as the eye, form, and eye-consciousness simply arose, and that this combination immediately ceased — without perceiving houses, mother, father, cars, or people in this. Or else to maintain mindfulness on the understanding that a collection of aggregates simply arose and passed away. Such an ability to maintain mindfulness at this level, this state in which you can sustain the mind in this way, is, as I already said, the first step of a mind suitable for insight (*vipassanā*). This is the first level. And it is precisely toward reaching this milestone that you now need to direct all your efforts — in order to bring your mind to this level.

When a practitioner brings his mind to this level, as soon as he directs his mind, the aggregates immediately come to the forefront. What does he need to do next? Up to this point, everything is now clear to us: if this is not there yet, if directing and establishing the mind in this way does not work out, one needs to nourish oneself a little from the side of knowledge based on hearing, and investigate and look in this way again and again. Everyone must understand his own level and make the appropriate efforts. However, if a practitioner is already at this level, what should he do? He needs to see the arising and passing away (*udaya-vaya*) of the aggregates.

The Arising and Passing Away of the Aggregates

When we observe the arising and passing away of the aggregates — I often speak about this — the point where many people are deceived and make a mistake is that they begin to think about the aggregates as something external to us, separate from ourselves. They begin to reflect on the aggregates apart from "themselves." Having seen something, they begin to think about it: "So, the eye, visible form, eye-consciousness — here are these three; all of this arose and ceased. These are aggregates. The aggregates arose and ceased." And after that, like a mantra, they constantly repeat this in their minds.

What happens because of this? Through such thinking, one-pointedness may arise, yet insight does not. Insight wisdom does not arise. Why does insight wisdom not arise?

Because what the person saw was merely the building up of yet another world, [only this time it was the building up of] a "world of insight," and not

seeing what actually happens, not seeing reality. In insight, however, what happens in reality must become clear. Reality must become evident. Therefore, never try to see the aggregates as something separate from yourselves.

What is called "I" arises solely on the basis of these aggregates. And what is called "the world" arises on the basis of those very same aggregates. Therefore, for a practitioner who observes arising and passing away, at every such moment — when we say "there is seeing [for me]," "there is hearing [for me]," "there is sensing [for me]," "there is knowing [for me]" — the impossibility of building up either this "I" or this "world" must become completely evident. The most serious misconception into which one can fall here is trying to examine and investigate the aggregates as something external to oneself, as something separate from oneself.

When we move to the practice of insight, this practice is mainly influenced by our former habit — by how we directed attention and reflected earlier. How did we examine and investigate everything before this [at the previous stage]?

"Here a sense has arisen that Mother is here." We took this object (*ārammaṇa*) and investigated it (*sammasana*): "So, here is the eye, here is form; in this way feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), and formations of the mind (*saṅkhāra*) arose [and consciousness (*viññāṇa*) knew this]; right here there was a collection of aggregates." And we try to carry this experience of investigation over to the point where [direct] arising and passing away are examined. We take

that very same experience again, apply it right here, and look: "Alright, the aggregates. Form arose and ceased. Here feeling arises and ceases. Perception arises and ceases. Some formation of the mind arises and ceases."

What happens in this case? It turns out as if [somewhere out there] there was something called aggregates, and now those aggregates arise and disappear. And who is looking [at this]? I am! I exist! I continue observing this. And what is the result then? That the one who looks remains. Meanwhile, the things being observed exist in the world. And then it appears as if existing things disappear, while the one who experiences the disappearance remains.

And if a practitioner, staying within this [approach], develops and deepens it a little further, then later fear may arise in him. What fear is this? "I exist, while the world is disappearing!"

Then fear arises. As I already said at the beginning, as meditation deepens, other states of mind arise, different from those that we have right now.

Right now we are in our ordinary state of mind, at a level where we are able to freely switch to other perceptions (*saññā*), so there is no problem in this for us. Both "I exist" and "other things exist" are continuously nourished in us. There is no contradiction in this: both the cup exists, and I exist. Both sounds are heard, and I exist. Because both of these sides are constantly compared and related to each other, no problems arise.

However, virtuous listeners, direct your full attention to what I am telling you right now. When you

deepen and develop the mind in practice — whether through calm (*samatha*) or through insight (*vipassanā*) — a completely different experience comes to you.

Calm is when other images (*nimitta*) do not come into attention, while the mind is kept on only one image. And what then arises in this calm? Does isolation (loneliness) not arise? Isolation arises.

And not only isolation. At such moments, objects that appear in the mind can be seen by you as if in waking life. "As if in waking life" means that they can be experienced as completely real. When moving to other levels of the mind, these objects can be sensed and perceived as something completely real.

Let me give an example: suppose you are sitting in meditation, and after some time it begins to seem to you that some sound is heard. The thought comes: "It is as if someone has come and is speaking with me" — so it seems to you. And what can happen then? You begin to hear a voice! Is anyone actually speaking? No, no one is speaking. However, thinking (*vitakka*) produced by your own mind is perceived in just this way.

In this way, many people reach the point where they begin to communicate with deities. With whom are they actually speaking? With their own mind. There are even some who hold Dhamma discussions with Mahā Brahmā himself! Where did this Mahā Brahmā come from? They created this Mahā Brahmā with their very own mind. So there are people who fall into traps.

Virtuous listeners, this is what happens when the

level [of perception] of the mind changes. And if you tell such a person the truth: "No, you are not speaking with Mahā Brahmā; this is a creation of your own mind in concentration" — he will never believe it.

After all, all of you have dreams. When you are inside a dream, does the thought come to you: "No, I am simply dreaming; all of this is unreal"? No. In a dream, everything seems completely real. The exact same thing happens at those levels [of concentration] as well.

After all, a dream is not real events; it is simply a stream of thoughts arising in our mind. Yet we experience that dream as something completely real, as reality. It is the same there [in meditation]: a thought that has arisen in the mind begins to be perceived as reality itself. And a person is deceived by this.

Similar states can also arise in someone who walks the path of insight. These states may not appear in the way described above. In people who walk the path of insight, what I spoke about before arises more often. The world disappears, yet what happens at the same time? I remain.

And then, due to the perception that the entire world is completely disappearing, disenchantment and revulsion sometimes arise in the practitioner. What happens then? Together with this complete disenchantment, meditation leads him in a completely wrong direction.

Disenchantment in itself is not a bad thing: *nibbidā*, that is, disenchantment [with what is conditioned], must be present. Yet only if there is not too

much of it. There must certainly be salt in a curry: without salt, the dish will not be tasty. However, if we fill the curry with salt, it will be impossible to eat. In the exact same way, nibbidā, disenchantment, is necessary, yet if there becomes too much of it, it turns into an obstacle to practice.

Therefore, as practice develops, we must not allow such extremes: imbalances must not arise in us. If you sense that "I remain, while the world disappears," that is a problem. And if you sense that "the world remains, while I disappear," that is also a problem. Therefore, in insight we must understand these things from a very balanced, middle position.

That is precisely why I said that at the stage called examining arising and passing away, it is no longer the method of reflection used before this that operates. How did we direct attention and reflect before this? With the intention of giving rise to that very [perception of] unity where it was clearly sensed that "Mother certainly exists," we began deliberately, making an effort, to show [the mind]: "No, there were only aggregates (*khandha*) such as these there, only sense bases (*āyatana*) such as these."

Yet do not use this method now in order to see that these are [only] aggregates. Back then, we took the image (*nimitta*) of Mother as an image external to us and, dividing that image into aggregates, showed [ourselves] in that way through reflection.

Now, however, at this stage, you should not use that former method. You should not try to show [this to yourself] as though the aggregates were something

separate and external to you while you divide them in this way and examine their arising and passing away.

At this stage, you must see very clearly: the very fact of seeing [anything] arises only when these aggregates are present, and as soon as the aggregates disappear, seeing itself also disappears. And that both of these sides — both "I" and "the world" — are built up solely on the basis of these aggregates.

You need to see that both of these sides — "I exist" and "the world [exists]" — are built up on the basis of [the very same] aggregates. It must become evident to you that there is no place, no basis at all, to establish "I" and "the world." And that both of them are asserted only on the basis of ignorance. Thus, no place must remain for designating either one of them. Therefore, here it is no longer enough to maintain wisdom only at the former level. At this stage, wisdom must be directed even more subtly.

So, on the basis of what are [the concepts of] "I" and "the world" established at all? On the basis of those aggregates that created this state of appearance and visibility [of anything]. Therefore, when you look at the arising and passing away of these aggregates, at the same time you must see: there is nothing here that could be designated as "I," and there is nothing here that could be designated as "the world." Practice must develop together with this understanding. Therefore, do not miss this part.

In insight, do not fall into merely sitting and monotonously watching: "Some aggregates arise and pass away, arise and pass away, arise and pass away." You need to see that these recognized aggregates arise

and pass away at every moment, leaving no place either for establishing "I" or for establishing "the world."

And when this becomes evident, you must see how exactly the sense of "oneself" arises together with what is seen. At an ordinary level, if you have this understanding thanks to knowledge gained from hearing [the Dhamma] (sutamaya-ñāṇa), this will not be all that difficult. However, if there are gaps in what has been heard itself [that is, in the knowledge gained from hearing the Dhamma], then those gaps will inevitably pass to these [subsequent] stages as well.

Why does the idea "I exist" arise in you right now at all? Because of what is seen, what is heard, what is sensed, and what is known, is that not so? If someone asks you what you have seen today since early morning, what will you answer? You will mention various things [and people] — what you saw. And what is the other side of this story? If someone asks: "Who saw this?", you will say: "I saw this."

If someone asks: "And where were you?", you will point out the place: "I was right here." Such is our natural state: there is "I," and there is what is seen. Who saw this? I did. I exist [— the one who saw]. Where was I? I was here. This is our habitual state.

That is precisely why the Blessed Buddha instructed Venerable Māluṅkyaputta: "In seeing, there is only seeing" (*diṭṭhe diṭṭhamattaṃ*). If seeing remains only seeing, what happens then? "Then, Māluṅkyaputta, you will not be with that" (tato tvaṃ, Māluṅkyaputta, na tena). If in seeing there is only seeing, Māluṅkyaputta, then you are not to-

gether with what is seen [that is, you are not connected with what is seen] — thus he teaches.

However, because for us seeing is not limited to seeing alone, what happens to us? "I exist" — I exist in connection with what I see. If there is a hand fan, who sees that hand fan? I do. I exist. I am the one who sees it. And if there is both a hand fan and an "I" that sees it, then where are you? You are there [in that place]. Thus, you have a place where you are. Now this world exists for you. And since this world exists, what does dying in this place mean? What happens then? Going to another place. And then this world exists, and the other world exists.

What, then, does the Blessed Buddha teach [Venerable Māluṅkyaputta]? He teaches about the ending of this suffering. If for a person seeing remains only seeing — "then, Māluṅkyaputta, you will not be with that" (*tato tvaṃ, Māluṅkyaputta, na tena*) — then, Māluṅkyaputta, the sense of "oneself" cannot arise in you in connection with what is seen. You are not together with what is seen. If you are not with it, then you are not "there." And if you are not "there," then you are neither in this world, nor in the other world, nor between the two. This itself is the end of suffering.

So, it is precisely on the basis of these things — what is seen, what is heard, what is sensed, and what is known — that the sense "I exist" is built up in us. Now, if in all of these places you see that only aggregates arise and pass away, what must this lead to? Thanks to this, both of these sides must disappear in you: both "I exist" and "the world exists." That is pre-

cisely why this belongs to the "development of the foundations of mindfulness" (*satipaṭṭhāna-bhāvanā*), and not merely to the "establishment of the foundations of mindfulness" (*satipaṭṭhāna*).

Look: what did we do in the establishment of the foundations of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*)? We directed the mind inward and directed the mind outward. Keeping the mind in this way, we examined what is internal (*ajjhatta*), examined what is external (*bahiddhā*), and examined both what is internal and what is external together (*ajjhatta-bahiddhā*). What did we do in such a two-sided examination? As is said in the sutta: "He dwells contemplating the body in the body internally; or he dwells contemplating the body in the body externally; or he dwells contemplating the body in the body internally and externally." We examined what is internal, examined what is external, and examined both — what is internal and what is external. Through such examination, it becomes completely evident that both of them have one and the same characteristic.

And what do we do when we move on to the development of the foundations of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna-bhāvanā*)? "He dwells contemplating the nature of arising in the body; or he dwells contemplating the nature of passing away in the body; or he dwells contemplating the nature of arising and passing away in the body."

What, then, is the practitioner looking at here? Both what is internal (*ajjhatta*), and what is external (*bahiddhā*), and both of these sides together — both what is internal and what is external — become the

field of his perception when he dwells contemplating their arising and passing away.

In doing so, it must not be the case that "I am here" — that is, "the one who looks" remains in place — while passing away is seen only in what is external. No, in this process both sides must appear completely clearly to you: both what is internal and what is external. It is precisely this that becomes the initial stage of establishing your mind in insight.

And when at this level a practitioner, keeping the mind directed toward insight, moves forward, this characteristic of arising and passing away comes to the forefront and becomes clearly visible. And what arises in one who continues to develop this further? Knowledge directed right at the dissolution of the aggregates (*bhaṅga-ñāṇa*).

The dissolution of the aggregates

The dissolution of the aggregates is when the mind begins to incline most strongly only toward the side of the passing away of the aggregates. Now, one who previously contemplated both sides — both arising and passing away — understands that his mind naturally stays only on the dissolution of the aggregates taking place moment by moment.

Together with this, as one understands that there is no essence (*sāra*) at all in conditioned phenomena (*saṅkhāra-dhamma*), the perception of them as frightening and dangerous (*bhayatupaṭṭhāna*) arises.

However, "fear" (*bhaya*) here does not mean ordinary everyday fright, but rather an awareness of the danger of conditioned phenomena themselves. This means that the practitioner's mind no longer inclines toward perceiving these phenomena as some images (*nimitta*) of this world. After all, he understands how mistaken such a perception produced [in the mind] is, and he begins to see clearly through what great

foolishness a cause for the arising of suffering is thereby created. And thanks to this, it becomes possible to go beyond this [habitual defiled] state.

Toward what exactly do you make an effort in this?

You make an effort to observe arising and passing away. When you observe passing away, the dissolution of the aggregates naturally becomes evident. You do not need to deliberately create some fear for yourself through thinking. These states arise on their own as stages of wisdom, as knowledges (*ñāṇa*). You do not need to produce these states artificially. They arise on their own, naturally, in the process of the practice itself.

That is why it is said in the Teaching that in order to attain the fruition of a stream-enterer (*sotāpanna*), a once-returner (*sakadāgāmī*), a non-returner (*anāgāmī*), and an arahant, as well as for a pleasant dwelling in this very life (*diṭṭhadhamma-sukha-vihāra*), one needs to do this very thing — to observe the arising and passing away of the aggregates.

What exactly needs to be done? To observe the arising and passing away of the aggregates.

So, this is what needs to be done. And as you continue this practice, you can see the changes that arise on this Path in the form of insight knowledges (*ñāṇa*) by the subtle differences in how your own mind functions.

When you observe arising and passing away, the mind inclines mainly toward the side of dissolution (*bhaṅga*). And it is right when a practitioner looks toward this side that he begins to understand the

frightening nature of conditioned phenomena: since all conditioned phenomena are things that disintegrate at such immense speed, [even] the very thought that they continue to exist is perceived by him as something frightening. Thus, the frightening nature, full of danger (*bhaya*), of conditioned phenomena (*saṅkhāra*) begins to become clearly visible to him. Why, virtuous listeners? Because it becomes evident: these phenomena can [at any moment] give rise to suffering.

Imagine: if someone placed a venomous snake into your hands right now, how much fear would you feel? Why does this fear arise in you? Because there is the understanding: this snake can bite at any moment; it can cause you harm. Or if someone places into your hands a bomb that can explode at the slightest movement, what will you feel? You will feel fear. Why? Because you know: this bomb can explode at any second.

It is the one who has realized the [continuous] dissolution of conditioned phenomena (saṅkhāra) who feels this fear. Why is this fear felt? Do not perceive this fear by comparing it with ordinary worldly "fear," with the fear that is familiar to us. This fear means that the practitioner knows with complete clarity: everything conditioned brings suffering.

Why? Virtuous listeners, if what are called conditioned phenomena, having arisen, pass away, and what was there before will never arise again — then what can happen at any moment because of the attachment that we generated while assuming that this exists? After all, what arises anew is no longer what

was there before. And this means that suffering can come at any moment. This is just like holding a bomb in your hands, not knowing at what moment that bomb will explode.

It is precisely this that begins to be clearly realized.

In every conditioned phenomenon — just like in a bomb when it is unknown at what instant it will explode — wherever one encounters [the perception] "I exist" and "the world exists," what is actually there? When passing away becomes evident, the practitioner sees: "So this is where this leads!" That is why it was said that fear arises at this stage.

And what happens when fear is realized? The aspiration arises: "One must become free!" — and it is right then that a person begins to make efforts for the sake of liberation. It is in just this way that we can systematically, step by step, develop this Path.

Conclusion

So, do not forget the first stage. Your task within the first stage is to gain the ability to see the aggregates with complete clarity.

You need to learn to direct attention to the aggregates again and again. It is in this very direction that you should develop your practice. This itself must become your goal. That is why, in the practice of insight, it is right there that insight wisdom (*vipassanā-paññā*) arises.

Let us train our mind for this; let us make some effort to direct our mind in the right direction. In practice, we need to accustom our mind to what we have spoken about today.

People who are at different levels of practice have gathered here. There are those who have already been practicing continuously for a long time, and there are also beginners who have joined only today. Therefore, practice starting from your own current level. It was precisely for this reason that I explained things going a little further ahead. And now let us set aside a little

time so that you can practice, starting from the level at which you are.

Today we are trying to significantly shorten the time of the Dhamma sermons themselves. However, starting practice without explaining this basic part would be somewhat unfair to beginners, so at the beginning we explained these key principles once again before going further. For this reason, the time of the Dhamma sermon became longer. After all, if we go further without these basics, those who have been listening to Dhamma sermons for a long time will understand, yet those who have joined for the first time will not have that support to take hold of. After all, those who know will in any case understand after listening how they need to continue their practice. Therefore, we try to clarify all of this, focusing specifically on beginners.

Here we pay the main attention to the practice itself. If someone lacks knowledge for properly directing the mind, then what must he certainly do? Before the start of the next program, he needs to listen attentively to Dhamma sermons and fill these gaps in knowledge. Since here we are focused on the practical side, I speak only about what directly concerns practice. I am not going into detailed explanations of other points related to knowledge based on hearing (*sutamaya-ñāṇa*). We examine much of this during Dhamma sermons. There is an entire system of knowledge related to knowledge based on hearing that you must possess.

After all, if a person does not know what "the eye" is [in terms of the Dhamma], and while listening

to instructions thinks that we are speaking about this physical eyeball of flesh, then when the impermanence of the eye is spoken of, he will not see this impermanence. Then all that will remain for him is to examine this in the sense that this eye will disappear after death. Therefore, here we are not speaking about this eye at all, but about the sensitive matter of the eye (*pasāda-rūpa*).

Next, when speaking of visible form, we do not mean what can be touched with the hands, but the color impression that comes to the eye moment by moment. And by "the mind" here is meant that which arises relying on the eye and knowing this color impression. And the passing away itself of these three [factors] is what is called "a form is seen."

If we do not have this knowledge, it will be difficult for us to align our mind with insight. Therefore, one needs to hear this and grasp this knowledge — this is what must certainly be done.

Therefore, if there are any gaps in this, by the next program we need to fill those gaps through knowledge based on hearing. However, right now we do not need to step back; try to grasp the essence of what we have spoken about today and move forward together with this [understanding].

Surely you have been able to form at least a general understanding of these points — that the process of seeing needs to be examined as aggregates. That is, the eye and visible form are material form (*rūpa*). Next, feeling, recognizing, thinking, and knowing — *vedanā*, *saññā*, *saṅkhāra*, and *viññāṇa* correspond to

these. All of this arises in that place which is called "seeing."

And not one of these [phenomena] became a "child." And what arises in the next moment is not a child either. Not one of the phenomena that have ever arisen has ever become a "child." Ask yourself the question: "If that is so, am I not constructing a 'child' for myself out of a collection of aggregates that did not become any child?" — carry out such an analysis of these points.

If you are just beginning to practice, no matter how many thoughts arise in you, right now you can examine only this object (*ārammaṇa*), "child." While you are examining this object in this way, all kinds of other objects may come to mind. What do you need to do now? Here you are thinking about the child, thinking that this is a collection of aggregates, and you direct wisdom to this and investigate. And while you are investigating like this, someone else suddenly comes to mind. So what do you need to do now? You do not need to stop what you have started and move on to examining the person who has just come to mind. Continue examining the object that you have chosen. Keep investigating that very same object, "child."

Even if a thousand more objects come to mind, do not follow them; do not start thinking about them. Forget all of them; do not let them continue as a chain of thoughts. Make it completely evident to yourself that this object "child" is simply aggregates. Examine carefully why it was said that these are merely aggregates, and why this is not a child.

However, if you are not yet able to see this at all, during the daytime today we have specially set aside time to discuss questions. You have the opportunity to ask these questions both during the general discussion and individually, while the meditations are going on.

Come at that time and ask, for example: "Venerable Bhante, although you speak in this way, it still seems to me that this certainly exists!" Ask any questions that arise in you during the process of investigation. After all, questions appear right when you begin in practice to maintain such contemplation in your mind. Only when you begin to reflect in this way does the mind start putting forward counterarguments and trying to prove from different sides: "No, yet this does exist!" Therefore, during the daytime, you can also resolve all the doubts that have arisen.

And now let us devote some time to the meditation itself. Sit in a posture that is comfortable for you, and keep your body upright. This morning, all of you received introductory instructions on the practice of the recollection of the Buddha (*buddhānussati*). Therefore, first, for one or two minutes or for a very short period of time, keep your mind on the recollection of the Buddha.

As for the others — if there are any among you who do not practice the recollection of the Buddha — direct your mindfulness to your in-breaths and out-breaths. Take a deep breath in so that your chest fills completely with air, and then breathe out. Repeat this several times, relaxing the body and creating a sense of lightness in the body, and then switch to

natural breathing — breathe at your ordinary rhythm and keep your mind on this process.

In other words, maintaining mindfulness of the fact that you are breathing in and breathing out, keep your mind near the tip of the nose or above the upper lip, and from this point, clearly knowing this, alertly and with steady mindfulness, breathe in and breathe out.

Having taken one full in-breath and out-breath, count: "One." And count like this: "One, two, three..." — and in this way reach nine. And then count in reverse order: "Nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one."

Having completed from three to ten such cycles, then firmly take some object and direct the mind toward insight. Take something that is sensed by you from your surrounding environment, or something that comes to mind, and move on to the practice of insight. And as for those who are already able to direct the mind immediately to the aggregates, right now let them practice while keeping the mind on the arising and passing away of these aggregates, or directly on their dissolution.

May the Triple Gem protect you!

Appendix

The Story about the Parrot (Commentary to the Introductory Section of the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta)

Translated by: *Bhikkhu Russiave Asaṅkhata*

Here the introductory words are explained: "Bhikkhus, this is the direct (the only) path" — why did the Blessed One speak this sutta?

Because the people of the Kuru country were capable of receiving a profound teaching.

It is said that the monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen of the Kuru country always possessed a healthy body and a clear mind thanks to an abundance of favorable seasons, a wholesome climate, and other suitable conditions of that land.

Supported by this bodily and mental health, and endowed with the strength of wisdom, they were capable of receiving a profound teaching.

Therefore, seeing their ability to receive this profound instruction, the Blessed One spoke this Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta, profound in meaning, dividing the meditation objects (kammaṭṭhāna) in twenty-one ways, right up to the attainment of arahantship.

Just as a person who has received a golden basket would place various flowers into it, or having received a golden casket would place the seven kinds of precious gems into it, in the same way the Blessed One, having gathered the people of the Kuru country, taught them this profound teaching.

For this very same reason, other suttas profound in meaning — in this Dīgha Nikāya: the Mahānidāna Sutta; and in the Majjhima Nikāya: the Satipaṭṭhāna, Sāropama, Rukkhopama, Raṭṭhapāla, Māgandiya, Āneñjasappāya, and other suttas — were also taught there.

Moreover, in that region all four assemblies (monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen) by their nature dwelt diligently in the practice of developing satipaṭṭhāna, to such a degree that even slaves and hired workers held conversations connected specifically with satipaṭṭhāna.

Even at watering places, at places for spinning thread, and in other places, there was no idle talk.

If any woman was asked: "Mother, which practice of satipaṭṭhāna do you perform (keep in mind)?", and she answered: "None," people reproached her: "Woe to your life! Even though you are alive, you are like one who is dead."

Then, having admonished her: "Henceforth do

not act like this anymore," they helped her learn one of the practices of satipaṭṭhāna. However, if she said: "I practice such-and-such a satipaṭṭhāna," they expressed approval to her: "Sādhu! Sādhu!" (Well done! Well done!), and praised her: "Your life is lived worthily; you have truly attained the rare human state; it is for the sake of people like you that the Perfectly Enlightened One has appeared!" and so on. And not only beings of human nature were devoted to the practice of satipaṭṭhāna, but thanks to them, even the animals living there were devoted to it.

Regarding this, there is the following story: it is said that a wandering performer took a young parrot and traveled around the region, training it.

He stopped to stay not far from a residence of nuns, and when the time came to leave, he forgot the young parrot and went away.

The sāmaṇerīs (novice nuns) took the young parrot in and began to care for him.

They gave him the name Buddharakkhita.

One day, seeing him sitting in front of her, the senior nun (mahātherī) said: "Buddharakkhita!"

"What is it, Venerable?" he answered.

"Do you have any meditation practice?"

"No, Venerable."

"Friend, for one who lives near renunciants, it is not proper to be heedless of oneself; one should strive for at least some practice. Yet since you are not capable of anything else, repeat: 'bone, bone' (aṭṭhi, aṭṭhi)!"

And following the instruction of the therī, he began going everywhere, repeating: "bone, bone."

One day early in the morning, while he was sitting on top of the gate, warming himself in the gentle rays of the sun, a bird of prey seized him in its talons.

The parrot let out a cry: "Kiri, kiri!"

Hearing this, the sāmaṇerīs cried out: "Venerables, Buddharakkhita has been seized by a bird, let us free him!", and grabbing stones and other things, they chased after the bird of prey and freed the parrot.

When they brought him back and set him before her, the therī asked: "Buddharakkhita, what were you thinking about when the bird seized you?"

"Venerable, I thought of nothing else except: 'A heap of bones is carrying a heap of bones. In what place will it scatter it?' Thus, Venerable, I thought only about a heap of bones."

"Sādhu, sādhu, Buddharakkhita! In the future, this will become a condition for you for the destruction of existence (saṃsāra)."

In this way, even the animals there were devoted to the practice of satipaṭṭhāna.

Therefore, the Blessed One spoke this sutta for them, giving rise to wisdom in them specifically regarding satipaṭṭhāna.

A story about the monk, from Path of Purification (Visuddhimagga), Buddhaghosa

Translated from the Pali by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli

"It seems that as the elder was on his way from Cetiyapabbata to Anurādhapura for alms, a certain daughterinlaw of a clan, who had quarrelled with her husband and had set out early from Anurādhapura all dressed up and tricked out like a celestial nymph to go to her relatives' home, saw him on the road, and being low-minded, she laughed a loud laugh. [Wondering] "What is that?" the elder looked up and finding in the bones of her teeth the perception of foulness (ugliness), he reached Arahantship.Hence it was said:

"He saw the bones that were her teeth,
And kept in mind his first perception;
And standing on that very spot
The elder became an Arahant."

But her husband, who was going after her, saw the elder and asked, "Venerable sir, did you by any chance see a woman?"

The elder told him:

"Whether it was a man or woman
That went by I noticed not,
But only that on this high road
There goes a group of bones."